

PRACTICE SUCCESS WITH A-DEC

Issue 1

thriving




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Sum of Upgrades Renews Family's Legacy



Dr. Shernan and his Mom anticipating arrival of his new A-dec 500® equipment.

Cover: *Dr. Shernan with his new equipment from A-dec's Treatment Room Makeover.*

Dr. Stewart Shernan of Malden, Mass., gains a whole new outlook after making sweeping changes to a practice founded by his father in 1950.

Although Dr. Stewart Shernan recognized it was time to replace outmoded equipment, an A-dec® Treatment Room Makeover contest proved to be the catalyst to spark a dramatic turn.

“The outcome of the entire experience has re-acquainted me to a level of excitement and productivity that’s been missing for too long,” says Shernan, 53. “I can describe how the process has re-invented the family practice through technology and design efficiencies, but that wouldn’t capture how ecstatic our patients are.”

From his office in suburban Boston, Shernan shares how he worked alongside his father, the late Dr. Sidney Shernan, for 20 years. “I treasured those times,” he says. “And while I was always grateful to have that opportunity, I also realized I was treating patients in the same chairs I remember as a kid.”

When Shernan’s father passed away a year after his retirement, Shernan explains, the writing was on the

wall. Or at least on a postcard: “My wife saw the Treatment Room Makeover entry form, which was a clear sign the stars were aligning. We figured it was meant to be.” Within two months of when Shernan was selected for the makeover, Shernan outfitted his two treatment rooms with all new A-dec 500 patient chairs, delivery systems, electric handpieces, space-efficient cabinetry, and interior furnishings and décor, which transformed a practice that had been serving the community for more than half a century. The result? A son who knows his father is smiling down on all the advances he’s made to further the care of patients.

Insight into Dr. Shernan's success

Excerpts from an interview with Dr. Shernan shortly following his treatment room makeover.

A-dec: I've heard you've had some good results with your office upgrades.

Dr. Shernan: Yeah, but “good” would be an understatement. I expected an office renovation and operatory makeover to be exciting, but seriously—this surpassed all my expectations. The whole outcome benefited my family and me in ways that go well beyond improving the practice. It was such a huge boost emotionally; it's turned into a catalyst to revitalize the future of my practice. I've always liked being a dentist, but this makes it so much more fun.

A-dec: Your situation sounds unique, in part, because of the history with your father.

Dr. Shernan: His death put everything at a difficult crossroads. Because my dad and I were so close, it's impossible to separate him from the practice. Before the contest, I'd reached a point where it was sometimes hard just being here—a bit of a struggle, which meant a renovation was likely to mean a lot more than swapping out equipment or patching bricks and mortar. Maybe it was kismet, but my wife and I ultimately saw this as a gift to make a dramatic change and establish my own model without losing sight of what sustained the practice for more than 50 years.

A-dec: Did you ever attempt to change anything while you were working with your dad?

Dr. Shernan: I was respectful of the fact that Dad had been practicing a certain way for so many years, so I was never very vocal about updating the equipment. And while I tried to practice my own techniques, the equipment presented challenges as the years passed. On one hand, the family dynamic and our patients appreciated the vintage, but on the other: the work was more difficult than it needed to be.



Pictured is the same operatory—before and after Dr. Shernan's Treatment Room Makeover.



“I can't decide what's better: listening to all my patients rave or all my newfound energy I have at the end of the day.”



Dr. Shernan feeling energetic and rejuvenated.

“My learning curve was about 30 seconds. The small heads [on the electric handpieces] are beautiful. The torque is amazing. My dentist friends are now drooling.”

A-dec: How do you think patients perceived the old office?

Dr. Shernan: It looked like heck. The appearance and the equipment was a serious concern for some, sure. Most tolerated it, I suppose. They put up with it, and I probably lost some patients because of it. I certainly didn't practice as efficiently as I might have—my patients might've noticed that—but for those who never knew my dad or his legacy, I'm sure they were asking, “What the heck is this? This stuff is ancient.” It was something we needed to overcome, but for the most part our patients were very forgiving because they enjoyed being with my family and believed in the care we provided. But to some degree, there was no question: the status quo would inevitably become a liability.

A-dec: How would you describe what the renovation and updates mean to your practice?

Dr. Shernan: The office now feels like an oasis for me. At the end of the day, I literally like to sit on my stool and just look around. I think about the patients who've been coming here and their newfound excitement—I just enjoy the surroundings so much. And, of course, the work itself is physically much easier.

A-dec: Physically easier?

Dr. Shernan: I'm 53, so I feel things I didn't when I was 28. I've had issues with hands, wrists, neck, legs—just nagging things that came and went. Years of standing, bending over, contorting myself, trying to make my wrists go in ways they weren't designed to go—they all took their toll. I was paying a price. I'd completely forgotten the simple things—what a difference it makes to sit! [Laughs.] My dad was old-school in the most eccentric way. He used to tell me that he knew what all the experts said about efficiency and ergonomics, but he insisted that he liked walking around. I was constantly walking over here for this, walking over there for that. It was the norm. I didn't think too much about it for the longest time, but it's remarkably slow. Every time I needed an instrument or some etchant or film, I'd walk either across the operatory or down the hall to the supply room. Looking back six months ago, it was ridiculous.

