



# Client Case Studies



**PRIME PRACTICE**  
The Dental Management Specialists



How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

**Dr Zhang:** I previously worked for another practice and observed the changes once Prime Practice were engaged to help them. When I bought my own practice, I tried to implement all the changes I could remember from my previous practice, but eventually realised we would be better off if we engaged Prime Practice too. We started working with Prime 2.5 years ago in March 2013.

How has your practice changed in the years?

**Dr Zhang:** A lot has changed, but there has been a massive shift in our communication. We are much better at keeping and building relationships with our patients. We truly listen to them and show an interest in them as people, not just patients. As a dentist, I have learnt how to express the treatment options to patients better and the whole team is able to support the patients in their decisions. The team have had training so they can also understand the importance of treatment and can support me in what I am proposing.

We also have much better systems in place with booking patients in and booking in recall, which keeps our business going.

Another change that has happened is that we have consolidated two practices into the one. We are seeing big increases in busy-ness and are exceeding our goals.

A lot has changed, but there has been a massive shift in our communication.

We had to deal with a number of unhappy customers with the closing down of one practice, but with the help of our coach, Prime Practice and support of the team, we have managed to keep most of our patients and integrated our key team members in the new practice.

We are seeing big increases in busy-ness and are exceeding our goals.

**Amy:** I started out as Dr Zhang's assistant. From what I could see, we weren't engaging with the patients much, but just fixing the presenting problems. I can see such positive outcomes from working with Prime Practice since we started. The dentists are much more confident to present treatment to the patients without judging them. They are no longer selling the treatment to the patients rather treating patients as if it were their mouth. If patients can't afford the treatment, we know how to support them.

**Amy,** I understand you are now the practice manager and undertaking practice management training with Prime Practice.

**Amy:** Yes, I am doing the Practice Manager Program. I am learning loads about myself and how to deal with people who have different personalities. I am learning how to lead the team and am finding my feet in the new management role.

How would you describe the impact of your Prime Practice coach on your development/evolution as a successful practice manager?

**Amy:** It's great to have the support of my coach who is very experienced and always helping me point my energies in the right direction. If I am ever feeling unsure about anything or

If I am ever feeling unsure about anything or have questions, I know I can always run through things with my coach first.

have questions, I know I can always run things through with my coach first. My being in this new role definitely frees up Dr Zhang's time so he can focus on other things.

The team and I also get a lot from watching the Prime online videos and from attending workshops. Our coach helps me guide the team in implementing all the systems we learn at workshops and through the videos.

How would you say being a 'Prime' practice sets you apart from other dental practices?

**Amy:** Other than the communication skills and confidence that the dentists now have, as a team, we are communicating much better. There are a number of things that have really helped us:

– We are really enjoying our morning huddles as this is where we learn what is expected of us throughout the day. As a team we delegate tasks on a daily basis at the huddle and we all know what is achievable as we discuss it in the huddle. This could be things like 'dentist needs to run on time as has another patient after hours', or 'medical history needs to be updated' etc. We also collect information from patients and pass this around and use this to build our relationships with the patients and help them to feel known. We really listen to our patients and allow them to share stories with us. Just yesterday a patient said this was why she kept coming to us. She said it felt like we 'got' her and as a result, she was sending her husband too! Getting this system implemented throughout the practice has taken time, but we see the benefits of this on a daily basis.

...as a team, we are communicating much better



- From the initial phone call with a patient, we are able to build trust and nurture the relationship. Developing our telephone skills has definitely been beneficial for us.
- Having set systems for most tasks eg: recall has dramatically improved the day-to-day running of our practice.

Being a "Prime" Practice has really benefited our practice and we are always learning and trying to improve things. I can definitely see such an improvement since I first started working at this practice 3 years ago in all aspects. I have been in the dental industry for about 11 years and this is the second 'Prime' practice I have worked in. I can honestly say that Prime is the best thing that could have happened to our practice. We have all grown and continue to grow further.



How long ago were you introduced to Prime Practice?

Just over one year ago, I was talking to our account manager at Henry Schein and they suggested I attend the 1 1/2 day Practice Owner's Workshop. I really liked what I saw. I learned techniques on how to deal with staff and how to have patients that are more loyal and remain with you in your practice. This is the stuff you just don't learn at dental school. I have done lots of clinical seminars in my years of practicing, but never anything on how to run a dental practice. I knew we were going to grow our business quickly given the number of patients that were coming in and I wanted to open another practice too, so I went along to see if Prime Practice could help us on our journey. And I am so glad that I did.

**This is the stuff you just don't learn at dental school.**

What has changed since joining?

The structure of the practice has changed in so many ways. We have systems and procedures in place to make everyone's jobs easier on a day to day basis. I have appointed one of the team members to be our practice manager and she is key to ensuring jobs get completed. My overall communication with the team has improved, so I am able to delegate more and this makes everyone feel better about their jobs. Because I have less on my plate and my team is more responsible and motivated, I no longer feel that I am the only one thinking about the practice.

Prior to Prime Practice, communications with the team would be very casual and random and done in between patients with no agenda and no follow up. Eventually things got done but now, with our regular team meetings, communication is more formal and things get done more efficiently and effectively.

**...communication is more formal and things get done more efficiently and effectively.**

How do you make use of the Prime Engine?

We use the Prime Engine for our team meetings. We will watch some of the video content and take-away nuggets of information to help the team improve. I also use the Engine to track daily production. I love numbers and seeing what is going on, it's not about the money; it's about seeing trends. Now that we have a new employee dentist and hygienist, it is good to understand how they are producing too. When things are down, you can see exactly where you need to take action.

How do you think Prime Practice has helped you with setting up a new practice?

Prime definitely helped with implementing systems early on in the piece before we started the new practice. As a result, the transition has been a lot easier. Most of the team work on both sites, so it is easy because the systems are almost identical. They can see both practices and recognise things that need to be improved in the different places.

**I love numbers and seeing what is going on, it's not about the money; it's about seeing trends.**

How do you think Primespeak has impacted your business?

I did Primespeak in August last year. I definitely took away some pointers on how to express treatment differently and sometimes take a different approach. I definitely have more confidence to present the ideal treatment options to my

patients and as a result, I have increased the amount of high end dentistry procedures that I am doing.



How are you finding the coaching experience?

My coach and I have a really good relationship. We have regular contact when needed and he is great at giving me lots of insights into my practice.

For example, I have just put on a new dentist and hygienist in the last few weeks. It's clearly early on, but they are already doing full days. My coach was integral in helping me to move patients from me to the hygienist or new dentist. I was given a checklist on how to do it and now it is easy.

He understands my view of my practice and is a great support to have. I have never had a coach in dentistry, but because I was always involved in a lot of sports, I have learnt how to trust, listen and do what the coach says to help me achieve my goals. It has been working the same way.

If not for Prime Practice, where do you think your new practice be?

I think I would be divorced by now and paying lots of child support! We had a 3 year old and a newborn when we decided to buy the second practice, so it was all hands on deck at a really stressful time in life. My wife is a dentist too and has taken on board all that Prime Practice has to offer. We would have really struggled without the systems and having the team fully on board.

**Learning to delegate was a big thing.**

Learning to delegate was a big thing. Once I was able to let go of things that could be done by someone else, it has freed up a lot of my time. I was doing too much clinical and managerial work and was up every night until 11pm. Now, thanks to all the new systems, I can leave work at a reasonable hour and come home and enjoy time with my young family.

**I have never had a coach in dentistry, but because I was always involved in a lot of sports, I have learnt how to trust, listen and do what the coach says to help me achieve my goals.**



How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

I had been working in a number of smaller practices following graduation and started working with Agim at First Bite in 2008. Agim had just started with Prime Practice then, so I was lucky enough to be there from the very beginning. I was able to observe all the systems and protocols being implemented and watch our practice evolve in every way.

What was the biggest difference between your previous practices to one working with Prime Practice?

There is a much smoother work flow, interruptions to the ideal day are less frequent and the team is a lot calmer. On top of this, we run in self managed teams in charge of various aspects of the practice, which empowers and motivates each team member, leading to even less stress for the practice owner. I found the workflow much more haphazard in other practices and this can be stressful to deal with on a daily basis.

