

# Adding value to dentistry

Who is the BDTA and what do they do? **Tony Reed**, Executive Director of the BDTA, explains.

**A**lthough there are doubts as to whether the alleged Chinese curse 'may you live in interesting times' is authentic, there can be little doubt that many in the dental industry feel that recent events have directed a curse of some sorts towards them.

There is of course the NHS contract, the unpopularity of which is not just confined to dentists but primary care trusts, the public and now MPs. Many practices have sought the private route either in whole or in part and are now concerned about how the current economic problems will affect their move. The whole of healthcare is subject to an increasing flood of regulation.

## Adding value

To stay in practice and profitable means developing a team of well qualified, and now registered, staff who can deliver a quality service to their patients at an affordable price. This applies whether the practice is NHS, private or a mixture.

The team is not just those who work in the practice, but extends to laboratories. And it also extends to suppliers, whether of equipment, materials or services. They too can and do add value to the practice. This especially applies to members of the British Dental Trade Association (BDTA) which is the body representing manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors of products and services to the dental profession in the UK.

## High standards

BDTA members are committed to providing the same high standards of quality as you are, giving you peace of mind when treating patients. Central to the maintenance of high

The Code of Practice ensures that the highest standards of self-discipline are enshrined in the conduct of BDTA members, who believe that their commitment to providing high quality, effective dental goods and ancillary services brings major benefits to the dental health of the nation and the country's economy. Members are thus required to install Quality Assurance systems which comply with the appropriate standards where this is not already a legal requirement.

The maintenance of high standards is a goal for all who work in healthcare, whether in the NHS or private sectors. BDTA members, whether they are manufacturers or suppliers of goods and services, share this aim and by choosing them you will add value to the services you provide for patients.

## Customer service

BDTA members provide excellent levels of customer service, minimising surgery downtime and giving you the confidence needed for a busy dental practice. Even in the best run practice things can go wrong and there is nothing more frustrating than sitting on your hands, because of equipment failure, while patients are clamouring for attention.

To provide the best service to your patients you need dependable support from your suppliers and manufacturers. No one can guarantee that the products or services they supply will never go wrong. But BDTA members have a long history of fulfilling this need for the whole of your team.

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standards is the BDTA's Code of Practice, to which all members are committed. Adherence to the Code is obligatory for members and there is a disciplinary procedure to deal with breaches of the Code.

The Code of Practice says that BDTA members must ensure that products they offer for sale are supported by adequate stocks and technical information. In addition, they must satisfy themselves that diagnostic aids, equipment repair facilities and spare parts will be available to support the customers for the normal expected life of the product.

**Research and development**

BDTA members research and develop new materials, equipment and technologies providing you with more choice and the ability to treat patients more efficiently and effectively.

It is sometimes said that any member of the dental team who has been away from clinical dentistry for as short a period as five years, will find it difficult if not impossible to return to seeing patients, such is the pace of development in ideas and technology. Looking back over the past few years, there can be few areas

familiar with how they work and why.

Dental equipment, materials and services are not pieces of flat-pack furniture that can be assembled with the aid of multi-lingual instructions. You and your team need training in how to use them. This will be provided by your BDTA supplier.



members' courses and seminars you can be better informed to give your patients sound advice.

**Training**

BDTA members are actively encouraged to train their staff ensuring they have the relevant dental knowledge to understand the ever changing needs of the dental team. This includes effective and timely response to customers' queries.

As a minimum, all relevant company staff should have attained the *BDTA Certificate: Introduction to Dentistry* within two years of commencement of employment with a member. BDTA training courses are available to assist in this process and provide benchmark training standards within the dental industry. The BDTA is also a source of information and advice on training, educational and career issues within the dental industry.



of dentistry – from computers to composites, from radiography to laboratory services, from orthodontics to oral hygiene – where the pace of change has not accelerated.

Along with the research and development of new products comes the need to tell the profession about them. The internet has brought a new world of information to practices, but with it come claims which cannot always be substantiated. The BDTA Code of Practice extends to advertisements, which should not contain misleading statements and should make clear the true nature of the product.

**Education**

BDTA members provide courses and seminars to support you with the adoption of these innovations within dental practice. The GDC requires that registrants should only carry out procedures for which they have been adequately trained and this extends to the use of equipment and materials. It also helps to be



Added to the requirement to practise evidence-based dentistry is the requirement for your patients to be properly informed of the choices available and to give their consent to any procedures. Increasingly these days they have picked up information from the Internet or the popular press about the latest ideas in healthcare. By taking advantage of BDTA

**Multiple benefits**

Adding value to your practice is a necessity in today's world of dentistry. BDTA members can help you do this through the maintenance of high standards, excellent customer service, research and development, courses for the dental team and training of their own staff.

An important factor is that the British Dental Trade Association represents and supports both manufacturers and suppliers of dental products, services and technologies, to the benefit of both dental teams and the public they serve. You can be reassured that by using a BDTA member, you are dealing with like-minded individuals who are committed to providing a high quality standard of service.

**For full details of all BDTA member companies, visit [www.bdta.org.uk](http://www.bdta.org.uk) or telephone 01494 782873 for a copy of the BDTA members directory.**