

RELOCATION – I’m Having to Move To Another Region, What’s My Best Course Of Action?

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During the course of a career, life can throw in some curves that cause a practicing dentist to pack up and move to another part of the country. The reasons for this are numerous, from the need to be closer to family, a spouse relocating due to work, or just the desire to be in a new part of the country. Regardless of the situation, relocating can sometimes be a daunting endeavor. Some doctors choose to work for a clinic or another doctor until they get settled in. Others want to begin a new start up practice. Others choose to purchase an existing practice in order to have a steady flow of patients from the beginning. When making your decision, keep some of the following suggestions in mind:

Resources to assist you in locating a new location to practice dentistry:

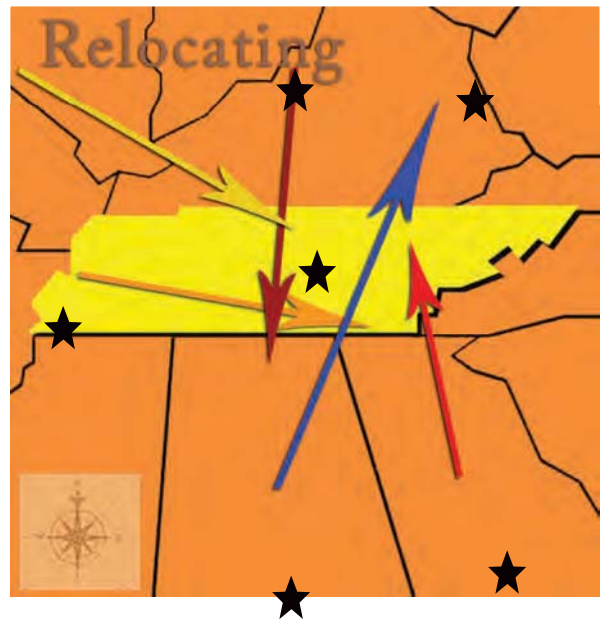
Having been in the dental business for many years, I am a firm believer that the most important resources for a doctor looking to relocate or to find a good location for starting a new practice are the dental supply dealer and their territory representatives. Good representatives generally know the areas they service, what’s going on in the area, the “hot spots” or growing areas, as well as areas that are not as promising. They know which dentists in the area would be willing to visit with you and offer guidance. They also can advise a new dentist to the area about what types of marketing strategies seem to work the best, and offer cutting edge ideas to help you get started quickly.

Other important resources in finding and developing a new practice would be: Local Dental Societies, Transition Companies, State Dental Association (whatever state you are going to live in), a local realtor, a local banker, a local dental lawyer, an accountant, local existing dentists, and a local Study Club.

The next step is to evaluate the opportunities available. This may include a new start or set up; buying an existing practice; becoming an associate; an employee; or a government (health department, prison facilities, etc) employee. Once you know the direction you intend to pursue, you are ready to move forward.

Where do I look to start my “new practice”?

Once you establish a relationship with a dealer representative you trust, he/she should be a valuable partner as you make these decisions. Arrange a meeting to discuss prospective areas. Let them inform you about who your contacts should be in the city of choice. They may be able to tell you about the economy, the area, and the needs of the community. Ask them to recommend a realtor. An experienced realtor can save a lot of time and extra driving. Keep in mind, the realtor will only be used if you are starting a new set-up or



relocating to another part of the city. After choosing a location, the equipment specialist and the office design team can help you design the office space that would work best for you. Plans will be drawn, the equipment will be selected and ordered, and a contractor will be hired. You will need to meet with your attorneys, CPA, and a dental marketing person to help finalize your plan. These people can help or offer advice to get your practice up and running quickly.

What about an office staff?

The interviewing and hiring of the staff is extremely important for you and your practice. They can make or break you and your business. Take your time, review the applicants, and check their references. Also review the applicants with your dealer representative. They often have insights into staff members and how they work. Once the staff is hired and in place, make sure they understand the vision you have for your practice ...communication, communication and more communication is the key.

Marketing the practice is critical. It’s important to know exactly what you want your practice to be and what the patient experience should be from first contact, to treatment to collecting payment to followup. Once you have your vision in place and the staff is on board, you can develop your marketing plan. The first step is to let people know you are open, where you are and how to contact you. Depending on your budget there are many ways this can be done. Internet marketing or developing a website, direct mailers to a zip code, or joining programs like “Welcome Wagon” are a few. Evaluate your options with your territory rep and marketing sources.

You will also need to address insurance questions, such as what insurance plans you will accept? Once your business grows, you can modify the list of insurance plans/companies to better serve your patients.

If I plan to become an Associate or Employee, what do I do?

Determine where you wish to live? Let that help you decide where you are going to work? Typically, you will want to live in close proximity to work. After deciding where you would like to work, get your CV or resume in order, then start calling and/or making visits to the dentists in the area you have selected. Your representative can help you find doctors that would be good to talk to. Nashville Dental utilizes our NDI Transitions division to keep current information on doctors looking for associates or employees. Once you locate some doctors to whom you wish to talk, arrange a lunch meeting or set an appointment with them to discuss employment opportunities. Find out what they are looking for, time frame, and how you can fit into their plan.



How do I get started this "late in my career"?

What is "late in my career?" Each dentist has their own unique set of requirements in the latter phase of their career. Some are financially sound and only want to continue work-

ing because they enjoy it; but they don't want to manage the business side of the practice. Others need the income and are not financially prepared to retire. Others enjoy the challenge and reward from running their own practice and seeing their business grow and prosper. Your unique circumstances will mandate which direction you should go.

A new practice can be a good investment if it is done correctly. If you wish to start a practice and sell it within a short period of time, you need to have a good plan in place to grow it quickly. It also needs to have quality equipment and technology in order to maintain marketability to a younger dentist.

Other options could be an associate/employee position in an office. Or you may make yourself available a couple of days a week in a couple of office locations? You could also establish yourself as a temporary dentist covering offices while the practicing dentist is on vacation, sick or on leave for various reasons. Another option could be working for a government run facility? Again, what do you want to do? How much do you want to work? Where do you want to work? All these answers have to come from you. Once you determine those answers, finding the pieces that fit can be established.

Laying out a plan "on purpose" will better serve your chances of success. Change is often difficult at best, so increase your odds of a smooth Transition by working with a team of professionals who only benefit by helping you to succeed.

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