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Why Prime Practice?

Agim had always been looking for a ‘partner’ who would be able to help him expand the practice and be able to work well within our practice. Prime Practice has provided this support for the last 7 years and our figures have been increasing year

after year. We have been able to grow from a one dentist, 2 hygienist practice, to a team of 18 staff which include 3 dentists, a hygienist and a therapist.

I bought into First Bite in 2013. I initially looked into buying other practices. Knowing Prime Practice as I did, I attended their “Buying or Setting Up a Dental Practice” course, as well as their “Practice Owner’s Workshop” course to get some insights. Both of these courses gave me valuable information on what it would be like to buy a practice and transition to a practice owner. Prime has been fundamental in helping me transition from employee to partner, from dentist to leader.

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What is the biggest thing that has changed since joining Prime Practice?

Prime Practice has taught us how to communicate and solve problems within our team. The appointment book is running smoother, the staff are managing their time better, and everyone has responsibility for their tasks. This creates a healthy working environment where staff are empowered. This has contributed to our continuing growth.

Prime Practice has taught us how to communicate and solve problems within our team.

What has been the most impactful workshop that your practice has undertaken?

After completing the Practice Management Program, we graduated to the Masters Program, and have been a part of this program each year ever since. The latest Team Masters Workshop was a few months ago and was the most impactful. It really brought all of the concepts from all the past workshops together. From phone skills and scheduling to communication skills and management of staff as well as dealing with issues that come up. Everything was covered! We all gained a lot from this.



Have you completed Primespeak? What were the impacts of this course?

The first time I did Primespeak was five years ago. It was akin to doing an Anthony Robbins seminar... I got so much out of it and took a lot of the skills home with me. Interactions with patients as well as in my personal life totally changed. It removes the sales agenda from treatment planning, and allows for an open and honest conversation with our patients

I had already been working as a dentist for 2-3 years before doing Primespeak and noticed the shift in my attitude. The great thing with Prime Practice is that we track everything, so I could see my case acceptance increase drastically. And we have been doing the Primespeak Seminar every year since. There is always something new that we learn each year.



How have you found the coaching experience?

My coach is our key motivator. Together we deal with communication barriers and team issues, we analyse our numbers, expenses and reports. Having a coach is absolutely essential to pushing yourself one step further.

My coach is our key motivator.

How does your practice use the engine?

The Prime Practice Engine is being used on a daily basis. We use it as a tool for us to communicate with all our team, as we work different hours. The team can log onto the engine, send emails, allocate training to watch and tasks to each team member. It makes communication easier in that sense. Everything is monitored and tracked and checked off. All of our daily huddles and team meetings go up on the Prime Engine and some of these are recorded and uploaded if team members miss out.

Have these changes affected your life outside of work?

Definitely. The management skills learnt transfers to our personal life and gives us a more structured way to deal with the world, which means you can actually get more done.

“ If Agim and myself are not around, we know that the systems are all in place for the practice to almost run itself. ”



### How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

It's a long story... The second employer I ever had was involved with Prime Practice, so I was introduced to the concept of practice management fairly early in my career. You could say I started being primed with workshops, pre-blocking and scheduling from about 2003.

My career as an employee dentist involved working for two Prime Practices before I eventually transitioned into (with the help of Dr Phillip Palmer and his transitioning program) owning a practice in Helensvale in 2010, which was also a Prime Practice.

I now own my own practice, whose doors opened on March 2 this year.

### Was there a difference between working at a Prime Practice and not?

Definitely! As an employee dentist, I worked for 2 non-Prime Practices and 3 Prime Practices. The differences were huge and after having worked at just one Prime Practice, I then actively sought out employers who worked with Prime. For 2 reasons:

1) I liked the appointment book systems which ensures some level of productivity and predictability in each day.

Learning these skills has been very challenging and rewarding.

2) In Prime Practices, it seemed that the team knew what they were doing. As a dentist, it takes a load off your shoulders as you feel more supported and relaxed knowing that the team has everything under control and you can focus on the dentistry.

### How is your new practice going?

Honestly, it was quite nerve wracking at first... even though my existing patients came with me to my new practice, it was still a new venture and I had never ran a practice on my own. But now, 6-7 months on, we are in a good place. We have just added an ED 2 days a week, we have an increasing number of hygiene patients and new patient numbers are also steady.

### How are you finding the Prime Practice Engine and numbers tracking?

As a dentist, you are never told the ins and outs of running a business and as a result I never enjoyed these things. But now as a business owner, I need to track numbers and really stay on top of my business to make sure I know what's going on. Learning these skills has been very challenging and rewarding. The Prime Practice Engine and numbers tracking has helped a novice to understand the workings of their business.

### How do you think Prime Practice has helped you with setting up a new practice?

- I re-joined Prime Practice as soon as I opened the doors to my new practice realising that to implement systems and train new staff members (there was going to be 3 new team members), Prime Practice was going to be essential in order to:
- 1) Help set up the systems in my practice
  - 2) Train my new team to provide excellence service
  - 3) Keep me on track

Prime has definitely helped to achieve these goals. We are doing really well. We have attended workshops and our team

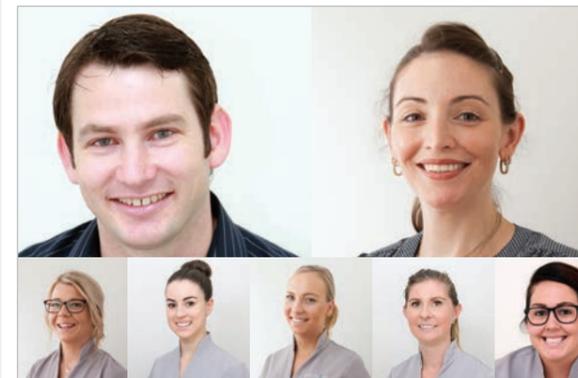
It is honestly the single most significant thing that has happened in my dental career...

is really solid. We have spent a lot of time and effort getting them on board with all the systems.

Our team are constantly seeking ways to improve. It is time consuming and hard work to get the practice running like a well-oiled machine, but month by month, we are looking at different aspects of the patient experience to make sure it is a smooth one.

Our new DA and dentist actually just attended Primespeak, and it is great to have them totally on board and ready to work together with my team.

Prime has definitely helped to achieve these goals. We are doing really well.



### Speaking of Primespeak, has this course had an impact on your business?

I did Primespeak first in 2006 in Sydney. 9 years on, what it has done is it has allowed me to have good relationships with patients and allowed me to do good dentistry. It is honestly the single most significant thing that has happened in my dental career and has paved the way that I do dentistry. I am able to practice dentistry well, and complete high end dentistry while preserving all the relationships with my patients.

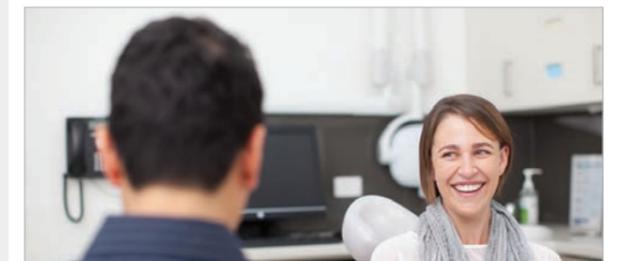
### How are you finding the coaching experience?

My coach is a good sounding board. My coach and I work out monthly action plans which help me get things done and completed. Being in a new practice, there are lots of things that need to be done on a daily basis and things can easily slip between the cracks. My coach is able to see the bigger picture, point out any gaps in my plans and make sure I am always kept to task.

### If not for Prime Practice, where do you think your new practice be?

I did say to Phillip some years ago, I just don't know how to run a practice without the Prime Practice systems. Clinical dentistry and the running of the practice are pretty much opposite roles, so it is good to have help with the business side.

Because of Prime, I can't see any other way of running a practice.



I feel very fortunate to have come across Prime Practice when I did. I never anticipated doing anything like this, but am glad to have been able to see how a good practice can be run and know what I need to do to achieve it.

