

Does your payment plan provider have their finger on the pulse of your business?

A shoulder to lean on

Andrew Warren looks at the role of a payment plan provider.

John Donne said: 'No man is an island' and it's as true today as it was in the 1600s. Despite the advent of new technology and communications, we remain highly social beings and having the support of those around us is important confirmation for our decisions. When we buy an expensive item, there is a psychologically significant moment when having made our purchase, we seek vindication for our actions, talking to those around us, explaining and validating the reasons for the purchase, which then serves as justification that we have made the right decision.

When you make the decision to change a clinical element of your practice you may feel less of a need to seek support, this after all is the area of your own expertise. However, should you choose to alter a business element within your practice the need for endorsement is likely to be that much greater.

Choosing to change your funding mechanism is as important a decision



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as you will ever make in terms of your business, but I can safely say that in the past 18 months, those dentists who have a payment plan option for their patients are extremely glad they do.

At DPAS our philosophy is one of guidance and support, as opposed to control and domination. In recent times many companies have sought to provide numerous additional services for dentists, but at DPAS we prefer to focus on our core competencies, providing a comprehensive, cost-effective and highly efficient service. We are however always willing to refer our customers to other specialist consultants within the industry with whom we have built up strong relationships and whose costs can easily be covered by the savings being made thanks to our low charges.

Our aim in working with practices is to do what we do really well. Using a payment plan administrator invariably means you are seeking a highly efficient dental plan administration service, along with a supplementary accident and emergency insurance policy, which operates effectively in a mutually beneficial way, providing your practice with a hassle-free monthly income that is completed without errors.

It is clear that good regional support is essential to any plan provider and we recently expanded our team of field consultants, so they now have much smaller areas of the UK to cover, enabling them to offer a greater level of support to our customers.

Converting to private practice may not be the immediate way forward for all practices and a traditional 'sales' approach may sound too pushy, too direct and could be misleading.

In my view the real role and value of our consultants is to give practices impartial advice, which may not be exactly what they want to hear, in helping them to arrive at the best possible outcome, whether this be concerning a move away from the NHS, a change of plan provider or converting patients from payment on a fee per item to plans.

Should such practices choose to adopt a range of plans administered by DPAS, our practice consultants are on hand to make regular visits to their practices, providing a range of services including staff training, promotional ideas and a variety of other measures that help practices which are introducing or maintaining a plan. In my experience it is always the relationships that these individuals are able to build that makes the difference. Being able to offer honest, straightforward advice about the optimal path for the practice and having the experience to back-up the advice being given, is a valuable asset that client practices are delighted to embrace and I am always hearing of the excellent relationships our field team are able to establish.

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