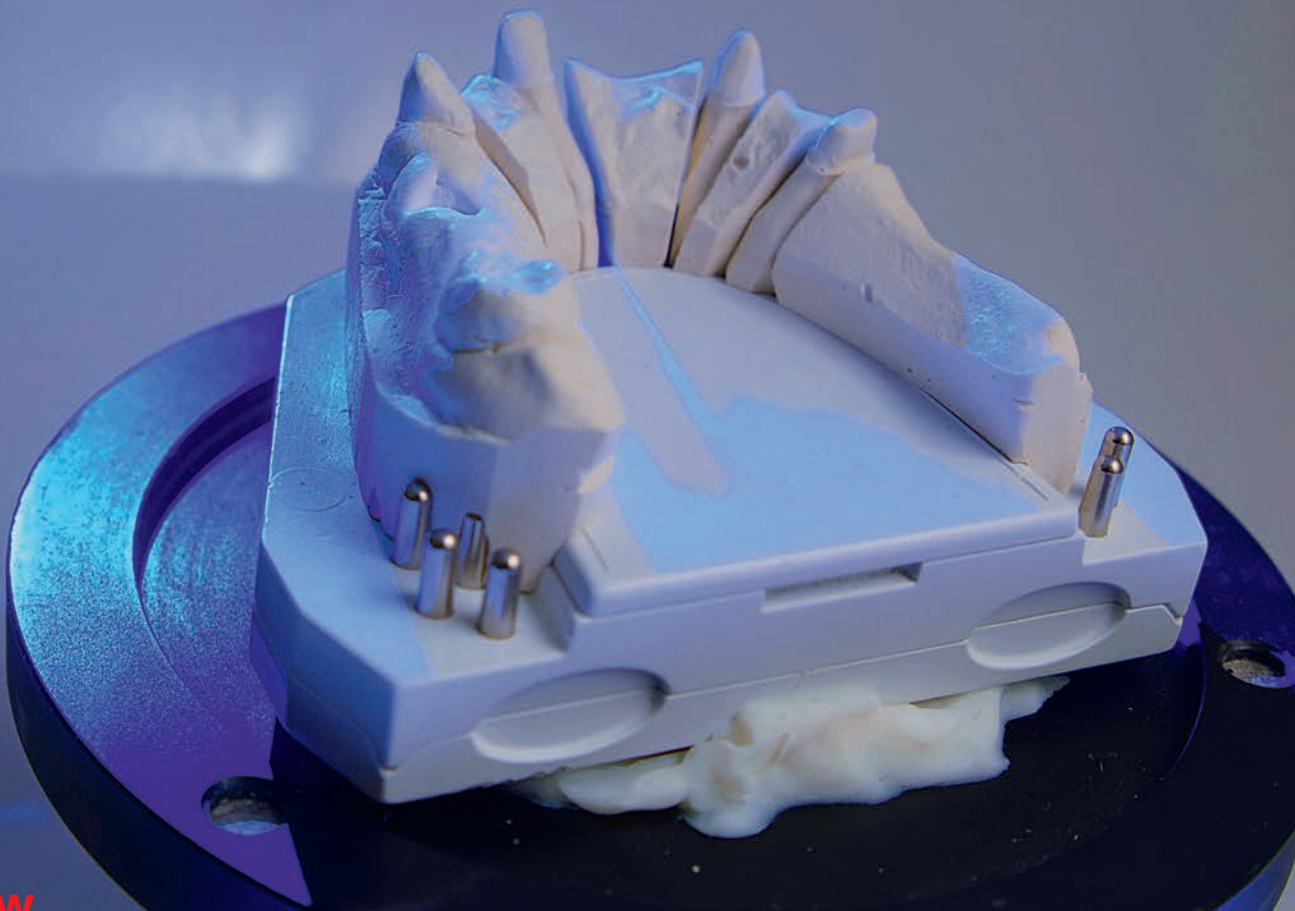


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interview

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Dr Scott D. Ganz

Editor-in-Chief



Signs of recovery

As we approach the last month of 2021, we can reflect on how our lives have changed during the global pandemic. Regardless of where you live in the world, SARS-CoV-2 has had a profound impact on daily life, including various levels of personal restrictions: wearing masks, social distancing, vaccine mandates, decline in travel and in-person meetings, and a large population of people working remotely. While it appears that the world is slowly making progress against this devastating virus and its variants, we are not yet there. In our world of dentistry, many events have been postponed or cancelled, and some have gone remote or are a hybrid mix of both in-person and remote sessions. The largest international dental event in the world, the International Dental Show held every two years in Cologne in Germany, was pushed back from its usual time in March until September, and both the vendor participation and overall attendance were significantly lower. The good news is that the event did happen; within the new restrictions of travel and vaccine status, new products were showcased, educational courses were held, and vendors and clinical colleagues were finally able to meet face to face.

