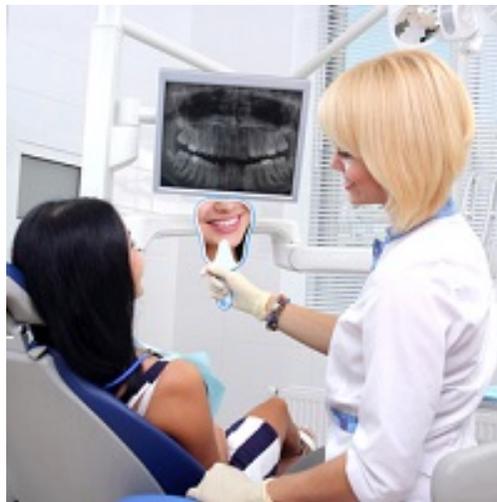


# The Modular Dental Practice: From In-House to Outsourcing

Whether you are fresh out of dental school or transitioning an existing practice to a more modern business model, you will have an overwhelming number of decisions and issues to face. From choosing clinical equipment to hiring office staff, many of these critical choices have one thing in common: You must decide between in-house and outsourcing.

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PUBLISHED: Tuesday, June 6, 2017



*Providing in-house services can benefit your patients and your practice, but it is important to know when to hire outside help*

Whether you are fresh out of dental school or transitioning an existing practice to a more modern business model, you will have an overwhelming number of decisions and issues to face. From choosing clinical equipment to hiring office staff, many of these critical choices have a common theme. You must decide between in-house and outsourcing.

Will you hire a bookkeeper or use a service? Will you buy a CAD/ CAM machine for crowns, or work with a laboratory? These and similar choices add to the complexity of running a dental practice, but they also provide an opportunity that previous generations did not have. Think of these things as building blocks, from which you can create your customized dental practice.

## ***Bringing it in-house***

Any diagnostic, treatment or lab work performed in your office has several benefits:

· You have greater control over quality and accuracy. Every time you trust a lab or a specialist to complete certain steps of treatment, you are trusting them with your reputation.

· In-house treatment can be more efficient for you and more convenient for your patients. It eliminates many delays and scheduling difficulties by streamlining the process in one location, under your direction.

· Build your reputation as an expert. When you offer services beyond standard procedures, patients take it as a sign of advanced expertise. You can also acquire new patients and build your professional network by accepting referrals from other dentists.

· Do more of what you love. We all have our most and least favorite tasks. Ask yourself which aspects of dentistry you enjoy the most and what type of cases you want to increase. Decide where you want to grow, and add appropriate in-house services to build up that part of your practice.

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### ***Advantages of outsourcing***

Of course, you can't do it all yourself, especially if you are just starting out. That is OK — outsourcing can have just as many benefits.

· Improve efficiency and reduce wasted time. Are there certain types of cases that you do not want or procedures that take up too much of your time? Look for external services, or you may want to consider referring these patients to an associate.

· Create a strong professional network. Work with other dentists who have different specialties or practice focuses than yours. Referrals between trusted associates can be mutually beneficial.

· Expand your services at minimal cost. Sometimes outsourcing is about increasing, rather than decreasing, an aspect of your practice. If you want to expand, but do not yet have the funding or training, then external services and professionals can open up new possibilities. For example, you can cater to patients with dental fear by working with an anesthesia service to expand your sedation options, or you can promise complex full mouth reconstruction by referring patients to a specialized oral surgeon for certain procedures.

· Remove sources of unnecessary stress, particularly in your front office. Accounting, marketing, insurance and billing are the greatest sources of frustration for many dentists. These tasks may be delegated to office personnel,

who may lack specific training or experience. Problems in the front office can result in poor customer service and costly mistakes. Equally problematic, monitoring and supervising can take your time and attention away from patients. Outside companies can often provide better service, eliminate stress and allow your office staff to focus on customer care.

### ***Putting the pieces together***

Try to make important business decisions within the context of your long-term goals and vision. Look beyond the short-term profitability, and ask yourself what you want to be known for, how you want your practice to grow and what you want to streamline.

A dental practice is an ever-evolving entity that develops its own public reputation and in-office culture. At times, it might feel as if it is careening out of control. However, its evolution is primarily shaped by the cumulative result of many choices that you make. With careful planning, you can take the wheel and drive your practice towards success while steering yourself away from stress.

### ***About the Author:***

*Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete Internet marketing company which focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education and the online reputations of dentists. With a team of 140+ full time marketers, [www.ekwa.com](http://www.ekwa.com) helps dentists who know where they want to go, get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call 855-598-3320 to speak one-on-one with Naren.*

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