How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

I did do a course in Perth a long time ago with Phillip (Dr Phillip Palmer) presenting. It was an introductory course to Prime Practice and I was really impressed by what they had to say and the depth of their knowledge, especially with regards to communication and the Primespeak concept. At the time, I was a partner in the practice but going through a buy-out process with an existing partner. I had a good chat to Phillip at that time and he gave me some great advice and invited me to join Prime Practice at some stage. I felt aligned with Prime from then and signed up with Prime Practice soon after. I have been working with them for 3-3.5 years, have graduated from the Management Program and am now in their Masters Program.

I found myself as the sole owner of quite a large dental practice. I was feeling pretty overwhelmed...

What was the motivation?

I had bought into my practice back in 1997 and gradually the senior partners moved on or retired and in 2007, I found myself as the sole owner of quite a large dental practice. I was feeling pretty overwhelmed. The concept Prime was pitching to me of having a self-managed team was really appealing, but I realised that first I needed to improve where we were and our communication as a team. I wanted to put my own stamp on the business and at the time I thought Prime would be a good avenue to help me achieve my goals. We have 4 dentists, 2 hygienists, 1 OHT, 2 front office, a Practice Manager and 6-7 rotating DAs, so I wanted some support with keeping everyone on track.

Have you grown since Prime Practice were engaged to help?

In the intervening years, we have had steady progress and grown. We have bettered and refined our systems and improved the way we control our appointment book and how we communicate. We are also looking to have another dentist and perhaps hygienist join us. We are in a healthy position now

and are currently in the process of building some exciting, long awaited practice renovations.

Prime and my coach have made the concept of something like a renovation much less intimidating. When you structure it, build it into your annual plan, analyse the finances appropriately and have someone to support you, you become less wary about growing.

How else has your coach helped you?

My coach has helped me improve my leadership skills and the confidence to put everything in place with my team.

I have a great relationship with my coach. He has a good understanding of how I work and can objectively point things out to me that I don't see. He can support me through the tricky things that come up along the way and makes sure I am always on track to achieve my goals and don't procrastinate.

What is the most important thing that Prime has taught you?

I was talking to one of my associate dentists the other day and I said that when I first embarked on the program, there were all these different concepts which were foreign, but then by the end of the Program, you have really rewired the way you think. And the best thing is that these messages are constantly reinforced in the team workshops, so we are all on the same page.

My coach has helped me improve my leadership skills and the confidence to put everything in place with my team.

One of the key things I have learnt and has been reinforced is that empathy is a powerful tool. I am generally pretty impulsive, so now when I am faced with tricky situations, I always try and understand where other people are coming from. We have instilled this in our team too- and I feel this is a really important step for team cohesion.

The team workshops have been fantastic. We have learnt and grown so much as a team. Hearing the way the team talk to each other, the growth is evident... and this tone is passed on to our patients in the way we communicate with them. And patients can really feel that.

The team workshops have been fantastic. We have learnt and grown so much as a team.

As a matter of fact, all of the Prime Practice workshops have been great. The entire Prime team are so well-trained in the Prime concepts so all workshops are easy to digest and take back to the practice. Another great thing about workshops is that you come into contact with other like-minded dental practitioners which has allowed us to build solid friendships and share stories and learn from other practices which has been rewarding and motivational.

Are you achieving your goals?

I feel confident that I have a great team in place and can go away and the practice will remain focussed. To a large extent I have comfort that my team focus on the common good. There are always little things to improve, but we are definitely getting there.



But there is still potential and room to grow. At our last workshop we did an exercise called Shark Tank and I was so proud of the team. The energy, ideas and drive they all have to improve the practice and the motivation we got from the workshop gave us many ideas to take back to the practice.

I initially engaged Prime Practice to see what I could achieve from the Management Program. We achieved a lot and I have stayed on board with the Masters Program for the ongoing support for the team and the business in helping us continue moving forward and keep us on track.

Prime has so many great tools available. And while our practice is growing, Prime is growing too. It is obvious that Prime is always changing things so they can better support us. There is now Recruitment and Marketing. There always seems to be new things available to us, which is pleasing as a client.



How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

My uncle is a dentist who did the Masters Program with Prime Practice. While I was still at dental school, I came along to a few workshops which planted a seed for me.

After I bought my own practice, I saw Dr Michael Sernik do Primespeak Seminar and that was the clincher for me. It was really, really good. I got on board about 6 years ago as a client and have been with Prime since then.

While I was still at dental school, I came along to a few workshops which planted a seed for me.

What has changed in your practice?

When I bought my practice, I started off doing 2 days a week, and now, 6 years on, I have 4 clinicians working full time in my practice.

We have just moved from a small house in St Lucia to a brand new purpose built practice just 10 weeks ago.

How did you get to this point?

I have worked incredibly hard to get to this point. With the help of Prime, I have systemised my whole practice so it works for us. Most goings-on have been regimented. Prime has definitely benefited me in getting a greater understanding of my practice and how everything is run.

I see Prime Practice as a lifestyle management program. You get the tools to put in the right systems so you can enjoy your life outside dentistry. Life isn't all about work! I have great people around me, so I am able to take time off. The systems have created a solid foundation for the team to work from.

How has the coaching experience been?

My Prime coaches have been fantastic. Having someone to run things over with and someone support me through my business decisions has been the best thing Prime has given me.

Has your team changed much over the years?

Yes! Our core team have been fairly consistent, but we have a team of 15 auxiliaries, located right next to a university, so yeah, people move on. The great thing is that the base is strong and the systems are strong, so it's relatively easy for someone to come in and take on work.



What else have you gained from being in the Prime Program?

The workshops have also been great to get the team on-board. They get to see how a great practice should be run and they get a better understanding of where I want to take the practice and why. We actually have a workshop next week with the team.

Prime have also helped us to orchestrate a really efficient recall system. Without these, I reckon you don't have a pulse...



How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

Ever since I graduated, I have worked in a practice that was working with Prime Practice. And when I spoke to my uni colleagues, I realised that in the practices they were working in there were all sorts of issues that I hadn't seen: including scheduling, staffing and upset with the dental industry.

When I bought my practice, I felt I needed to know the fundamentals of running a successful practice, so I went along to the Practice Owner's Workshop.

I felt I needed to know the fundamentals of running a successful practice

What has changed?

My leadership skills are different and better. My team is a lot more independent and self-directed. To the point where they know when they need to include me in decisions and when they don't. This has certainly helped me to maintain a good work life balance. So when I walk out the door, I don't need to be working out of hours. I can truly be away from the office.

What is your most important leadership tool?

Having the trust in the team I employ that they can accomplish the tasks they are set and I don't have to be responsible for everything.

Has your team changed?

Thankfully, my team has largely stayed the same. We have expanded slightly and have had a few pregnancies along the way, but otherwise we have all the same people I started Prime with. Individually, they have all gained confidence with their skills and added new dimensions to their roles. I think they enjoy having a greater role in the operations of a practice.

What has been your biggest achievement since starting your own practice?

My biggest achievement is not letting my work consume everything. That is really important when you own a dental practice and many of my uni colleagues have spoken about this. I am able to spend time with my family and know things will be moving forward in the business.

Having a good team is a priority and if they understand their roles and jobs. With systems in place, they can work independently.

Having a good team is a priority and if they understand their roles and jobs, with systems in place, they can work independently. This has also been a great achievement – to have a consistent team.

How have you found the coaching experience?

It is good to have that person to report in to to have that sense of responsibility. I have found it really motivating to have someone else to answer to. My coach has done a terrific job of moving me in directions I needed to go. Take marketing for example, I was initially very reluctant, but in the last few months, I have found myself doing things I wouldn't have even touched in the past because I wasn't comfortable and didn't know how. She has coached me up to it to explore those opportunities with good results so far.





How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

Back in 1999, my accountant recommended that I go and talk to Prime Practice as I was having trouble controlling my expenses and running the business. I have been a Prime Practice client on and off ever since then – for nearly 15 years! We have taken a couple of breaks over the years. At one point we stopped for about 5 years, but little by little, everything slipped. We had lost our cohesiveness and edge. Our systems fell back and became eroded and we rejoined.



