



Getting Started

Can You Really Profit By Design When Planning an Office?

Garrett Ludwig

The direct answer is a resounding, “Yes!” We adopted the company slogan “Profit By Design” many years ago since it speaks to the intent as well as the effect of design. This simple formula has proven itself for our clients consistently over many years. So let me share a few of the elements that characterize this reliable prescription for success.

INTENT

Call it goal-setting, due-diligence or simply homework, there is no substitute for intent in the achievement of any aspiration. To wit, you have earned your credentials as a dentist through focus, commitment, sacrifice, study and hard work - in short, intent. If you make the same commitment to planning an office, you are guaranteed a similar success.

Since the process of planning an office is not as well-scribed as an academic curriculum, the first step in the process is to find comfort in delegating responsibility and engaging professional guidance to lead you through the process. If you adhere to the simple precepts that follow, I assure you that you will discover factors that will save you money, others that will earn you money and those that will simply make your work-life stress-free. Collectively those elements will result in profitability. Here are a few examples:

On the savings front, there are no less than 30 check-points that we use in the process of determining the feasibility and efficacy of a facility for use as a dental practice. Each has a potential cost and will impact your construction budget negatively or positively. It's a matter of knowing what to look for and having the wherewithal to redirect those costs from the plus column to the minus column.

Consider this typical example: A Lessor may offer a leased space as-is. That means that the cost of demolishing and removing all existing partitions, lighting, wiring, plumbing, ceilings, etc., would be assumed by the lessee - you. On a recent project, the demolition costs were estimated at \$25,000 (that's not a misprint). That constituted a 6.5 percent increase in the construction budget before the project began. We negotiated with the Lessor, and he agreed to provide the space clean.



Another common example is the need to provide a pitched walkway to accommodate handicapped access. By definition in the regulations, a slope (ratio of 1:20) will not necessitate railings. On the other hand, a ramp (ratio of 1:12) will require perimeter railings along with bi-level hand-rails. If you have the space to work with, the slope is obviously the most economical solution. The point is that, if you are vigilant about thoroughly evaluating the extensive list of potential line-items, you are likely to save as much as 30 percent in construction costs.

Earnings and stress-management are products of the same due-diligence. It stands to reason that if you work more efficiently you will create the potential for increased revenue. In kind, if you create an environment of homeostasis, you will enjoy the peace of mind, contentment and joy of performing dentistry unencumbered. You can't put a price or a value on that. To put that in perspective, picture the ideal ergonomic treatment room. You reach for something, and it's there. You ask your assistant for something, and it's there. If you identically replicate this work environment in all treatment rooms, I will personally guarantee

that the resulting increased efficiency and productivity will expand your bottom line. Most importantly, you and your staff will enjoy the synergy that results. Those are the rewards of intent.

EFFECT

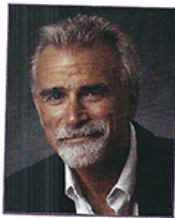
So, where is the profitability in an effective design? Call it marketing, advertising, merchandising, or simply promotion, your professional image is established the moment anyone enters your office. You can't buy that with any media. Therefore, the highly touted wow-factor is an essential effect that will certainly initialize a positive impression.

But the reality is that the image must transcend the atmosphere created with architectural appointments and sensory details. The fact is that patients are savvy and that dynamic image must be maintained throughout their experience in your office. As a result we adopted the mantra and skill-set to "manage the fluid movement of people within a defined space."

It is grounded in the strategic juxtaposition and orientation of services, and is enhanced by the personnel who manage each of those services. It also isn't exclusive to patients. The synergy of a well-planned environment will resonate with all who enter your office- including staff, colleagues, technicians, vendors and service providers.

In closing, I would like to quote a man who knew a great deal about profiting - Steve Jobs. He said, "Design is not just what it looks or feels like. Design is how it works." That's the essence of effect. 🍷

Garrett Ludwig is President of Diversified Design Technologies, Inc. and specializes in dental office design. His design expertise is best summarized



by his company slogan, "Profit By Design"- which speaks to the purpose and intent of creating functional, efficient and fiscally sound design concepts. Contact Garrett at 800-622-5563 or garrett@dentaldesign.pro.

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	Corporate Dentistry <i>Associate/Employee</i>	Comfort dental <i>Partner/Owner</i>
Income	+\$8,333/mo (\$100,000/yr)	+\$29,250/mo (\$351,000/yr)
Social Security Tax	-\$637/mo (\$7,650/yr) (.0765%)	-\$1,333/mo (\$16,000/yr) (.0765% w/ limits)
Fed/State Income Tax	-\$1,666/mo (\$20,000/yr) (20%)	-\$7,500/mo (\$90,000/yr) (33%)
Partnership Down Payment	NONE	-\$2,000/mo (\$24,000/yr) (5-year loan)
Consulting Payment	NONE	-\$4,000/mo (\$48,000/yr) (10-year loan)
Net Income	+\$6,029/mo (\$72,350/yr)	+\$14,417/mo (\$173,000/yr)
\$350,000 Student Loan Payment	-\$2,800/mo (\$33,600/yr)	-\$2,800/mo (\$33,600/yr)
Rent Payment	-\$1,200	-\$1,200
Car Payment	-\$500	-\$500
Health Care Payment	-\$650	-\$650
Remaining Income	+\$879/mo (\$10,550/yr)	+\$9,267/mo (\$111,200/yr)

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*On average based on 2013 overhead figures.