A-dec: Is it fair to say you needed a better system to revisit the placement of everything?

Dr. Shernan: That's a complete understatement because now, of course, everything is an arm-reach away. It's a game to see how long I can go without standing. As soon as I met Rich, the Territory Manager from A-dec, and Bill Pellicano from Patterson Dental, I knew my world was about to change. The two of them spent hours here, asking questions and figuring out what would work best for me. In terms of getting the most out of my limited space or how I can focus my time with patients, they have it down to a science—they think of everything while making me part of the conversation, right down to organizing materials or making sure I got comfortable with my new electric motors. And, by the way, I still hear from them to make sure everything is just so. A tweak here and a tweak there. It dawned on me that every practice is an evolution. No one benefits if the practice begins to stand still.

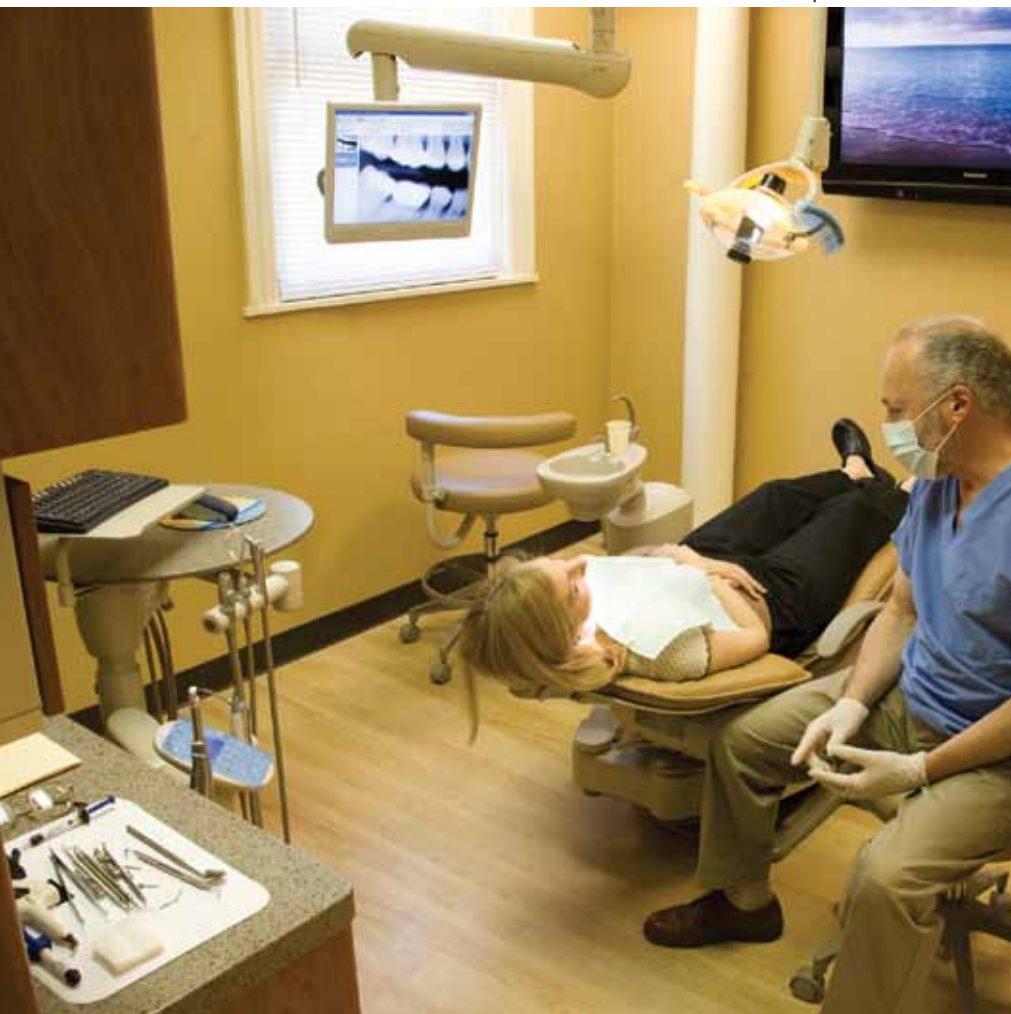


Dr. Shernan enjoying dentistry and practicing seated for the first time in his career.

“You can't overstate the impact that the sum of these solutions has on productivity. My ability is dramatically heightened because of all the ways I've eliminated the drudgery factor.”



Pictured here is the same operatory—before and after.



A-dec: Are you still performing two-handed dentistry?

Dr. Shernan: I'm still two-handed for now, but there's a big difference with these wonderful ergonomics. The efficiency right now is astounding, so I can only imagine what it'll be like when I get an assistant. It's going to happen; it's a matter of when.

A-dec: Are patients noticing a difference?