What has changed?

Now, I actually understand what my business is and what my role is. One of the interesting things is back when I joined Prime Practice I didn't really want to run the business, but wanted to give myself the space to practice dentistry. It has taken me 10 years to realise that I actually enjoy running the business! We have systems to make life more comfortable and my days are lovely! As we have pre-blocks, I am able to do the 'easier' things when I want and 'harder' things when I want. When we get the very odd scrabbly day due to cancellations or something, it is terrible. I can't imagine what work would be like with more of them! I am also a lot better at being consistent with my team: we have proper staff meetings and communication is much easier. Had I not joined Prime Practice when I did, I would have literally worked myself to death. When I joined, I thought working lots of days and hours was a good plan. I got to the stage where I was giving everything to everybody and keeping nothing to myself. I was working harder and harder but take-home was getting lower – if someone looked at me the wrong way, I would give them a discount. It was not sustainable.

Now, I actually understand what my business is and what my role is.

What is the biggest thing that changed?

The biggest shift has been realising that I have to run the business and becoming comfortable with it. I was terribly afraid of it initially, but I have really overcome this mindset. I am working towards having a self-managed team. If you would have said that to me ten years ago...I would have laughed... Also, we have grown from a one dentist practice with a couple of team members to 3 dentists, 2 hygienists and a total of 12 team members with 4 surgeries. Sure, I would have grown to some extent, but not to this level and being ok with it.

How have you found the coaching experience?

I love the coaching. I have had a total of 3 coaches in the last 10 years. They have all been different and helped me at different points in my journey. My last coach taught me how to mindmap and I have found that really helpful in keeping a balanced view of the problem at hand. My latest coach has been helpful with all my recent staffing decisions I have had to make and execute. I had to retrench a team member which was quite challenging. She is helping me to make the hard decisions and not be scared of executing them. My coaches have evolved as my needs have.

How has Primespeak helped you?

It has taught me not to be nervous to talk about money with patients. But the biggest thing is mentoring new dentists with Primespeak and watching their figures go up as they start using Primespeak.

Have these changes affected your life outside of work?

Outside of work, I give myself more time and have more time. When I initially joined Prime Practice all those years ago, I soon found out I was pregnant. My team were taken on the Prime Practice journey in as much as I was in my part-time capacity. My team actually put in place all the systems which was amazing!

As I have a bit more space in my life, I have started studying sedation and getting other dentists onboard to do the other dentistry. So I am spending less time in the office and not worrying (most of the time).

Outside of work, I give myself more time and have more time.



How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

I had just taken over an old practice and I was stressed and felt I had no one to show me how to run my ideal practice. I spoke with a friend, who is also a Prime Practice client, about my concerns and he suggested that if I speak to Prime Practice, my stress will be alleviated. So I decided to go to the Practice Owner's Workshop.



What was the impact of Practice Owner's Workshop?

It opened my eyes to the fact that I really didn't know a lot about running a practice.

It opened my eyes to the fact that I really didn't know a lot about running a practice.

Prime Practice presented a lot of great ideas and gave me some hope that my ideal practice was achievable. After this workshop, I was left wanting more... so I joined the Practice Management Program to learn as much as I could.

What has changed?

One and a half years ago when I opened, my practice had one chair. I now have 3 chairs and a hygienist. I wouldn't have even dreamed that I could do this myself, but the guidance from Prime Practice and my coach has really helped me.

What's the biggest thing you have learnt?

I think the key for me has been improving my communication skills, with both my patients and my team. Leadership skills has been a big one. Every time I go to a workshop, there is something new that I have gained.

I have done Primespeak once, but I know I will be doing it again soon. It has been so helpful for me! Not only have I become a better dentist, guiding the patients to the optimum treatment that I think they deserve, but Primespeak has also helped me with communication out of the office. Not to mention the improvements to the bottom line.

How have you found the coaching experience?

The coaching has been great. I don't think I would be able to reach my goals without guidance from my coach. She helps me look into my numbers and coaches my practice manager too so we work really well together. We are always accountable to someone and to each other and we know there is someone looking over our shoulders to make sure we achieve our goals.

Have these changes affected your life outside of work?

The information I learnt at uni and the experience I had received by working for others really didn't prepare me for owning or running my own practice. Now that everything is under control and running properly, I don't have to worry too much when I am at home.

The information I learnt at uni and the experience I had received by working for others really didn't prepare me for owning or running my own practice.

Basically I have less stress when I'm out of the office and when I am in the office, I can focus more on dentistry and trust everyone else to do their jobs.

All of that in a year and a half.



Chinchilla Dental is a rural practice that has been a Prime Practice client for the last 10 years. Dr Don Clarke is the original owner and Dr Gina Irwin bought into the practice 18 months ago.

### Why did you join Prime Practice?

**Dr Clarke:** The practice was very hectic, busy and disorganised. A lot of patch-up dentistry with no real appointment book. When someone walked in the door, we would see them. We had no pattern financially and just winged it. We couldn't measure anything. In hindsight, it's actually pretty embarrassing.

**Our appointment book was controlling the practice and our everyday.**

**Dr Irwin:** Our appointment book was controlling the practice and our every day. We had lots of people squeezed in, with no consistency regarding production. We also didn't really understand the financials involved with running a practice and what was considered normal.

### How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

**Dr Clarke:** A colleague of mine recommended it based on the problems we were having in the practice and it sounded like exactly what we needed. So, we came down to Sydney to do the Practice Owner's Workshop and found Dr Palmer very inspiring and everything he was saying made a lot of sense. I really liked the fact that he was a dentist and I thought if we managed to get our practice to the level Phillip was talking about, we would be happy.

### What has changed since Prime Practice?

**Dr Irwin:** I have been at Chinchilla Dental for 15 years and was working there for 5 years before Prime Practice were brought on to help us. At that stage there was just the two overworked dentists Donald and myself. We have grown to become a very busy rural practice with 3 dentists and a hygienist, requiring major extension of our current building. Our first hygienist was brought on 9 years ago on the advice of Prime Practice and we haven't looked back from it. It has been great to watch our patients develop a trusting relationship with another person at the practice as well as the dentist - the patients come back and see the hygienist to actively maintain their teeth, which has freed up time for the operators to do the more productive work.

**We try to be more organised. We have a financial plan, which has given us great guidelines for the year and our appointment book looks a lot more structured.**

**Dr Clarke:** We try to be more organised. We have a financial plan, which has given us great guidelines for the year and our appointment book looks a lot more structured. We also have an annual plan and operating statement, from a financial point of view. From a team perspective, we pay much more attention to HR, including having regular meetings with key staff members. As a result they are much more engaged and we are made aware of most things that are happening most of the time. They even independently run different committees on a rotating basis for example the Ordering Committee and the Maintenance Committee, so we know everything is covered and they get trained in different aspects of the practice. We are lucky that we have been able to create a real sense of community

**From a team perspective, we pay much more attention to HR, including having regular meetings with key staff members.**

around our practice which is also important in a rural setting. We have an LED Community Noticeboard outside our practice which is free to be used for any upcoming local events and we are regularly involved in community causes such as sponsorship of a Show Society Art Prize, an Anzac day youth art prize, sponsoring a local school Bull Ride event this year and of course entering a float at the biannual Chinchilla Melon Festival (we have won most humorous float on two separate occasions! – Austin Powers theme this year and Tooth Fairies a few years ago). The team all love wearing their custom tee 'uniform' to and from work on a daily basis.

### What is the biggest thing that changed?

**Dr Irwin:** We have more consistency in our days with more ideal days and more consistent production. And less stress. We have also empowered the team so they can communicate with people as well, which helps build the team's capability, gives more team stability and takes some of the stress off the dentists' shoulders. Don and I really complement each other and work together along with our team to deliver the ultimate experience to our patients. Primespeak has also helped as we can now communicate effectively without getting the patients offside, but still diagnosing appropriately.