The 107th annual meeting of the American Academy of Periodontology, held in Miami in the US, was a success, as was the 103rd annual meeting of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons recently held in Nashville in Tennessee in the US. This past weekend, the American Academy of Implant Dentistry held its 70th annual conference in Chicago in the US and celebrated

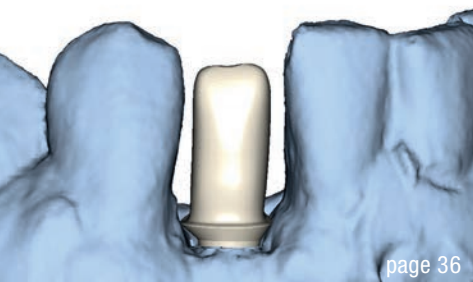
a record 63 diplomates awarded at the event. These meetings were successful despite being hindered by a lack of international attendance due to imposed travel restrictions. Clearly, there is a pent-up need for in-person meetings, continuing education, large and small symposiums, live-surgery training, hands-on workshops, etc. These are all signs that our industry is slowly recovering, albeit to a new normality.

Perhaps one of the most encouraging signs was the amazing success of the Digital Dentistry Society Global Congress, which was held in beautiful Lake Como in Italy earlier in November. Over 750 clinicians descended on the Villa Erba international congress and exhibition centre in Cernobbio to learn from international experts speaking on all aspects of digital dentistry at an incredible venue made possible by the generous support from industry sponsors. All participants were required to show their green pass, proof of vaccination or negative recent PCR test to enter the facility with their masks. Despite these limitations, the participants—from around the globe—were happy to be there to take part in this event. The signs are there, we are moving in a positive direction and hopefully the past is behind us. Please enjoy our new issue of **digital magazine** as we look forward to a very successful 2022 season and return to normality with renewed energy and spirit.

Dr Scott D. Ganz
Editor-in-Chief



page 06



page 36



page 56

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editorial

Signs of **recovery**

Dr Scott D. Ganz

03

practice management

The COVID-19 practice manager 2021: **Four steps to confidence—Part 4**

Chris Barrow

06

Teledentistry: A bridge between **present and future**

Dr Carlo Fornaini

10

interview

“Digital technologies are fundamentally **changing the dynamics** of our industry”

An interview with master dental technician Stephan Kreimer

12

Amann Girrbach goes **“shareside”**

An interview with Dr Wolfgang Reim, CEO of Amann Girrbach

16

case report

Full-arch rehabilitation with lithium disilicate secondary crowns
luted **on to the primary framework**

Joaquín García Arranz (Quini), Dr Ramón Asensio Acevedo & Oscar Jiménez Rodríguez

18

The use of autologous tooth structure as adjunct grafting modality
for **full-arch dental implant rehabilitation**

Drs Scott D. Ganz & Isaac Tawil

24

Delayed **immediate** implant placement and direct **soft-tissue** management

Dr Haki Tekyatan

30

Restorative simplicity for a challenging case with limited space

Dr Fernando Rojas-Vizcaya & Jose de San Jose Gonzalez

36

feature

“It was easy to turn off the pain”—

Patient receives dental implant under self-hypnosis

Franziska Beier

38

news

Study highlights **how artificial intelligence can be used** for detection of caries

Brendan Day

42

Apple's iOS 14 **shakes up digital dental brands**

Jeremy Booth

44

industry

3Shape Unite—the platform connecting the **digital dots in dental clinics**

Claudia Duschek

46

MODJAW: A next-generation digital dentistry solution

Extension of Ceramill CAD/CAM workflow—digital solutions lead the way
into the dental practice

Clinical advantages of KATANA Zirconia YML as related to an external
organisation's test results

48

50

52

meetings

DS World 2021: Latest innovations, product launches
and partnership **announcements**

Iveta Ramonaite

56

Registration for 2022 **Midwinter Meeting** is now open

International events

58

60

about the publisher

submission guidelines

international imprint

61

62

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Time management—there simply do not seem to be enough hours in your day.

The COVID-19 practice manager 2021: Four steps to confidence—Part 4

Chris Barrow, UK

In the first part of this series, we looked at the characteristics of great leadership and how this applies in the role of practice manager. In the second part, we looked at management and the checklist of systems required to run a modern-day dental business. In the third part, we talked about teamwork: what makes an ideal team player and an ideal team, and how does the practice manager keep the right people?

