

# Retirement planning

## Quentin Skinner on how to maximise your financial potential



News comment

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For those of you who are getting to be of a certain age, it is all too easy to keep treading the treadmill, simply putting one step in front of the other to keep going, because that is what you have always done.

It often seems easier to simply continue in the same rut, keeping one's eyes blinkered from any suggestion that it is time to think seriously about planning for the future. Sure, most will have been through the basic mental calculations about retirement pensions and lump sums, but there is more to it than that.

Of course, a regular review of likely pension

outcomes with an appropriate expert advisor is very much to be advised, not least because legislation changes and opportunities to improve one's lot come and go with each tax year. And talking of tax, obviously specialist accountants also can make a significant difference in efficient tax planning. The benefits of such outside professional help are plain for all to see.

However, dentists at this stage of life should also be looking at the structure of the funding of their practice, to ensure that it will maximise the financial outcome of a sale on retirement of everything that

they have spent so long in building up. NHS goodwill value remains defiantly high, albeit having fallen over more recent months – how likely are these levels to continue as more and more cash-strapped PCTs see the contractual change resulting from a retirement as an opportunity to cut high UDA values? For those dentists operating in the private sector, there are many considerations in ensuring an efficient final outcome of their career. They should be concentrating on structuring their business in a way that maximises patient attendance and loyalty to their own practice brand on the most cost-effective basis that yields the best ongoing profitability.

Without a doubt, funding by dental payment plans is the best way to maximise patient attendance, but

a timely review of plan arrangements is an essential part of retirement planning. Is the branding of the plan, or even of the practice itself, best tuned to readying the practice for sale? Is the cover offered by the plan the most appropriate to maximise the goodwill outcome because, if not, it could adversely affect things significantly? Is the plan pricing up to date and optimised, and has there been a recent audit of plan patients? This whole area is one where dentists approaching retirement should seek advice from the dental plan administration companies.

Above all, the most important thing is to avoid leaving the planning of the culmination of a lifetime's hard work until the last moment. Rather than jeopardising the potential value built up over the years, there is nothing to lose by starting to act now.