**We have more consistency in our days with more ideal days and more consistent production.**

### How have you found the coaching experience?

**Dr Irwin:** I have been coached for 12 months. It really helps keep you on track and to be more accountable. It's all a matter of following through on what your goals are and what you will do about achieving them. I am blown away by my coach's ability to communicate things effectively. When I have an

issue with staff, she can come up with a way to communicate it that allows the staff member to solve it themselves instead of us telling them what we think. This has given us a lot more stability with our staff in the last two years because they feel empowered, rewarded and appreciated. Maintaining current staff has been an issue in the past particularly with keeping young people in a rural setting.

**Dr Clarke:** Coaching has been very good as it keeps you on track. Being the type of person I am, I find it a bit daunting sometimes, but it makes me more aware of my failings and shortcomings and to stop being embarrassed by them and start working with them.

### Have these changes affected your life outside of work?

**Dr Clarke:** Not having to worry about the practice constantly has been a huge relief. I had to take off an extended period of time a few years ago and the team managed to keep the practice going without me. That gave me huge peace of mind.

“Having all the structures in place means I can get on with other aspects of my life without constantly worrying about everything going on in the practice. And because the team knows what they are doing, you don't worry so much.”



How and when were you introduced to Prime Practice?

I came to New Zealand with my young family and not long after started my practice in 2000.

I had a practice manager in 2004 who came on board and to be honest we were struggling. We needed help and after some research she came to me with the idea of getting help from Prime Practice. It took me a year or two to decide what to do... Dentistry is a really stressful job and without the support of Prime Practice I don't believe I would be where I am today. Looking back at the systems and procedures I used before I worked with Prime Practice scares me! Fast forward nearly 11 years and I am so glad I made the decision to work with Prime.

How does the number tracking in the Prime engine help you?

I find the number tracking keeps us on track as a team. Each of the clinicians are responsible for entering their own numbers daily so they know exactly where they are at and can take responsibility for their work. The data that is stored is great and seeing each clinician's productivity really helps them to see the goal.

How do you find having a coach?

I've been working with my current coach for about 5 years now and he is great at keeping me and the team on track. We have one coaching call a month scheduled but he is always available for us to call if a problem arises. In fact, sometimes I feel like I need more time with him because he can often see things

I don't. It's a fresh approach to running the business. It is also really good for my team to have a coach to rely on. I encourage my team to contact our coach if they have any issues or ideas - it helps with development of each of the team members. I don't want my team to think that just because I am the boss, they have to do things exactly the way I do - I want them to have the freedom to make their own decisions and make things work for them. That's where my coach helps.

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What would you say to someone thinking about joining Prime Practice?

Start today. The earlier you start, the more you will enjoy coming to work and doing the dentistry. Without systems in your dental practice, things will drag you down. I think it's worth starting with Prime Practice from the beginning of your career to cement good business habits early. This has been the most beneficial part for me.

I actually met another dentist recently in Sydney at a conference and we started talking. I could tell from how he was talking that he was struggling and he was interested in how I was running my practice. I told him about Prime Practice and how they had helped me build the successful practice I have today. I referred him because I know it works; he asked me 'does it work?' and I said 'Look at my practice, yes it works'.

I referred him because I know it works; he asked me 'does it work?' and I said 'Look at my practice, yes it works'.

You've attended several workshops; which ones do you like best?

I think I have attended Primespeak 4 or 5 times. Again, it's about the habits. Although they definitely should, dental schools don't teach us these things. Patient communication is not something that we graduate knowing. I think dental students should be attending workshops like Primespeak Seminar so they can understand aspects of the non-clinical side of dentistry early on. You might have to attend a couple of times, it doesn't just happen after

Patient communication is not something that we graduate knowing.



one visit, but each time you will learn more and because of the different people in the seminar each time, you always take back a different way of doing things.

I also like the team building workshops. I find they are a really great way to recharge and get out of the practice as a team. We get to know each other better and ensure we are all on the same page. I want my staff to know that I am open to their ideas and encourage them to help me continue to build the practice rather than just come to work.

I want my staff to know that I am open to their ideas and encourage them to help me continue to build the practice rather than just come to work.

When I started the business it was just me and now I have both my sons working as dentists at the practice. It's working because we all work together. Now my grandson comes to visit the clinic and he loves it, maybe there's a third generation of dentists in the family.

When I started the business it was just me and now I have both my sons working as dentists at the practice. It's working because we all work together.



How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

We came out to Australia in 2008 as sponsored dentists for DJS and were invited to attend any Prime Practice workshop as part of our training. I did Primespeak and already knew of Prime Practice when it came time 4 years ago to set up my dental practice.

How has it been since opening your dental practice?

When I bought my practice from a retired dentist, it was a fairly simple transaction. We walked in and they walked out. In every other respect, it was a very challenging time, as my wife and I had no experience of running a dental practice. Luckily for us, I had already made contact with Prime Practice and had sought their support in the transition.

How did Prime Practice help you?

Looking back, it helped me a lot. There were so many times that I felt overwhelmed and didn't know which direction to take. My coach was always available to point me in the right direction and implement the right systems so that my team could help me along the way.

There were so many times that I felt overwhelmed and didn't know which direction to take.

Where do you think you would have ended up without the support?

I have no doubt I would have sold the practice and become an employee dentist again. It was just so overwhelming,

but having an awesome coach who knew I could do it and supported me to hang in there was just what I needed. Working with Prime Practice was the best investment I ever made. And I was so sceptical when I first joined. In my mind, I thought I would be able to do it myself. But having never learned these skills, I wonder how I thought I could do it all alone! I am now in a much more comfortable position, but I know I still need Prime to help me continue to build my practice.

Working with Prime Practice was the best investment I ever made.

What is the most beneficial thing about working with Prime Practice?

It's really hard to pick one. Everything about Prime Practice is great. The coaching has been really fantastic for me. I have been blessed with a great coach who is understanding and incredibly patient with me. Whenever I have a problem, she will talk me through it. Challenges around patients, putting systems in place so the team can manage the practice, challenges around the team; she supports me with all the situations that arise from the day to day running of the practice.

With the support of Prime Practice, the move has been a really easy transition and in hindsight, an excellent idea.

3 months ago, we moved our practice location as it was no longer meeting our needs. The decision to move was a huge, scary step and we had to carefully weigh up the pros and cons and manage the process carefully. The previous location was very old – apparently it had been used as a dental practice for 75 years and as a result wasn't able to reflect the level of service we were providing. There were also a number of stairs to get to it and there was no parking nearby as it was on the main street. We wanted to serve our patients better and needed a better location to do it.

With the support of Prime Practice, the move has been a really easy transition and in hindsight, an excellent idea. I knew that

I could rely on the systems I already had in place and I had the support that I needed to do it successfully. We are getting so many compliments on our new space and gratitude for making our patients' lives easier. It was also a great reactivation message to our patients we hadn't seen in a while and we have had lots of patients returning. We are even hoping to get a new dentist really soon.

If there is a time when my numbers go down I can identify what is happening and make the necessary changes.

How are you finding the Prime Practice Engine and numbers tracking?

Initially, I didn't know about the numbers tracking or why I was doing it. Now I understand how helpful it is... I can track my progress over the last 3 years and compare how I did every year. If there is a time when my numbers go down I can identify what is happening and make the necessary changes.

How has Primespeak helped you?

Primespeak has really helped. As any dentist will tell you, they never learnt how to communicate with patients at school. We know how to do the clinical, but it has nothing to do with communication. Primespeak helped to remove the burden of stress when communicating with patients. I never feel rejected, because patients understand and feel empowered by the way I communicate as they are able to make their own decisions. They feel that I am there to support them and make sure they are well-looked after. And that's a great position to be in as a dentist.

Any last messages about Prime?

It has been a truly awesome experience to have the support of Prime. Having worked with them for 3 years and getting to know my coach and everyone that works there, I know I have the whole Prime Practice team supporting me and interested in what I am doing.

When I go to workshops, I chat to other Prime Practice team members and they all care and support me in the same way. The interest and ideas they have to support me are just awesome. I am very thankful.



