



*If you believe
in your mission
you will succeed*

Dental therapist and reader panel member **Victoria Wilson** tells *BDJ Team* all about the 'Smile Revolution' and the lessons she learned setting up her own oral health promotional project.

What is the Smile Revolution?

The Smile Revolution is an oral health promotional entity that creates content to support dental professionals' advancement as well as producing content to support the public's oral health.

What aspects of your career do you feel have contributed to the formation of the Smile Revolution?

Since I qualified from the Eastman in 2003 I have always had an interest in being involved

in other projects additional to working in the clinical setting, that support our development. Soon after qualifying I worked on setting up a study club with a slightly innovative approach at the time, where we incorporated a brunch, and paper reviews. Fast forward a number of years I moved to Dubai and became further involved in arranging more meetings for colleagues, I ran study clubs for the whole dental team, and founded the Emirates Dental Hygienists Club, the only organisation until today representing hygienists in the UAE.

In 2013 I developed a school oral health programme, incorporating animal therapy, that was my first attempt and an innovative oral health promotional project. This project was supported by Philips in the UAE and became very popular amongst schools and nurseries.

'It can be overwhelming working on your own and leading a business, but connecting with likeminded colleagues who have achieved similar tasks will support your advancements'

In 2015 I embarked on a BSc in oral health promotion that led to my interest in research, and the formation of the Smile Revolution. I feel the choices I have made and the studies I have embarked on have all led to the formation of the Smile Revolution. I have learnt a huge amount from running every aspect of a programme of courses, working alongside remarkable clinicians, as well as establishing an organisation under the main authorities in a country. Various leadership training courses and my global insight into dentistry and oral health equipped me with elements I found helpful in being able to set up and establish the Smile Revolution.

Are there any additional aspects that underpin the Smile Revolution?

Over the years I have developed an increasing interest in the importance of behavioural change in my role as a dental therapist. The way we communicate as dental professionals

has a significant impact on the behavioural change of the public in the realm of oral health; this is a huge element of the Smile Revolution that underpins every aspect of it.

What lessons have you learnt in setting up the Smile Revolution?

The greatest lesson I have learnt in setting up the Smile Revolution is: if you truly believe in the mission of your project or business, and you have clearly defined the ways you are going to achieve your mission, then you will succeed. You need to recognise your weaknesses along the way, and source the necessary colleagues to support you in these areas, or source education to support your advancements. There are continuous challenges one faces in any business, and this is normal and you need to be accepting of

this being normal, and merely a process and journey you will continue to go through in having your own business. It can frequently be overwhelming working on your own and leading a business, but connecting with likeminded colleagues and leaders who have achieved similar tasks will support your advancements. You will also trial new aspects that won't work, however the key is moving on and learning from the things that may have gone wrong to not repeat the same thing again in the future. You need to constantly keep an open mind and agility in running a small business like the Smile Revolution has been fundamental to its growth.

How many projects are running under the Smile Revolution?

There are four main projects currently running: Smile Revolution Podcast, Toothbrushing with Sophia and Alice, Smile Revolution Yoga, and an Oral health promotional course.

Podcast

The Smile Revolution currently runs the Smile Revolution Podcast, a podcast tailored to advancements in the dental profession. The Smile Revolution Podcast created a platform to interview colleagues from all around the world on their career paths or specific research to support the advancements of the dental profession. The Smile Revolution Podcast is committed to helping to facilitate change in the listeners through being inspired by the guests' stories or aspects of their research. Frequently, discussions from the podcasts get explored further through various written articles.

Link to podcast: Sound cloud - <https://soundcloud.com/user-108396645/episode-one-karen-walker-oral-hygiene-and-career-fulfilment>.

iTunes: <https://podcasts.apple.com/tz/podcast/episode-one-karen-walker-rdh-focusing-on-patients-oral/id1452405496?i=1000439189108>.

Toothbrushing with Sophia and Alice

Another project that has come out of the Smile Revolution is Toothbrushing with Sophia and Alice, an audio book to support brushing toddlers' teeth, available as a free resource online via soundcloud: https://soundcloud.com/victoria-wilson-820138236/baby-smile-revolution_audiobook-master.

Smile Revolution Yoga

As a registered yoga instructor I saw an opportunity to teach yoga dedicated to the dental profession. Smile Revolution Yoga's focus is to support the wellbeing of the dental profession through a practice sensitive to the demands and needs of the dental profession.

Oral Health Promotional course

I launched this course which explains how to start an oral health promotional project/business. I wish to share with the dental profession all I have learnt in the process of establishing the Smile Revolution, to enable colleagues to create their own sustainable oral health promotional projects and businesses so we collectively as a dental profession continue to elevate our reach and help overcome the oral health inequalities that exist today.

<http://www.smile-revolution.net/>

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41407-020-0375-0>