

# HOW I DID IT

Interview with Dr Raj Juneja

Having a blank canvas can be a double-edged sword, says Dr Raj Juneja

The leafy village of Chalfont St Peter in Gerrards Cross nestles on the edge of the beautiful Chiltern Hills. An area of outstanding natural beauty, it is home to some stunning landscapes. Apt then that it was this aesthetically pleasing location where we chose to launch our long-held vision – a dental clinic dedicated to mixing the highest quality treatment with a luxury experience. Face Teeth Smile is just 30 minutes train ride from central London. It was also a central point for our existing patient base who were scattered east and west of the Buckinghamshire location.

I am an Invisalign diamond provider and one of their clinical speakers and have an interest in orthodontics, implants and cosmetic dentistry. I also advocate minimally invasive dentistry.

Kiran, my wife, developed her interest in facial aesthetics from her experience as a dentist, with her clinical dentistry eventually giving way to a complete focus on full-face rejuvenations.

## BUILDING THE PRACTICE

Putting in the hard graft early, and often working seven days a week across all types of general dental practice, I concentrated on developing my skills and knowledge



until confident enough to realise my undergraduate dream – owning my own clinic.

I worked in NHS-heavy practices, high street private practices and mixed practices, which gave me a broad spectrum of experience so I

was able to ascertain what type of practice I wanted to open.

Meanwhile, I built on my foundations. Adding Invisalign to my clinical portfolio (only later becoming a clinical speaker), I honed my anterior aesthetic skills, with digital dentistry

60  
SECOND  
TOUR

## THE PRACTICE

### Face Teeth Smile

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## THE ETHOS

Having studied dentistry together at the university of Birmingham, Dr Raj Juneja and Dr Kiran Juneja discovered they shared a collective vision. They wanted to deliver a patient-focused service that took a holistic approach to the face, teeth and smile, and boost confidence by delivering life-changing aesthetic results.

## THE TEAM

### CLINICAL DIRECTOR AND PRINCIPAL DENTIST

Dr Raj Juneja

### CLINICAL DIRECTOR AND FACIAL AESTHETICS LEAD

Dr Kiran Juneja

### PERIODONTIST

Dr Hiten Halai

### DENTAL HYGIENIST

Elizabeth (Libby) Cronen

### DENTIST AND SEDATION LEAD

Dr Manpreet Kaur Juneja

### DENTAL NURSE

Leah Martin

### DENTIST

Dr Kaveet Patel

### TREATMENT COORDINATOR

Ella Dyson

### ORAL SURGEON AND FULL ARCH IMPLANTS LEAD

Dr Emmanuele Clozza

### BUSINESS DIRECTOR

Simranjeet Juneja

### RECEPTIONIST

Rosina Jelly

## PRACTICE DESIGN



playing a key role in my journey.

In essence, I wanted my business to be 100% digital, a really nice environment and a luxury clinic providing the treatments my patients wanted.

Initially, I considered acquiring an existing practice to refurbish. But once I began to get traction – via social media mostly – and patients seemed happy to travel from the various clinics where I was working in Hertfordshire and Berkshire, I set my heart on a squat practice.

But rather than allow the situation to run away with me, I decided to hold back a little and resisted the temptation to open my longed-for business venture straight away. I wanted to gain more clinical experience to ensure I was proficient. So, I did my implant training, I did restorative and aesthetic courses, and my ortho diploma. I wanted to make sure I was a well-rounded principal. If I was to have associates placing implants, I wanted to be able to oversee that.

### BY 2020 I WAS READY

I approached the team at Samera, a company of business advisors and accountants, whose boot-camps offer advice to dentists looking to purchase squat clinics. I signed up to one of these and that really sparked my interest when I started to see the numbers.

### SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT PROPERTY

The search for the perfect property was slow at first. But, having settled on Chalfont St Peter, we took a bit of a chance and posted leaflets through the letterboxes of businesses in the high street, expressing an interest in purchasing if anyone happened to be considering selling up. Some were less than receptive but one couple was delighted when the proposition literally landed on their doorstep. They owned a stationery shop and were living in the flat above it. They had put the property on the market a couple of years beforehand, but then held off because of COVID-19. Now they were looking to sell and retire. We spoke to them about price, I spoke to my financial advisors, and we made it happen.