How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

When I first came to Australia, I was introduced to Prime Practice via DJS who were sponsoring me. We were offered to attend Prime courses as part of our sponsorship, and I chose to attend Primespeak Seminar. I then chose to attend this course again as I found it so impactful. After a few years, I opened my own practice with my wife Nihal, also a dentist. I had been introduced to the concept of practice management at Primespeak, so decided to try it out at Practice Owner’s Workshop about 6 months after opening.

How did Practice Owner’s Workshop help your practice?

I knew that there would be room for improvement and there would be a lot we would learn and benefit from that we didn’t learn at dental school. At that point, we were not sure how much value we would get out of it. But we wanted to do it to see if we could improve our practice and communications. The workshop gave us a great deal of tools to take back to the practice as well as insight as to how Prime Practice would be able to support us over the next few years. It was definitely a big help getting Prime Practice on board at such an early stage in practice ownership.

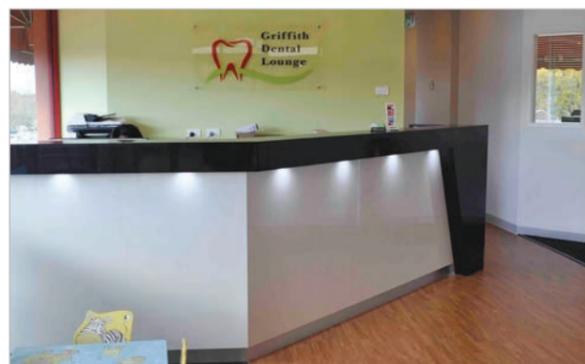
The workshop gave us a great deal of tools to take back to the practice as well as insight as to how Prime Practice would be able to support us over the next few years.

What do you think the Practice Management Program has given you?

It gave me great insights into what we can do as a practice. When you own a practice, there are lots of things you want to do but don’t know how to go about them. For example, you see that a certain system is just not working. How do you go about changing that to the best, tried and true policy? How do you get your team on-board? How do you communicate the changes effectively? Prime Practice has really helped us with all systems and policies in the practice. Our coach is amazing. Very empathic. She takes in everything we say and understands exactly where we are coming from. She gives us great advice on how to move things forward and supports us.

We now know that we are following the ‘best practice’ way to do this and everyone knows their role in making the systems run smoothly.

Having systems in place in our dental practice really helps us feel supported. For example, having a tried and true system in place for daily huddles, setting up the booking schedule and implementing regular maintenance consistently removes a heap of stress and headache. We now know that we are following the ‘best practice’ way to do this and everyone knows their role in making the systems run smoothly. Having this in place takes part of the worry about running a practice away. You have more space in your head for bigger things. You can take on more of the business side if the every-day worries



are taken care of. A lot of systems have really supported us over the years and makes our lives easier knowing the systems are all in place.

Imagine where do you think you would be without the support of Prime Practice?

We have been working with Prime Practice for 3 years and 4 months. It has really added a lot to our practice. Taken away much of the headache involved in running a practice. We are able to structure things in the practice a lot better. Systems to help us with accreditation. Also, all of the training and courses we attend helps us to see what other practices are doing and helps us to improve.

You’ve attended many workshops, which has been your favourite?

Primespeak is a great course and I have done it many times to help me understand all the nuances. Just getting a patient to own their own dental problems was a massive shift and took a huge weight off my shoulders. The position statement is also very basic, but very powerful. It helps a lot. Also all of the courses that have been run on-site have been very powerful and effective for our team.

Just getting a patient to own their own dental problems was a massive shift and took a huge weight off my shoulders.



How have you found the coaching experience?

It is like having a sporting coach - extremely beneficial. Our coach has done a great job. She is very understanding and it is great to feel so supported. Otherwise dentistry can be a very lonely career with no one to bounce things off.

We know we are always covered. She will always try and be available for us to support us and provides great advice and support on EVERYTHING from team communication to systems and procedures to communicating with patients.

What is the best thing about working with Prime Practice?

The best thing is that Prime Practice is growing with us. As running a practice becomes more complex, Prime Practice create better solutions. For example, as the Practice grows and you would like to add on a hygienist or a dentist, Prime will have the toolkit to support. Similarly, if you decide to sell the Practice at some in in time, again Prime would have the toolkit to help.

As running a practice becomes more complex, Prime Practice create better solutions.



How long have you owned your dental practice?

We purchased our practice just over 20 months ago in November 2014. I (Alastair) am a dentist and Jessica is the practice manager with a legal and economics background.

How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

We were introduced by a dentist friend who worked at a Prime Practice. They showed me some resources on the Prime Practice website that were really valuable and I became interested in Prime.

At the time, I was still working as an associate, so I attended Primespeak and got a better understanding of how Prime Practice works. At that early stage in my dental career, it was just so great to know there was a company out there supporting dentists.

When we started our own practice, we wanted to have Prime on board to help us navigate the waters. So we attended Practice Owner's Workshop.

What did you gain from that workshop?

We did the workshop 6 months into owning a practice, which was the ideal time. The topics provided a glimpse into practice ownership and the issues faced on a daily basis. At this point, it was good to know we weren't the only ones facing the issues

At that early stage in my dental career, it was just so great to know there was a company out there supporting dentists.

mentioned and to learn there were ways to make life easier. It really gave us a lot to think about and a good snapshot of where we are and where we could be.

We actually felt like we were going ok, but it was about trying to learn from the experts with experience and learn what we could do better. The intention was always to try and build our dream practice. We didn't have any sort of systems, so learning how to systemise many aspects of our practice was a massive learning. Implementing these was another thing, but has really helped make things more efficient.

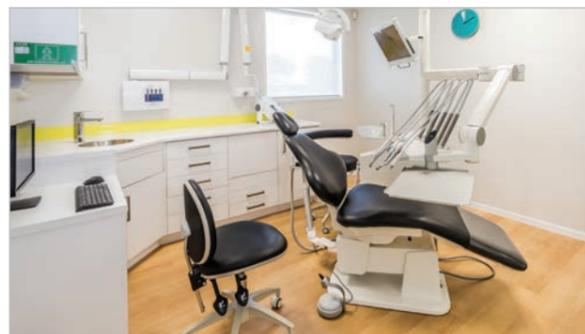
We actually felt like we were going ok, but it was about trying to learn from the experts with experience and learn what we could do better.

What do you think are the key things Prime Practice has helped with?

Primespeak has really changed the way we interact with patients. It's an incredibly powerful thing to get patients to trust us and understand we are always trying to do the best by them.

And also understanding the importance of having active maintenance processes in place has been key. This has really helped us build our practice.

In a nutshell, Prime Practice has really helped us align our practice. Aligning our patient communication so our whole team speaks the same language with patients, and also aligning our communication and management of our team.



How have you found the coaching experience?

This has been a great asset for us. Our coach always seems to pinpoint key areas for us to focus on. She has been great and managed to help us take things to another level. After each call, we feel really empowered, we have an action plan, we know what to do and the next step. As business owners, you can get caught up in the day-to-day grind. Knowing the call is coming up keeps us accountable and makes sure we take the time to grow the business and focus on it. It helps us keep up with the work and implement systems when possible.

This has been a great asset for us. Our coach always seems to pinpoint key areas for us to focus on.

You have recently grown. How did that come about?

We have recently hired a new hygienist and dentist. Initially, it felt a bit awkward handing our patients to other people, but we worked with our coach and the communication with our patients became much easier... It helps us with the transition to introducing these two new key team members made it easier to get them aligned into the practice. And it's great, both these two new team members have been able to learn a bit of the Prime Practice way using the online learning videos. They have workshops coming up in September to truly get them on board, but the videos are a great interim step.

Initially, it felt a bit awkward handing our patients to other people, but we worked with our coach and the communication with our patients became much easier...



Primespeak has really changed the way we interact with patients. It's an incredibly powerful thing to get patients to trust us and understand we are always trying to do the best by them.



How were you introduced to Prime Practice?

We were referred by a few friends who were enrolled in the Prime Practice Management Program and getting great results.

