

DENTAL LABORATORIES WORKING FROM HOME?



By Andrew C Wheeler

At the time of writing this article we are beginning the fourth week away from the lab, affectively being in 'lock down'.

We are in uncharted and unprecedented times, collectively and individually. All of us are in a state of flux trying to navigate an unclear path.

It has affected us all in different ways and will continue to do so for many years to come. The ones who have vulnerable family members, lab owners with staff, businesses with limited cash flow, employees, the list goes on.

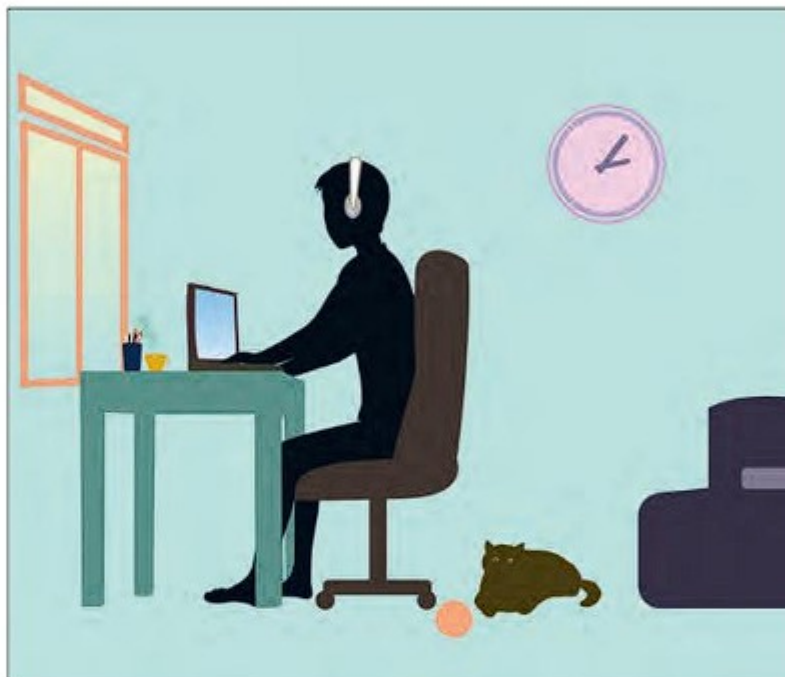
Personally, I have noticed the wave of different emotions as I come to terms with being away from a profession, that favours those of us who enjoy the solitude of our work. I am now at home with the family, learning how to handle two young boys with the energy levels of a small country!

WORKING FROM HOME?

So, is it possible to take the government advice and work from home? Thanks to growth of digital technology, those who have taken it onboard do have some options to keep ticking along. If not, it is surely time to consider making the move.

In the current situation work has all but dried up but there is work that can be done from home. There is a plethora of online courses running, it's refreshing to see that many of these are being run by people who normally wouldn't have had the time to do so, sharing their home-grown talents. CPD hours, which most technicians I know add to the bottom of the to do list, can be updated. Journals such as the Enhanced CPD dentistry cover all the required points we need alongside the online courses being offered.

This is invaluable time to 'play' with the software we use daily. Exocad and 3Shape are very comprehensive pieces of software which most of us don't fully use, a brief search on



You Tube will reveal a mass of 'how to' videos. These areas don't necessarily bring in much needed income but importantly they help to keep our minds active might sow a seed for the future direction of our careers.

FINANCIAL HELP

A great concern is the affect this will have on our expenses. We now have a much better understanding of how the government intends to help the numerous different situations we're in. Most of the companies I have contacted have procedures in place to take a payment holiday, this combined with government support will hopefully see most people through this time. But sadly, I'm sure we will see some labs close as a result of this pandemic. There is some very helpful general advice to be had online while the DIA is regularly updating their advice to lab owners on the options.

Thought needs to be given to where business will be when we finally get over this period, a change of direction, refocused priorities. We all have our journey to walk and this might be the time for that long overdue change.

THE FUTURE

No one knows when life will return to normality. But as we can see from the fantastic effort in printing PPE from dental laboratories across the country there is cause for much hope. Now it's a time to draw close to our loved ones, re-evaluate our work life balance because at some point all the patients who have postponed dental work will walk into a dental surgery. It's at this point UK dental labs will step up to that challenge and start the wheels of production again.

Hang in there and stay safe!