

# Giving something back

Seb Evans looks at **Manish Chitnis'** idea of a '10 years younger contest' and how it aims to restore community spirit

**Seb Evans**  
Editor of *Dentistry*



There could be no better springboard than Covid-19 for a competition designed to restore community spirit and rebuild business whilst giving local people the opportunity to 'press the refresh button'.

## The '10 years younger' competition

Tapping into some shared goals brought on by the pandemic, dentist Manish Chitnis dreamed up the idea of a '10 years younger' contest.

Teaming up with local businesses that could help provide some life-changing tweaks, makeovers and enhancements alongside his team's dentistry skills, he was able to offer a complete transformation package for two winners each amounting to more than £14,000 worth of treatments and consultations.

Manish explains: '2021 was traumatic for many people and we wanted to give back, by giving two people a reason to smile.'

From the many entries, two locals were chosen. Kirsty Davies, a 49-year-old recently widowed mum-of-five who 'found her smile and found her long-lost confidence, too' and Anthony Ford, an insolvency and business turnaround specialist from the local business community, who hadn't visited a dentist 'in a wee while'.

Their journeys were regularly updated on social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram, with the practice sharing each business' contribution step-by-step to include clever 'teasers' before the big reveal at an event held in a local school.

The project was an impressive feat in coordination – and arguably went partway to championing dentistry itself. With the profession in the doldrums, the feelgood story not only garnered a lot of interest from the local community, but resonated with dental colleagues as well.

Feedback was, without exception, positive and an excellent lesson in dental marketing – even catching the eye of the national press. But the project was so much more than that.

As Manish says: 'The "10 years younger" competition



Kirsty Davies before and after



Dental Concepts team

was set up to give something back and help somebody transform their life. As we look back we can see that, with the help of our wonderful partners, all goals became a reality.'

## Dental Concepts

With practices in Whitchurch, Andover and Southampton, Manish and Shilpa, principal dentists and owners of Dental Concepts recently opened their latest clinic in Sandbanks, Poole, and the competition was perfectly timed to coincide with the launch of this newest addition to their group, Dental Concepts.

As small business owners, dentists appreciated the need to attract people through the doors again when restrictions were lifted. For Manish, this was especially pertinent. As a dental practitioner about to open a new practice, there was a need for an inventive approach.

And, because dentistry traditionally has a poor reputation, Manish believes trust needed to be won – a factor always relevant if a small business wants to become an integral part of any community. In his experience, this can also accelerate growth.

'First of all, people get to know you, then they start liking you and then we build on that trust to benefit from word-of-mouth recommendations.'

The holistic culture within Dental Concepts is well honed and goes above and beyond focusing solely on the oral health of patients.

The first Dental Concepts practice opened 11 years ago and, in that time, there has been a huge shift in patient perception. The pandemic arguably took self-awareness to a new level with the 'Zoom boom' and Manish acknowledges that 'dentistry has changed dramatically' in this time.

'We started as a small NHS practice with a single chair and now have four centres and a 25,000-plus database of patients. Dentistry is more digital and patients expect more transparency; they want to understand all the options available to them to enhance the way they look and feel. Increasingly, it is all about patient choice, which means more people are opting for a private delivery of

treatments. We have seen a massive change – especially in the past year or so.'

Working on the principle of '10 Cs to a great smile', the practices' website counts 'care', 'communication' and 'comfort' among the key considerations when delivering high end dentistry. Certainly the '10 Years Younger' competition was testimony to this, but it is also where and how the prize winners were treated that help set Dental Concepts apart from others.

## New technology

From the warm and friendly reception in the waiting room to the clinical environment, nothing is left to chance and each patient is made to feel they are at the heart of what the team do. The investment in creating the most comfortable surroundings – for the team and the patients – is evident, with good communication enhancing the whole experience.

This includes the harnessing of new technology that ensures patient comfort pre-treatment, too, with the delivery of anaesthetic using The Wand in a manner that is 'comfortable' and 'non-threatening' and that's administered in a localised way and that wears off quickly.

Manish explains: 'When you walk into a dental surgery, a huge chair, big lights and a display of cutting-edge equipment may look beautiful, but it can be intimidating for patients and that can be a problem.'

Aware of this, he invested in Belmont Cleo II chairs, which, he says, 'have made life very simple'.



Dental Concepts surgery

'The chair has a folding leg rest, so is compact, easy to handle and doesn't overpower a room or intimidate patients. It also gives me the best communication opportunities with the patient. I can sit at their eye level at the six o'clock position and can talk one to one. I also like what I call the "full discovery" position, where I sit at the three o'clock spot alongside the patient with the large screen on the wall, so it is almost like sitting in a theatre together, with all the

reviews, pictures and so on in front of us.

He adds: 'Clear and honest communication with all options, risks, benefits, the long-term stability and short- to middle-term options can be openly discussed, so they can take a financial and timeline call to fit with other priorities.'

From the convenient booking system to practice communications – digital or otherwise – everyone on the team tries their best to ensure this continuity of comfort and convenience.

Manish explains: 'It starts with the initial "meet and greet" when the patient arrives at the practice and continues throughout their journey – in the ambience and comfort of the welcome area and the way the patient is looked after inside the treatment room.'

The careful coordination of comfort and convenience is evidently part of the group's DNA. And with a team in tune with their patients' needs and a practitioner at the helm who believes in giving time to nurturing these, it's no surprise that Dental Concepts is a group that is prepared to innovate to ensure long-term relationships for the benefit of all. **D**