About 4 months after starting our own practice, we found out that the Practice Owner’s Workshop was coming up in our area. As we were experiencing some difficulties with growing our team and wanted to know how to manage it, we decided to attend the workshop..that was about 3 years ago.

What did you gain from that workshop?

Fundamentally, we got a sense of clarity around what we wanted to achieve with our practice. We were able to look at our financials differently, begin to understand benchmarks, we got some clarity around our business. And we realised just how different the business side of running a practice is to the clinical side. And we figured there was a lot to learn...

...we realised just how different the business side of running a practice is to the clinical side. And we figured there was a lot to learn...

Three years on, the main thing we have to be proud of is our really great team culture. We have managed to hire and maintain an amazing team with 4 dentists, 1 OHT, and 7 support staff (and looking for 1-2 more). I think this is as a result of hiring well (with the help and support of our coach) and tools to motivate them in the right way so they can be at their best.

How have you found the coaching experience?

Our coach is amazing. She checks in with us that our financial and personal goals are all on track. But she also makes sure the emotional side is on track. She provides loads of support not just for us, but for the whole team.

Sometimes the coach will have calls with our PM, or depending on who in the team needs some support. Could be our front office or clinical co-ordinator... which is great. This helps us to ensure that everyone on the team is supported because we can’t physically be everywhere doing everything. Knowing everyone is supported allows us to get on with the dentistry.

...we can’t physically be everywhere doing everything. Knowing everyone is supported allows us to get on with the dentistry.

Sometimes we also have help from other specialists within the Prime Practice business, for example, Phillip Palmer joins our call if we need to add in an employee dentist, or on-boarding a new dentist.

You’ve attended many workshops, which has been your favourite?

Primespeak has really enabled our whole team to see how to use the right language and educate patients. All of our dentists have done Primespeak and it is a requirement when a new dentist starts working with us that they do this first. Being able to get all our dentists to speak the same language is priceless as it removes the pressure and sales of dentistry. That way, we also know that the dentists working under our practice name are all doing the right thing.

Instead of being reactive to stressful situations, our team will brainstorm the best solutions and leave out the emotional side.



How has Prime Practice helped?

Owning a dental practice can be stressful. Prime Practice has definitely helped manage this stress.

We get the support from our coach, which I just mentioned.

We attend workshops which really allow the team to get motivated together and learn to trust each other... Instead of being reactive to stressful situations, our team will brainstorm the best solutions and leave out the emotional side. Because of this, each individual is encouraged to grow personally, and then as a team. This gives each team member more clarity and purpose to their roles and therefore the team manages itself, to a large extent.



If there is spare time, our team members will log in to watch some Prime videos. Depending on what we need at that stage, our practice manager will pick one that is relevant and share it with the team. They review the team related ones and the dentists often review the Primespeak related ones.

On the business side, Prime Practice helps us measure our KPIs and our monthly production to make sure we are on track and hitting targets. We know where we stand and we know we are heading the right way.

Prime also provides support around recruitment and HR, even having all of our employment contracts right and checking in as to what is the right thing to do in tricky situations.

On the business side, Prime Practice helps us measure our KPIs and our monthly production to make sure we are on track and hitting targets. We know where we stand and we know we are heading the right way.

With Prime, there is someone to turn to no matter what the problem is...



## How long have you owned your dental practice?

**Reza:** Both of us were working at Central Dentists Brighton 3 years ago when the opportunity came for us to take it over, which we did. Almost at the same time, the opportunity presented itself for us to start another practice from scratch linked to a GP practice nearby. It was a really tough decision, having never run one business before, let alone two!

After weighing up the options, we decided that it was too good an opportunity to miss and that we would run both practices... We were met with so many challenges and really didn't know if we were going to manage.

Fortunately, this was a month before we were introduced to Prime Practice at a workshop. We quickly realised that Prime Practice understood all of the challenges we were faced with and would be more than capable of helping us run our businesses.

## What was your first Prime Practice workshop?

**Mahkam:** We did Practice Owner's Workshop first. Prior to this workshop, I had been a dentist for about 9 years. I had NO IDEA about the business side of running a practice. I was a good clinician, but I was treating teeth and the mouth, but not the patient. We gained so much from just that workshop. We realised that there was a whole new world of being a practice owner.

**I had no idea about the business side of running a practice. I was a good clinician, but I was treating teeth and the mouth, but not the patient.**

Prime Practice had the solutions to teach us how to run our business at a time when we really needed it. So we thought we would give the Practice Management Program a try. I had wanted to learn some new skills and this gave me a great opportunity to do so while still practicing dentistry and create a new environment in my practice.

## What was wrong with the current environment?

It is difficult working with other people, but in dentistry you need a lot of people - you need all your team to be on the same page and you need to be building relationships with patients and be communicating important information to them in a way that builds trust rather than breaks it. Knowing how to build relationships with all of these people in a fast-paced environment is difficult and the skills to do this was missing.

**With patients, you need to be ethical - you need to be able to sit down and discuss what you see in their mouths, diagnose as if it was your own mouth and not judge them based on what you think they can afford.**

With patients, you need to be ethical - you need to be able to sit down and discuss what you see in their mouths, diagnose as if it was your own mouth and not judge them based on what you think they can afford. Before Primespeak, I'd assume the patients would get embarrassed if I'd give them all the treatment options, but it is getting a lot easier now to get patients to own their own conditions.

With our team, we went from being employee dentists to running a growing team of now 15 with 7 dentists.



That's a lot of personalities to manage! All of the Prime Practice workshops, in particular team workshops and leadership workshops, help build and nurture these relationships with team members so we function better.

## What made you think you needed help running your practice?

When we joined Prime, we had so many questions. In the dental industry, you can't just go and ask another dentist down the road for support, or to help answer some of the questions you have about patients/ team members.

It was just us, with our challenges. Alone. When we first went to Prime Practice, we realized that there are other practices going through the same issues with the same challenges and problems. And it was so great to know that there were solutions!

Now, if we have even one question, we have a coach who we can always rely on. It is not good to just walk around with questions going around in your head, with no idea if you are doing the right/ wrong thing in any given situation. I know that Prime Practice has been assisting practices around the world, so I feel confident that they are giving me the right advice.

## How have you found the coaching experience?

It is amazing. I don't consider her to be just my business coach... I consider her to be our life coach. Our whole team feels the same. She is incredibly experienced and, over the last 3 years, we have been building a really solid relationship. If we have any challenges in the practice, she is available. We have also been having a group chat with our coach to help them to get to know each other. So they can trust Prime and what we are trying to achieve with our practice.

**I know that Prime Practice have been assisting practices around the world, so I feel confident that they are giving me the right advice.**

## What do you think are the key things Prime Practice has helped with?

**Reza:** Communication. The dental industry has a lot of technical words - when we, as dentists try to communicate a treatment plan, it often would get quite confusing. Prime Practice have taught me how to explain my treatment plan to the patient in a way that patients can understand what is going on in their mouth and take responsibility for it themselves.

**Mahkam:** I would agree, and also leadership was another part. I think I know a lot more about how to deal with people; how to communicate with them. We are so proud that we have now had a great team for the last couple of years. With other practices I worked in, many roles were a revolving door. Now, we recruit well and if someone is not performing, we go through the causes and reasons why and we find out why and fix it.

## How do you use the Prime Engine?

We use the Engine a lot - it is very helpful for our meetings. We store all our actions which are allocated to a team member with a due date and then get carried into the next meeting. Makes us all more accountable. We also watch the Prime videos at every opportunity and they are really helpful too.

We track our figures also on the site. It is good to see the progress and we sometimes share these with the team. It is also helpful to track trends year on year.

## Where would you be had you not met Prime?

Well, there is no way we would have achieved all that we have in these short three years without Prime. It is not just about the communication and leadership that we mentioned, but it is also the systems. If we leave the practice for a few months, the systems are all in place and the practice truly can run itself. That's priceless. What I also like about Prime Practice is they set leadership and financial goals. When you have them, you take smaller steps to achieve the bigger picture. And the whole team can be working with you towards the same goal.



How long have you owned your dental practice?

