

Move Your Practice Forward with Industry-defining Trends: Leverage Lessons from the International Dental Show

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Did you attend what is billed as the world’s largest trade show for dental offices, labs, and specialty trades earlier this spring? If not, never fear! We have isolated some of the most prominent topics and trends showcased at the [International Dental Show](#), held every two years in Germany. The [IDS](#) returned to Cologne post-COVID for its 100th anniversary.

You may leverage some of the trends showcased this milestone year when pinpointing smart, of-the-moment investments and when marketing those investments and initiatives to your loyal community of “brand ambassadors.” Make your positive and proactive mark on dental history.

Toothsome tech

This year underscored the evolution of aesthetic materials, minimally invasive techniques, dynamic digital processes, and 3D printer capabilities. Modern glass ionomers, composites, hybrid composites, and their ilk are not only natural-looking, but new approaches are overcoming practical challenges to optimal treatment outcomes. Innovative tools, for instance, have been introduced to minimize the “bubbling” and ensuing discolouration associated with preparing flowable composites. Proprietary syringes with filter functions prevent these problematic challenges, supporting patient satisfaction and workforce productivity.

A nod to innovations in sought-after conservative treatments, the files used in root canal treatment are increasingly flexible and resistant to damage (such as breakage). As such tools have advanced, they are contributing to a change in the endodontic procedure – allowing for more tooth structure to be spared during treatment.

To digital technologies and workflows, x-rays are increasingly positioned as a complementary imaging source alongside the latest scanners to rely on Artificial Intelligence. Related software is further contributing to efficiencies in day-to-day functions. Secure and intuitive cloud solutions have not stood still in uniting teams, devices, and services to comply with the ever-changing regulatory environment.

Furthermore, prosthetic-related manual tasks are getting a big boost as workflows are increasingly coordinated and integrated to support fast and precise dentures and other prostheses fabrication. The newest milling machines are within reach for practices and lab operations partners alike; in some cases, their real-time controls have accelerated total milling time [by 30%](#).

Lastly, 3D printing has matured, so savvy practitioners may want to reconsider systems formerly dismissed in their earlier iterations. Next-generation systems rely on intelligently designed construction platforms, which consolidate several vital components. The result is a speedier, less clunky printing process.

Reap ROI from regenerative processes

Conservative-minded techniques go beyond the minimally invasive endodontic measures facilitated by the latest changes to vital instruments. They are entering the realm of tissue regeneration. Now more than ever, pulpotomies have a high rate of successful treatment even after the roots have fully matured. As underscored in this year’s industry conference, treatment sites are being sealed with materials such as Mineral Trioxide Aggregate Bioceramics (versus the traditional calcium hydroxide-based materials).

Additionally, the latest approaches transcend the preservation of hard tissues and tooth structure as tissue engineering “grows up” to regenerate damaged pulp tissues. Those autologous grafts taken from the patient can then be used to rebuild the inner structure of the tooth and not “just” to optimally restore the damaged shell of the tooth and its protective hard tissues.

Prioritize perio expertise

The latest installment of the IDS committed considerable time and resources toward periodontics. As noted by organizers, the conference that attracts 120,000-plus professionals from 162 countries (including [Canada](#)) paid special attention to the latest [European guidelines](#) for periodontic care. In turn, organizers emphasized ETD (for “perio Explanation and Therapy Discussion”) and OHI (for “patient-specific Oral Hygiene Instruction”).

The current environment demands consistent education and communication regarding perio therapies and prophys. For instance, it may be time to step up one’s messaging game when addressing risk factors like smoking and vaping, related cessation programmes, and the link between oral health and overall health/medical risk factors. Do not wait for awareness months to creep up before producing small social posts, larger email blasts, and website articles on the “dots” that connect advanced gum disease and cardiac events, respiratory diseases, and other systemic conditions.

Do not forget to highlight the “dots” that connect long [COVID-19 patients](#) with periodontal disease and prevention and remediation efforts. There are ample opportunities to illustrate the risks of severe flares associated with patients who have periodontal disease and vice versa (the effect that comorbidities may have on promoting periodontitis). Aside from the value that patients can get from multimedia content on these subjects, these hot topics also present opportunities to further solidify partnerships and build trusted relationships between dentists and patients.

A final note: The IDS highlighted approaches to periodontal therapies within the context of peri-implantitis, too. For patients with dental implants, it is essential to further empower (with credible information) the importance of properly caring for the tissues around the implants. This will only become a bigger consideration for the modern dental practice as implant-retained tooth replacement is increasingly a commonplace dentistry service. Additional measures to address existing peri-implantitis will also surface, emphasizing autologous tissue regeneration with [platelet-rich fibrin](#).

What to do with these “take-aways”

First, we appreciate that a significant chunk of the “trends” at this latest IDS event centred on technology. So, it is essential to establish best practices and measures to regularly assess where one is “at” with the technology. If some of these technologies seemed “pie in the sky” 18 months ago, let alone two or three years ago, it might be time to take a closer look at that device, appliance, material, system, product, or instrument. After all, we need only look to our hands or pockets and the “mini-computers” within them to see how quickly technology matures. Do not miss out on opportunities to improve productivity, morale, satisfaction, and the patient experience – all of which can be supported in so many ways with intuitive technologies and meaningful vendor partnerships.

Second, it would be a misstep on our part to fail to reinforce how to leverage existing or on-the-horizon technologies, techniques, services, or approaches that speak to some of the latest and greatest developments as defined by the international industry prognosticators. To the average person, our world’s “gee whiz” technology may be met with glazed-over eyes. The current patient or the ideal quality prospect wants to know, “*So what? What does this mean for me?*” Try to get beyond some of the clinical terms and industry-speak referenced here. Think more like your community, like you do when sharing the ins and outs of treatment options with your patients. Channel this tone, word choice, and approach when communicating the benefits of said techniques and tools to your “fans.”

Third, when you do make new investments – be it completely new types of technologies or an upgrade to existing software or devices – shout it from the rooftops! Do not let it remain a “best-kept” secret. Share it on the home page of your site, in announcements on Facebook and other socials, in newsletters, and even in old-fashioned “snail mail” (alongside a promotion or discount on said tech, as applicable!). As indicated, be sure to align any new investments with promotional strategies or membership programmes. Whenever possible, round out these efforts with visuals and audio, as many technologies lend themselves well to YouTube videos or Instagram photos, and present action-oriented learning opportunities as one’s team demonstrates their use on actual patients or fellow staff members.

With some of these of-the-moment industry-defining developments integrated into your practice, you can shape your teams’ and patients’ futures for the better while playing a role in contributing positively to dentistry of the future.

About the Author:



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