

# HOW I DID IT

by Gareth McAleer

Beyond Dental has gone beyond the pandemic – to create a legacy of a lockdown. Gareth McAleer tells how a dental group is building back better to ensure a premium delivery of dentistry

**THE PRACTICE**  
Dentist Gareth McAleer and business partner Alexander Ogden are redefining dentistry. Beyond Dental is their newest venture. A dental and facial aesthetics clinic situated in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, the squat practice opened at the start of November.

It is one of a number of businesses that occupy a former church converted in the 1990s to become an award-winning development.

The clinic has four surgeries and is staffed by one associate, a hygienist, a dental nurse and receptionist, and practice manager to offer a range of treatments and hygiene services.

The design is contemporary and fresh with a neutral palette of taupe, verdant green and soft pink that work alongside the natural wood features – a nod, perhaps, to those green shoots of growth.

It is the latest addition to their group of practices located across the Midlands and the South East, and whilst they are proud of their achievements to date, Beyond

Dental is a work in progress.

The ambition is to create many more businesses all with the same branding and ethos. Initially continuing to expand in the Midlands and South of England, they will then look further afield across the rest of the UK and Ireland. Its formula, says Gareth, is the legacy of the first lockdown that demonstrated a need for change in the industry; the brand borne out of the chaos

that ensued when COVID-19 closed the doors on dentistry.

Gareth explains: 'Before the pandemic, the job was getting a little stale and mundane for me. The pandemic was a real challenge and one that needed to be taken on. I created a group of private practice owners in April 2020 to try to forge a way back to practice. By June, it had grown to 1,200 members representing around 3,000

practices. We worked together to create SOPs for return to work, as well as procure PPE as large and smaller local groups.'

This proactive approach was a game changer. He recalls:

'We were the first to announce a return to work in early June and we did so with real passion and confidence. Many of the practices who followed the formulae opened well and have subsequently had great success.'

With a passion for dentistry restored, Gareth



60  
SECOND  
TOUR

## THE PRACTICE

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## THE ETHOS

In the wake of the pandemic, the multi-practice owners believe it is those dental businesses that strategically planned for a strong recovery that are now riding out the economic storm. Indeed, their practices are more than just surviving, they're thriving – and, with plans to continue growth, the duo are the epitome of innovation in the face of adversity.

## THE TEAM

**DENTISTS**  
**Gareth McAleer,**  
Principal dentist

**Ben**  
Associate dentist

**HYGIENISTS**  
XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX  
Hygienist  
XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX  
Hygienist

**NURSES**  
XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX  
Qualified dental nurse  
XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX  
Qualified dental nurse

**RECEPTION AND  
MANAGEMENT**  
XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX  
Practice manager  
XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX  
Receptionist

## PRACTICE DESIGN

and Alexander set the wheels in motion towards expanding their small but successful group.

'It was important to have a game plan, as dentistry was not going to be the same as it had been. We devised a strategy to give patients and staff the confidence to return to work. We installed antiviral filtration and ventilation and, in conjunction with strong SOPs, a reliable source of quality PPE and back-to-practice videos for patients, we were ready. I think Covid-19 divided the strong from the weak practices, and exposed those without a good, solid business plan.'

The germ of an idea developed into Beyond Dental, a concept that 'sets a new bar in dentistry that goes beyond where the current industry is,' he says.

By August 2021, they had chosen the location for their first practice. Building

works began the same month, with doors opening in November. The ethos was simple: to treat anyone who walks through the door as they would their family – and this applied to everyone.

The vision is one of diversity. For them, a family is so much more than the traditional social unit. They want their patient base to be eclectic, with a group of clinics that meets multiple needs from all generations who simply wish to look better.

Gareth says: 'This lies in the

communication with patients, as well as our delivery. We offer a full service across our clinics to ensure we give everyone options. We offer a treatment coordinator service, remotely before and after the appointment and during the patient's visit.'



beyond  
dental



## PRACTICE DESIGN



Interestingly, each practice in the group is fully associate-led, which enhances the practitioner experience as well. Gareth explains: 'We bring in enthusiastic dentists who have had a few years' experience and who are ready to go to the next level. They know that, with the

patient base and facilities we provide, they can fulfil their ambitions and dreams. Most of our dentists have completed, or are attending, postgraduate training and it's very popular for dentists on Masters programmes.'



### THE BUILD

Great design and a functional layout play their part in their delivery of dental care and combine to create a clinic that is both aesthetically pleasing and highly efficient. There is an understated elegance that provides visual evidence of mindful and careful investment.

'We have our own build team led by Alexander, who was a property developer in the past. The design enhances the overall experience and was developed from his vision. It is designed in such a way that it demonstrates the time and care we are investing in the patient experience. It is also a fully digital and paperless clinic, with intra-oral cameras in every surgery as well as Itero scanners to ensure a full information system.'

Patient and clinician comfort are paramount and Gareth says they took seriously the feedback they received from patients on what they expected from any dental experience and this included 'inspirational spaces' throughout the practice. The choice of equipment, furnishings and cabinetry reflect this and includes the chairs they chose.

The concept of Beyond Dental has at its core an ergonomically designed environment with four-handed dentistry their preferred delivery of care, which is why they opted for Belmont's new Eurus for the dental surgeries.

Gareth explains: 'The Eurus has lots of additional functions, such as the touch-screen control panel that is very easy to use. The design was important for our continental delivery system and is comfortable, ergonomic and efficient.'

### THE RESULT

Good practices are built on relationships. But the secret of a great practice is about having the confidence to do dentistry differently. Hardships often bring out the best in small business owners. For Gareth and Alexander, this pandemic has seemingly given them the impetus to innovate and has instilled fresh passion for dentistry. They will no doubt ensure this business model will prosper. ●

### COMPANIES AND EQUIPMENT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

#### Architect/surgery design

XXXXXXX

WEBSITE: <https://xxxxxxx.com>

#### Dental equipment

Takara Belmont

WEBSITE: [www.belmontdental.co.uk](http://www.belmontdental.co.uk)