

1. **Be open to a variety of opportunities.** Go to every interview you can. It never hurts to talk, and an opportunity may turn out to be more than you expected. You can learn from each interview even if it doesn't lead to a position.

2. **Be open to other locations.** The Law of Supply and Demand applies to career and practice opportunities. Typically, the farther you get away from a Dental School, the better the opportunities. Many of the best opportunities are located in great communities just forty-five minutes to three hours away from major Dental School cities. Typically you can increase your earning potential from 10% to 100% by settling in a city or community that is underserved.

3. **Get your references ready.** They can be former employers, co-workers, or teachers. Contact them to let them know to expect some calls. Have all their contact information in one place.

4. **Have your production numbers ready.** If you do not have production numbers, then have something that will give the hiring doctor a good idea of your skill set, speed, and experience. If you are just getting out of dental school or a residency, your procedure log may be a good substitute.

5. **Consider preparing a "Proof Book" containing:**

- a. A current CV/Resume
- b. Case presentations
- c. Before and After photos
- d. Production numbers or equivalent
- e. Accomplishments
- f. Treatment plans
- g. Letters of Recommendation
- h. References
- i. Blank paper for notes
- j. Questions for the practice
- k. Blank Thank you notes

You may never have to open it, but it demonstrates preparedness and professionalism; this will set you apart from other candidates the practice may be considering.

The Interview

Because you are looking for a long-term position, it is as important for you to interview the prospective employer as it is for them to interview you. It is good to have some questions prepared. This will show interest and give you information you need, as well as take some pressure off the interviewer.

Questions for your interviewer:

NOTE: *DO NOT* lead off with questions about compensation.

- a. What are your treatment philosophies?
- b. What would be expected of me as an employee; what role would I be expected to fill; would I be limited to certain types of cases, such as endo or pedo, etc.?
- c. Tell me about your patient base: families, geriatric, pediatric, etc.
- d. What demographic changes have occurred with your practice in the last ten years? What changes are on the horizon?
- e. Do you actively market or depend on referrals?
- f. What kind of equipment do you use?
- g. What about your practice are you the most proud of?
- h. Where do you see the practice in five or ten years?
- i. What are your personal and professional goals?
- j. What are your goals for the practice?
- k. Are you referring a lot of certain type of case out of the practice?
- l. What specific things are you looking for the new Associate to bring to the practice?

The face-to-face interview

1. **Treat the staff with courtesy and respect.** A practice owner often feels like his or her staff is like family and will listen to their opinion, especially if it is negative. On more than one occasion, we have seen excellent candidates not offered an opportunity because they treated a staff member poorly.

2. **Smile and show some enthusiasm.** More candidates are hired because of their personality and positive attitude than because of specific clinical skills. One high-end cosmetic practice told us they had interviewed six different dentists. They hired the candidate who smiled and appeared to truly enjoy being a Dentist, passing on more experienced candidates with less personality and enthusiasm.

3. **Show sincere interest in the hiring Dentist's situation.** Understand that the Dentist needs to solve a problem. Maybe the practice just lost a key associate or partner. Maybe the practice is growing and cannot keep up with patient demand. Maybe the Dentist needs someone to take over the practice when he or she retires. You need to get a clear understanding of the Dentist's true motivation for adding an associate. Once you truly understand needs of the hiring Dentist, you can mutually determine if you are the solution.

4. **If you are interested let the owner know you are interested.** At the close of the interview say something like, "I just wanted to let you know that I am very interested in this opportunity and I am ready to take the next step, what ever that is. How should I proceed from here?" This doesn't mean that you will accept the job with no further discussion. It simply shows you would be sincerely be interested in discussing contract terms or meeting with other partners, consultants, or staff members as needed.

After the interview

1. **Thank you notes.** Always send a Thank You note after an interview. Buy Thank You notes prior to going to the interview. Make sure you get a business card from everyone you speak with so you can verify the spelling of their name, their title and the correct address. Immediately after the interview, drive to the local post office or collection box, write a brief Thank You and mail it immediately. Do not put it off. If your timing is right, the practice will get the Thank You note the next day. Even if you don't want the job, it is professional and impressive to thank your interviewer for his/her time.

2. **Call the practice in two or three days.** If you don't hear anything from the practice after a few days, call them and let them know you are still interested.

3. **Working Interview.** Offer to do a one or two day working interview.

Negotiating an offer

1. Every offer and every opportunity is unique. Be careful not to compare offers with your colleagues. It is like comparing apples to oranges – they have similarities but are ultimately very different.
2. Know what is most important to you. Do you need a guaranteed salary, or are you confident enough in your skills to work on a percentage basis?
3. Discuss what you want with the recruiter before and after the interview so that they can work as your ambassador. They will let you know if you have received a competitive offer based on the location, type of practice, and other variables.