

approach are that financial rewards are either obtained at once or over a few years. This allows the seller to maximize after-tax outcomes through a custom-designed retirement plan structure. This includes capturing much of the value as goodwill and possibly employing a deferred sale arrangement. In addition, the seller is no longer responsible for the practice but receives value for a career of service to the community. Often the seller who remains as an employee can serve as a mentor to younger staff, help to retain patients, and encourage staff members to remain. The drawbacks of being an employee relate to the loss of power exerted as the owner and employer.

Walking away

Typically a dentist who sells a practice and sets up a succession plan so he or she can walk away does so within a year or so of the sale. These dentists reap the financial benefits in terms of tax savings and allocation of the selling price to goodwill. The downside is the emotional toll related to giving up the role that has defined their adulthood and moving into one that has much less prestige or commitment.

Ziliak R: Beyond the mass: Planning for a successful transition. *Dent Econ* 108:88-89, 2018

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DENTAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

DSOs—help or hindrance?



BACKGROUND

Dental support organizations (DSOs) contract with dental practices to provide many business management services and support duties so that dentists can concentrate on performing the clinical side of the practice. They are growing rapidly because they fill a desire that many dentists have to put aside the business aspects of dental practice, which is often the most disagreeable part of owning a solo dental practice. DSOs are seen both positively and negatively by dental practitioners.

ADVANTAGES

Most dentists don't enjoy the business aspects of running a dental practice and prefer to spend their time in clinical pursuits. A major role for DSOs is to reduce or eliminate the business and administrative duties associated with a solo dental practice. Although not all offer the same advantages, the leading DSOs offer many of the ones listed here.

- Enhance the balance between work and life.
- Reduce administrative responsibilities.
- Ensure the practice complies with all regulations.
- Handle insurance.
- Help with management tasks.
- Help with legal support.
- Negotiate better agreements with dental suppliers.
- Reduce frustration related to business situations.
- Create a professional community.
- Provide mentorship.
- Allow the dentist to focus on providing patient care.
- Provide access to up-to-date technology.
- Help in remaining current with the latest materials, devices, techniques, concepts, and political activities.
- Help new practices to get started.
- Facilitate exit strategies from the dental practice.

- Significantly help new dentists pay off school debt, build practice speed, increase diversity in procedures offered, and build self-confidence.
- Encourage and provide continuing education.
- Allow for better service to income-challenged patients.

DRAWBACKS

Dentists can also view DSOs negatively because of several factors. Most important is the lack of autonomy once a DSO takes over. Dental practitioners often choose their profession because of the independence they can have. DSOs have their own rules and regulations, so the dentist is no longer his or her own boss.

DSOs aren't all well-regarded with respect to their philosophy of success or business practices. Some have the reputation that they focus solely on money, set quotas for treatment, or engage in questionable business dealings. In addition, many dentists still have a negative opinion of the DSO concept itself.

Some specific problems related to DSOs involve dissolving the contract and dealing with fellow practitioners. Some DSO contracts can make it very difficult to leave the arrangement when the practitioner believes it is unfair. Some DSOs believe the practitioners are being unfair. Negotiations are needed to resolve

Clinical Significance

DSOs are part of the dental practice environment and are likely to remain in place. It's therefore important that private practice dentists learn to work with them with the goal of providing the best clinical care and dental practice experience for their patients.

these conflicts. In addition, fellow practitioners may see the corporate practice as straining their practices' ability to survive in a certain area. They see the DSO as promoting unfair competition and offering advantages that aren't available to a solo practice.

DENTISTS WHO CHOOSE DSOs

Millennials have characteristics that seem to make DSOs particularly attractive to them. These include a desire for an excellent work-life balance, enhanced ability to be technically savvy, their view of themselves as global citizens, the value they place on being

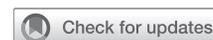
authentic and transparent, their liberal and progressive bent, their participation in team efforts, and their civic orientation. Thus, millennials are more likely to view DSOs as a positive choice that will fit with their lifestyles and values.

Christensen GJ: The cons and pros of DSOs: Are dental support organizations good or bad for dentistry? *Dentaltown*, June 2018, pp 54-56, 58, 2018

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DENTAL TEAMS

Joining professional organizations



BACKGROUND

The sense of belonging is often first experienced through family, but other group experiences also provide the sense of identifying with others in terms of shared beliefs, values, and ideas. The experience of belonging along with its benefits for individuals as well as professions and society at large was investigated.

MEETING THE NEED FOR BELONGING

Sociologically speaking, the sense of belonging is informed by a collective consciousness that holds society together. The group exists because individuals share a sense of solidarity with one another. This sense can be based on beliefs, status in life, or professional interests, as well as many other intangible values.

Nursing professionals have been studied to determine the characteristics of those who join professional associations and those who do not. Significant differences were found between members and nonmembers, with members tending to have a more advanced educational level, a higher income, higher levels of positive professional values, and increased positive attitudes toward work compared to nonmembers. Membership brings a sense of belonging, support, and even prestige.

FINDING THE RIGHT GROUP

Groups exist in many professions and share certain characteristics. Often there is a dues fee, and the organization has a fiduciary responsibility to use the accrued funds to serve the interests of the group and must account for the funds to its members. Officers are often selected to lead the group and provide information to the membership.

The types of groups that can be joined differ, with some being associations, some societies, and some academies. In an association, the members have a common purpose and formal structure.

Often the definition of an association is set by state law. Societies are organized groups of people who come together based on shared religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes. These voluntary associations are seeking common goals, particularly when the reason for joining is a shared interest, belief, or profession. An academy is an organization that supports art, literature, science, or advances these pursuits. It is often less politically motivated than associations and societies. Online communities are also organizations that can be helpful in supporting a sense of belonging.

DISCUSSION

Joining a group can further your commitment to building and maintaining positive relationships between members of the dental community. Having others to work with can strengthen the quality of the profession as well as build individual values among its members.

Clinical Significance

Belonging is an important part of the human experience. When individuals share common interests and goals, they can often achieve more than an unaffiliated individual can. Finding the right organization requires that you look for groups that share your interests and aspires to advance the profession or society through effective leadership and group achievements. The benefits of belonging can be life changing.

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