I purchased the existing practice in 1997, so have been there nearly 20 years.

How did you come across Prime Practice?

We ran a solo practice for a period then brought a partner into the practice, but this broke up. Following the break up, we had a DA working with us who had previously worked for a Prime Practice. She suggested working with Prime Practice to invigorate and energise the team after what was a difficult 'break up'.

**I made it clear that I didn't want to do this to make more money. We didn't do it at all on financial grounds, it was purely to help build our team back up.**

So, I investigated the concept of practice management and spoke with a few different companies. I met Phillip at an ADX conference and we had a long chat. I remember it was quite emotional for me to be able to discuss all that was going on and for someone to understand and offer help.

Phillip totally understood where we were up to and was tremendous with on-boarding us to Prime. When we were initially talking, I made it clear that I didn't want to do this to make more money. We didn't do it at all on financial grounds, it was purely to help build our team back up.

Has Prime Practice delivered on its commitment to build your team back up?

Absolutely. And more. I can't imagine having the same team I had then. I mean, they are the same people, but their focus

is completely different. The profile of each team member has been lifted, the DA's, front office team all feel like an integral part of the process and truly 'own' their job and have a purpose.

When we started working with Prime it was just myself and an employed dentist.

One of our problems at the time was that we were too busy. We had nowhere to put new patients. We had patients waiting 2-3 months for a filling. We just couldn't service the demand!

Prime taught us how to pre-block, which was amazing, but the greatest thing, I think, that Prime has supported us with is building a hygiene department.

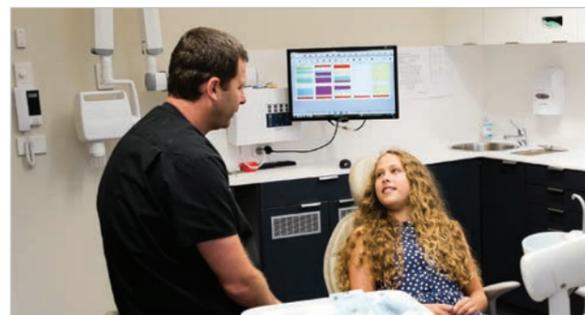
We are now 2 full time dentists, 2 part-time dentists and 3 full-time hygienists. Introducing hygiene to our practice was truly amazing.

What was your first Prime Practice workshop?

Our first workshop was Practice Owner's Workshop. It was great.

We got a taste of what was possible, how Prime could help us and left us wanting more.

I loved being introduced to the tracking aspect. I had never really looked at figures before, other than looking rudimentarily at my bank account. That has been a fantastic innovation with Prime. Not just the financials, but also tracking our practice KPIs and tracking the clinician's production, reappointment rates and active patients. I had never thought of these aspects of running a dental practice before.



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I enjoy the tracking now. I sit down once a month and go through the figures. It is nice to have hard facts regarding where we are up to. Before that, my business knowledge was largely based on a hunch. I enjoy looking at the factual data.

Was Primespeak a big thing for your practice?

Primespeak changed the way I structured the new patient exam. I have probably had more case acceptance., but more importantly, the part I liked the most is the initial building of trust that you get from the initial examination. And it's nice to have some structure, guidelines and tools that you can use in what was otherwise a tricky situation.

What other key things has Prime helped you with?

There is not a part of the practice that hasn't been touched by Prime. Definitely communication and team morale. But the improvement in patient experience is what I am most proud of.

Also, the team all feel they have purpose. They have been given training and direction. We have excellent communication. If there is a problem, there is a process in place for that to be rectified.

**There is not a part of the practice that hasn't been touched by Prime.**

How have you found the coaching experience?

Coaching has been good. We have developed a great trusting relationship and I have found, in times of need, my coach is an amazing support. For example, when we introduced a new dentist to the practice. We talked through the best way to manage expectations and communication and structure her induction so she was set up for success.

**Coaching has been good. We have developed a great trusting relationship and I have found, in times of need, my coach is an amazing support.**

Where would be had you not met Prime?

I think we would have still been a reasonable practice, but we never would have reached the heights that we have. And, it is not just that. I have also received immense personal satisfaction from gaining all these new skills. Our team all have a great focus and they are having a good time, so we all enjoy working together. Dentistry is great, but it is a team environment. If you can't communicate and get along with your team, it can be very difficult.

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### How long have you owned your dental practice?

We bought a 1-man practice from a retiring dentist in 1998. Between 1998 and 2011 we remained in the same premises, but had grown to take over a bit more space.

Then came 2011 with the big earthquake in Christchurch. Both Richard and I were with patients at the time and somehow we had both finished a bit early (we never finish early) and were able to literally grab the patients out of the chairs and run! I had just finished extracting teeth putting in a denture. The whole building was red stickered (we were unable to go back in) and has since come down with a new building now in its place.

We were incredibly fortunate in that the September before, we had had another earthquake and were closed for a week. This caused us to review and substantially increase our Business Interruption insurance. This bought us time to make decisions on re-establishing our practice and allowed us to maintain our team while planning and setting up new premises.

We bought a house and converted it into a dental surgery, which was finally ready in December 2011. Because of the increased business interruption insurance, we were able to keep the team together and didn't have to start entirely from scratch. This was a really tough time but many of the skills we had previously learnt through Prime such as planning and communication certainly helped.

### What was your first Prime Practice workshop?

I must have read about Prime Practice in the dental practice magazines. I liked the idea of the management systems and I felt like systems and management were missing in our practice. That was in 2006 and our practice then completed the Management Program.

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After we finished the Management Program, we decided to go it alone as we felt we had good systems in place... and we managed to keep a lot in place. However, after we had re-established in the new premises, we felt we were back where we were in that some of the systems were dropping, there were some goals we wanted to achieve and we needed help to reach them. So we re-joined Prime in the Masters Program.

### What were the goals?

Both personal and practice related. We wanted a better life balance and we needed to start to thinking about succession planning... What do we want in the next 5 years? Do we want to sell to a corporate? Do it all ourselves? We decided to try and do it all ourselves and so we sought the help of Prime to achieve these goals and ensure we are set up for succession planning and set up our practice for success. The doors were wide open and we were welcomed back with open arms.

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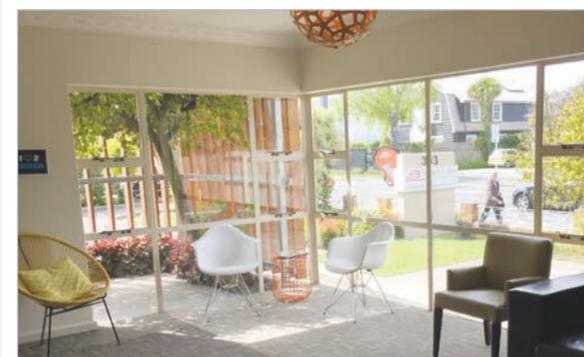
### How are you going with setting up goals?

We have set them up and we have specific steps in place with our coach to reach them. We have worked out how to prioritise things and move towards (the goals and) where we want to be.

### Was Primespeak a big thing for your practice?

For me personally, this has been amazing. I have been able to really hone that new patient exam to a point where patients are clear on what they want. I can present them with options, support them in what they choose. They can make a decision knowing they are supported. Before Primespeak I was half-way there, just didn't have the confidence or the systems in place. Now I have a new patient exam system and flow and it removes the stress.

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### What is the best thing Prime has given you?

Focus and clarity. Focus for ourselves on our practice goals and for our team to understand the practice goals and to realise that by achieving them, we can help them achieve their personal vision. It gives the team a focus and empowers them to providing exceptional care to our patients. We believe very strongly in the importance of our team, so we love to develop them and support them in their goals too.

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### How have you found the coaching experience?

It has been great! It has always been easy communication. Our coach is always available. She guides us well and we feel accountable (for our goals), which means that we move towards our goals rather than remaining stagnant in our practice.

### Where would be had you not met Prime?

Had we not met Prime, I think we would just be coming to work every day to drill and fill teeth. There would be very little work satisfaction and I can't imagine we would have a way forward with our practice.

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