Dr. Shernan: Do they ever! Patients are giddy. More often than not, they'll get a silly grin or giggle and say, "Wow! Oh, my gosh. You've got to be kidding me." I rather expected it, but not to the degree, I hear it. They're responding the way I'm responding. For a dentist to have this new equipment is like a kid in a candy store, it's so satisfying that they're seeing what I'm appreciating. One woman compared our office to a spa. They gush; they

really do "I want this chair in my home theater." I don't know if other dentists with new equipment get the same reaction, or whether my patients are just more candid, but the excitement is palpable. They gush, which is contagious. When they rave, I'm beaming and when I'm beaming, we're all happy. It's like one big love fest. You know ... just cool.

"I'm experiencing a level of excitement that's difficult to put into words. I look around every morning and say, 'Wow.'"

A-dec: Did you get new handpieces as well?

Dr. Shernan: I did—all new A-dec |W&H electrics, which are incredible, wonderful new toys. I remember picking them up when I was at the A-dec facility and thinking how bulky they seemed, but as soon as someone taught me how to hold them, I was sold. Technologically, there is no comparison to what I'd been using. And my learning curve was about 30 seconds. The small heads are beautiful. The torque is amazing. My dentist friends are now drooling, which is funny when you consider my old equipment.

A-dec: How familiar had you been with A-dec before the makeover?

Dr. Shernan: You can't be a dentist and not know the name, but I remember A-dec from my years at Tufts. I actually looked into Pelton & Crane as well and even visited their facility, but A-dec was different and not merely because I was in the running for the makeover contest. My visit to A-dec in Oregon was an eye opener, the start of a metamorphosis. Seriously. I was struck by A-dec's corporate culture, philosophy, and approach to manufacturing, which translated into the equipment. A-dec does a wonderful job not merely as a manufacturer, but empowering the entire dental community to be creative and innovative. As a dentist, I like being part of that. Everyone at A-dec I spoke with seemed to really enjoy what they do—as if they have a real desire to come up with the very best solution for each dentist. The tour was something I didn't expect to find from a dental equipment manufacturing company. I figured it would be more of a chore, but that wasn't the case. Not only was it extremely informative and relevant, but it was way fun. I just have very fond memories of it. I would like to make an excuse to come out again. Maybe when I open a second location.

A-dec: That's a nice vision—tell me more.

Dr. Shernan: My wife Karen and I were originally thinking that new equipment could be used as a springboard to build a new practice closer to my home in West Newbury—we could open something very basic—but the more I got into this renovation, the more I thought about my dad's legacy, which is right here. I enjoy coming here now—much more than I ever thought possible. I no longer have a reason to leave this location. Being closer to home is no longer an issue because I like being here so much.



The renewed practice that Dr. Shernan shared with his father for 20 years.

“The outcome surpassed my wildest expectations. The environment and the efficiencies have created an oasis. Not only did the prize transform the practice, but I gained a whole new outlook on my future.”

A-dec: Is it true you were typically seeing four to eight patients a day?

Dr. Shernan: My business model was nothing to copy. I tracked virtually nothing. Remember, I was practicing two-handed dentistry and making a point to treat patients really well and allowing time to spend with my family. It was easy to just pick up on my dad's approach, which is to take things slow. Now I want and need to be more productive, so I'm changing. I find I can be much more efficient and quicker with my new setup. It's night and day actually, because everything is at my fingertips. It's a cliché, but I now have one-stop shopping in the operatory, which allows me to get a lot more work done in far less time. That alone enables me to see more people and I'm doing a better job of managing my office, my business. Meantime, I get the sense that word of mouth is spreading; I'm seeing some wonderful new patients who've been referred by other patients—some even mention the renovation. Now I'm working with a consultant to identify the right time to add staff. I'm just about there.

A-dec: What would you say to any dentists out there in the situation you were in a year ago?

Dr. Shernan: I don't know how unusual my situation was, but I experienced a complete renewal in my professional career. It's a brand new day. A lot of this stuff I say may sound corny, but I'm experiencing a level of excitement that's difficult to put into words. I look around my operatory every morning and say, "Wow." I get to work and my patients are comfortable and I'm comfortable, and my workspace is beautiful and everything works really well. I had practically accepted the drudgery factor, and now it's completely gone. You can't overstate the impact that the sum of all these engineering solutions has on productivity. In all honesty, my productivity has improved exponentially because of the way I feel about being here.

“Yeah, but ‘good’ would be an understatement. I expected an office renovation and operatory makeover to be exciting, but seriously—this surpassed all my expectations.”



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TREATMENT ROOM MAKEOVER '09

Nearly 1,900 doctors across the U.S. and Canada entered a photo of their treatment rooms accompanied by a brief essay on why they deserved a chance at new gear. Fifty doctors were awarded VIP trips to A-dec's headquarters in Newberg, OR.

A-dec is one of the largest dental equipment solutions providers in the world, with a global network of customers and authorized dealers in more than 100 countries. For more information about A-dec, visit a-dec.com or call 1.800.547.1883.