

Cosmetic Dentistry Pioneer Offers Advice for New Dentists

If cosmetic dentistry is an area in which you would like to build your practice, chances are good that you've heard of Dr. Lorin Berland. If you haven't, you'll want to get to know this renowned expert. Dr. Berland, whose cosmetic and family practice, Berland Dental Arts Center, is based in Dallas, Texas, has built an international reputation for his expertise in cosmetic dentistry and his tremendously popular *Lorin Library Smile Style Guide*. He is one of the most widely published authorities on cosmetic dentistry in the world today. He has been featured in every major publication from the *Wall Street Journal* to *Time Magazine* and on numerous television programs, including "20/20."

The New Dentist™ magazine recently spoke with Dr. Berland and asked him to share his insights and expertise as a dentist who has "been there, done that" in the world of cosmetic dentistry. He is a pioneer in the field and began considering the shape, length, and look of teeth long before cosmetic dentistry was ever considered a serious component of the dental profession.

"I started out working in a denture lab in high school and then I worked for a dentist as his lab technician. I started thinking about the *Smile Guide* when I was setting up denture teeth because the dentist I worked for told me, way back then, that a really good looking denture always fits better. So I started looking at the different shapes and lengths of the teeth that make an individual have an attractive smile. But it was in my residency program after dental school when I really started getting into the cosmetic side of dentistry. That was the dawn of esthetic bonding. Back then, it wasn't considered 'serious' dentistry, but my patients sure considered it important. And so did I. I was fortunate to be there at the beginning but as a result, I made more mistakes than most and certainly more than new dentists have to make today."

New dentists might be surprised to learn that this trail blazer in the arena of cosmetic dentistry urges practitioners to take the conservative approach. "Your first obligation is to do no harm. The least amount of treatment that yields the desired outcome is the best amount of treatment. You can always do more, but you can't put back what you've already taken away. Almost all cosmetic cases begin with whiten-

ing. Then consider bonding before veneers, veneers before crowns." He notes that he is seeing an increase in post treatment problems associated with some cosmetic cases and other dentists eager to cash in on the public's interest in cosmetic dentistry. "If the patient wants a movie star smile and is willing to pay for it, you had better know how to create it. That's what they are paying you the big bucks for, your knowledge."

Dr. Berland emphasizes that new dentists can help to maximize their success in cosmetic cases using pictures. "Take photos and more photos of your work. Go over them on your own, maybe with an assistant. Everyone must have a digital camera in their office. We do a full-series of photos on every new patient. In my opinion, it can be more important than X-rays because I can pull up the photos, put a face with the teeth, and best of all, put them on the screen to share with the patient."

In addition, he notes, "Recent studies have proven that what they teach in dental school – men have square teeth, women have round teeth – is not always the case. Nor should it be. That's why I created the *Smile Style Guide* and Lorin Library products (www.digident.com) to help the patient choose the appropriate shape and length combination for the front teeth. I also recommend composite mock ups, cosmetic imaging and/or a Trial Smile before beginning any big cosmetic case.

When it comes to radiography, "If you are buying X-rays, I strongly recommend you go digital. I have been using DEXIS for 12 years and have never had a problem. You want to go with a good name and a reputable company. I would stay away from

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Lorin Berland, DDS, is an internationally recognized expert in cosmetic dentistry. He has an exclusive cosmetic and family dentistry practice in Dallas, Texas, The Berland Dental Arts Center. And he is creator of the Lorin Library *Smile Style Guide* and www.denturewearers.com. Dr. Berland can be reached at www.dallasdentalspa.com.



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the emerging markets because a lot of these companies come and go. When looking at purchasing expensive equipment, talk to users. Go to dental meetings and visit the booths. If you have your own office, they will come by and demo it. Compare the products and gather information.”

Dr. Berland urges new dentists to be their own worst critic rather than their biggest fan. “Be very critical of your work. We can always do better.” Moreover, Dr. Berland, who is a Fellow of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, recommends that dentists who want to expand cosmetic services should join the AACD.

Finally, Dr. Berland has this advice for every new dentist, “Introduce yourself to the established dentists in the area, and offer to take care of emergencies if they are out of town. Too many new doctors come to town, open their practices, and never make the effort to reach out to those dentists already well established in the community.” **END**



Website

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information that the search engines will find you, and avoid limiting information to just bullet points because

bullets alone reduce the chances that the search engines will find your site.

“For example, if we do a page on porcelain veneers, it will explain what they are, the reasons for getting porcelain veneers, and what is involved in getting them. You want to make sure that you are repeating the key words, so that it’s relevant to the search results, without overdoing it. About one to one-and-a-half pages of content per topic is good.” But Mr. McCollough urges dentists to use click through pages that give visitors the option of reading more by clicking on specific items on a list rather than large blocks of text, which will overwhelm the reader. “Remember, people want to skim and scan on the Internet.”

Be careful that content is not copyrighted. Mr. McCollough notes that some web designers who do general design work, don’t have content specific to dental practices. It is not uncommon for them to copy and paste from other sites. “We literally have thousands of people violating our intellectual copyright and we find them all the time.”

3 ‘Flash’y Can Stop Traffic

When it comes to the design of the site, Mr. McCollough cautions doctors not to use Flash based websites. “The problem is they are virtually invisible to search engines. Search engine robots cannot

read Flash because it is more of a photo than a document.” In addition, he emphasizes that Flash sites often are difficult to navigate. They may look slick, but they tend to be a hassle for users, and they take a long time to load, even with high-speed Internet connections, and many people will not wait.

He also encourages doctors to avoid music. “It’s annoying for the users. When the music starts, the user is looking for the off button.”

4 Keep the Clicks to the Point

As for navigation on the site, keep it consistent on every page. “This enables people to dig through your website and drill down to what they are looking for. If you make them work, they will leave your site and go to your competitor’s.” Mr. McCollough also urges doctors to avoid setting up vertical navigation buttons lined up along the left side. “We recommend horizontal navigation, and nest pages under a ‘parent’ page. For example, if you have multiple doctors, have one button that says ‘Our Practice’ and list the doctors giving visitors the option of clicking on a name to learn more. Limit naviga-

tion buttons to no more than two rows.”

5 Consider Cost and Maintenance

Today’s dentists should expect to get a very attractive website with excellent content that is easy to maintain for about \$2,500. “Our technology, which is database driven, enables us to create websites that have the look and feel of \$20,000 sites, but don’t cost \$20,000. And dentists have a much greater level of control allowing them to edit, change, delete, and do what they want with the site when they want. We have a website editor not a text editor, and there is a canyon between those two concepts,” explains Mr. McCollough.

In addition, ProSites allows dentists to take a “free test drive.” “Doctors can go to www.prosites.com and in less than five minutes they can build their website from our predesigned styles and see it right before their eyes before they ever spend a dime. They have total control, and we’ve removed the risk associated with creating a website. With ProSites, it’s point, click, launch,” says Mr. McCollough.

For additional information visit www.prosites.com. **END**

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