

# More straight smiles in the UK please!

With the huge rise in UK adult orthodontic treatments, **NAZ HAQUE** says it is more important than ever for your practice and services to stand out

**E**ver watch TV shows from America, USA to be specific? Seen the stereotypes of British people with crooked teeth? If there is no smoke without fire, one can ask, where does this belief come from?

In fact, historically reports have indeed consistently indicated that a significant percentage of surveyed UK adults have crooked teeth.

Fortunately, a recent survey conducted in June 2016 by the BOS (British Orthodontic Society) has revealed that a rising number of adults are now seeking orthodontic treatment. It was reported that 75% of the surveyed practices reported an increase in adult treatment. It was found that 66% of these adult patients were 26-40 years old. The Mi-Smile Network who provide Invisalign reported submitting 1,177 cases! STO (short term orthodontics) prices can range between £2,000 - £8,000 on average.

So, good news for proud Brits. If the treatment uptake for orthodontics continues at its current level, the next generation will possibly escape the stereotype our neighbours have created. Even better news for dentists providing teeth straightening or building a successful practice. They're going to have a chance to change more smiles and increase their revenue!

## PLENTY OF CHOICE

With this increased demand comes an abundance of options. Fixed, removable, lingual, labial, braces, aligners and brackets. Say that to a patient all in one go and watch their face! It's data overload and not focused on their needs. Information overload confuses the patient, or worse, scares them away.

Patients also have questions in mind when they look at your digital presence (primarily your website) and the overload of technical information may

create the same end-result - the patient fleeing. Communication is the key to success!

Whether a dentist is a registered specialist in orthodontics or a GDP, whether they focus on the anterior, the posterior or both, there are more than enough patients for all dentists to treat. Patients for both types of dentist are thinking of the end-result. They're not paying for straighter teeth - they're paying for the confidence to smile. They just need to decide who they will trust to deliver the treatment.

In the online world, the experience the website provides the user can be the distinction between failure and success. Whether in person, on the website, or on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc., the key to converting a patient is to build trust, display credibility and win the relationship. People remember not what we say, but how we make them feel. I'll say it again, communication is key.

Communication is not just about what we have to say. It's critical that we also understand the patient and how to provide solutions based on their wants or needs. If a patient has crooked teeth but doesn't feel that this impacts their life in anyway, then they do not have a stimulus and they are highly unlikely to invest in orthodontic treatment. However, if a patient has crooked teeth and they are in pain, or are scared to smile in their wedding photos, then they have a stimulus and are likely to

be open to investing in treatment - and quickly, because they will be in pain until they do, or because the wedding day is fast approaching!

The stimulus creates a desire for answers. Historically this could be asking a family member, a friend, a colleague, or a neighbour who has been in the same situation. This is due to our primal need to acquire social proof - often we don't want to be the first one to take a new step. Reflect on this, have you asked colleagues for their experiences of something you're about to invest into or embark on? This is part of the consumer journey. What do you know about your patients buying habits?

The patient journey has evolved and dentists recognise that they're receiving more educated patients these days, some who

even try to tell the dentist how to do their job in straightening their teeth! Imagine how many hours that patient spent researching the treatment?

## ONLINE PRESENCE

It has been reported that 93% of all buying decisions now start on Google! Ortho patients have experienced a stimulus, so they are searching on Google. If a practice doesn't appear on Google page 1 or doesn't even have a website, they're not in front of this audience (who have needs/wants). If they don't have a website in 2016, why on earth not?

The core age group of private patients taking orthodontic treatment live in the digital world, so if we want to attract them and win their trust, we need to be where they are. 90% of adults have a mobile phone and 55% of all internet traffic is now on a mobile! Google is now providing a separate list of search results when users search on mobiles. So, it is important for practices to make sure that their website is totally mobile friendly! Every page must work well on a mobile device.

When patients land on a dental website, their experience can increase the stimulus or scare them off. They'll be seeking reassurance, social proof and evidence of the results. They will go from researching the solutions, to reviewing the information on the systems, to deciding on the dentist and the practice they'll trust to talk to.

Over the next 12 months, through several articles, I will be explaining the patient's online journey: Where they start, what they're looking for, and then how to appear in front of them, bring them in, win the relationship and convert them. These articles will be dedicated to your success.

Are you looking to attract more private ortho patients? Are you in front of that 93%?

If you can't wait until the end of 2017 to get the entire plan, get in touch. How soon you get the answers is up to you. Maybe you will continue your journey in helping to create more straight smiles in the UK with a Google search too... [OP](#)

## FACTFILE



**Naz Haque** is the Google Consultant for Dental Focus. Excelling in business strategy, Google

marketing strategies, digital marketing, and mobile and network computing, he has provided consultancy services for major blue-chip brands such as Apple, Microsoft, HP and Sony. Through Dental Focus, as an expert in Search Engine Optimisation, Naz has been helping dentists grow their businesses, attract more patients, increase their monthly revenue and achieve their dreams.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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