### FACE TEETH SMILE OPENS

With planning permission granted in June 2021, Face Teeth Smile opened in March 2022. The building was in disrepair. It needed new wiring, new plumbing and there was an external staircase to flats upstairs. Ironical when you consider I was originally against a construction project. Strangely though, we were never fazed, despite it turning into a bigger project than we anticipated. The most stressful part was the build. I had to upgrade

the electricity, install new drainage and there were lead pipes that needed removing, so the budget increased quite a lot. But having the freehold was paramount – and we are lucky to work in a profession that is considered viable when it comes to finance.

Having a blank canvas can be a double-edged sword – on the one hand it gave us free rein to design the clinic in our vision. On the other, it was a little overwhelming trying to realise this and make the best decisions. I was looking at this building and scratching my head. This was the first practice I was going to own and I needed to get it right.

Wisely, we called in the experts. We used Eastside Construction for the build, Apollo Interiors to carry out the architectural work for the surgeries and the dental infrastructure, and used Squareplus Architects, specifically because they were novices to dental practice design and we wanted something a little different from the usual clinic reception and waiting area. I chose them because their experience was more in fashion outlets and hotels. Away from the surgeries, I didn't want my clinic to look like a dental environment.

### BRANDING

We kept our branding simple and clean – in the signage, in the website design and in the clinic itself. And my 'go to' chair was in



## PRACTICE DESIGN



keeping with this desire for simplicity. Like everything to do with our project, I was prepared to listen to those I trusted, as well as draw on previous experience. So, I spoke to a lot of friends and colleagues, plus I had used different chairs in the various clinics I had worked in and what I found was that the Belmont chair was reliable. I had spent a lot of money on the front of house and I needed my chairs to be stylish, yet functional. I didn't need any unnecessary frills. The Belmont Voyagers are easy to maintain and easy to clean – and what I need is reliability.

Two dental surgeries and a facial aesthetic treatment room are up and running and a third surgery is due to open soon. The patient journey is fully digitalised and there is a lab on site to accommodate the 'Amazon Prime generation', with next-day delivery of, for example, whitening trays, as well as the option to pay online. As a health care service, we need to fit into people's 'day to day' lives. Patients are no longer 'wowed' by digital scans and speed of service. If they can book restaurants online, then why not their dental appointments? That said, I am aware of the need for inclusivity. So, as well as disability access and a ground-floor surgery, there are also options for patients to call or pop into the clinic and book in. If a patient wants a written appointment reminder, then that is OK, too.

### LOYAL PATIENTS

Pivotal to our whole decision-making process has been the opinions of our loyal patients.

Via a survey, our patients were consulted on many aspects of the planned clinic – the procedures they would want available, the option to book appointments online, digital impression taking, as well as the location itself. Even the name – Face Teeth Smile – was inspired by the letters I send out to my patients after consultations. The phrase I always mention in the first few paragraphs of my treatment plans are 'after analysing your face, teeth and smile, and so on.

### SUMMARY

Some would say this was a brave move perhaps, but I hope it demonstrates what I consider extraordinary mutual trust between us and our patients. The initial plan was for me to work two days a week at Face Teeth Smile and work as an associate for the rest of the time. Within a month, however, I was working only one day a week as an associate and five days a week at my own clinic. We are now seeking two associates to take on the general dentistry as well as a specialist, so I can focus on the other treatments we offer. For anyone considering going down the same route of practice ownership, I'd advise to always have the end vision in mind. If you would like to own your own practice, start gaining skills both clinically and non-clinically to get you to that ultimate position. Setting up a squat clinic does come at a huge expense – of time, cost and commitment. It has been draining and there has been a lot of stress along the way. So, I'd suggest

that anyone considering opening a practice should wait until they are clinically skilled enough to take on all those other stresses but confident to know their dentistry. As a much better dentist, it will make for a less challenging journey. ●

### COMPANIES AND EQUIPMENT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

#### Architect/Surgery design

Apollo Interiors

WEBSITE: <https://apollointeriors.com>

#### Dental construction and Build

Eastside Design and Build

WEBSITE: <http://eastside.ltd>

SquarePlus Architects

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

#### Dental equipment

Dentec services

#### Practice Management System

Dentally

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

#### Website developer

Blowmedia

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