In the concluding part of this series, I will be looking at extreme self-care, making sure that the best possible version of you can turn up for work (and arrive home again!). I set the scene by running through what has inevitably become a series of present-day challenges:

- time management—there simply do not seem to be enough hours in your day;
- task management—when you get to the end of the day, you rarely get to the end of the list;

- energy management—you are living in what seems to be a perpetual state of exhaustion;
- attention management—everyone wants a piece of you and a variety of digital channels are used to try and grab your attention.

Sound familiar? I want to share some insights about each of these challenges that have helped me (and those I care for) to navigate the pandemic.

Time management

It has been suggested that time management is a myth, that we all have 24 hours in the day and the choice as to what we do with them. That sounds very harsh when you have a family to raise and bills to pay. I am lucky to be at an age when my five children have left the nest, and believe me, I recognise my good fortune (if you see what I mean), but I also remember long years of

struggling to make ends meet, come a boom or bust economy.

To anyone caring for others at home as well as at work during the pandemic, I can only offer my admiration. I do, however, want to make a point about boundaries, about learning to say NO to situations, things and people that are unhealthy for you.

People are not designed to work a 50- to 70-hour week or to take on the stresses of everyone else as well as their own—that kind of high-energy level of operation can only be sustained for short periods before you burn out. My business coach, Rachel Turner, likens this to a revolution counter on a car engine, asking two questions:

1. How long do you operate with your revolution counter in the red zone?
2. How do you get your revs back down again?

The answer to the second question can reveal much. Do you use:

- alcohol
- caffeine
- sugar
- low-quality TV
- shopping

Energy management—you are living in what seems to be a perpetual state of exhaustion.



Task management—when you get to the end of the day, you rarely get to the end of the list.

Or

- yoga
- meditation
- high-quality reading
- running/cycling/swimming/walking
- music?

Task management

Philosopher and guru Wayne Dyer famously observed that “nobody in a cancer ward ever wished they had spent more time at the office”. You get the point. That list of yours is endless—there will be no end to it, and it will outlive you. So, you must learn to do the best you



reasonably can and accept that what is left over will either get done by somebody else or never get done. You cannot work eight days a week or 27 hours a day.

Task management is another myth—there is only priority management. One of the first modern-day books on time management, *The Time Trap* by Alec MacKenzie, suggested the following:

- Make a list every day.
- A, B, C the list.
- Do the As first.

Simple enough but profound and timeless.

I am a list person—my life is a list—and I keep that list nowadays on the cloud and synced to every device I own. Do not try managing your list; simply manage your priorities (and often other people's—that can be the hard part)—back again to strong boundaries and saying NO.

Energy management

I use a simple mnemonic with my clients, SNEF:

- Sleep. Read Matthew Walker's book *Why We Sleep*. I did in 2019, and it changed my approach to the subject. Without adequate and appropriate sleep, we cannot function at high revs for any sustainable period.
- Nutrition. I do not do diets and am a happy carnivore, but I do ensure that my nutrition is healthy and balanced. COVID-19 introduced me and my wife to meal

kit company HelloFresh, and we remain committed clients.

- Exercise. Aerobic exercise has been a backbone of my life since the mid-1990s. Nowadays, I am a retired marathon runner after countless injuries, but I have taken up cycling and taken to it, both indoors and outdoors. Having two hunt, point and retrieve dogs helps as well.
- Fun. Despite everything the world throws at us, I have always regarded a healthy sense of humour as being a prerequisite of happiness (and the best version of that is the ability to laugh at oneself—which I do most days). Fun can be quality entertainment, great company or a mini-adventure.

Attention management

This is a modern-day phenomenon that seems to have crept up on us in the Internet age. There is a lot of online talk at the moment of the difference between synchronous and asynchronous communication.

Synchronous communication happens when messages can only be exchanged in real time. It requires that the transmitter and receiver are present in the same time and/or space. Examples of synchronous communication are phone calls or video meetings via platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Another example of synchronous communication is that tap on the door (or the shoulder), followed by “I know you said not to be interrupted, but...”. In this case, the transmitter is someone who wants your help (or to dump his or her load) and the receiver is you.

Attention management—everyone wants a piece of you and a variety of digital channels are used to try and grab your attention.



Focus on you; become incredibly selfish, so that you can best serve those who need you.

Asynchronous communication happens when information can be exchanged independent of time. It does not require the recipient's immediate attention, allowing him or her to respond to the message at his or her convenience. Examples of asynchronous communication are e-mails, online forums, collaborative documents and communication via platforms like WhatsApp, Slack and Asana. Another example of asynchronous communication is you taking yourself off to get some privacy—whether that is working from a local coffee shop or at home—frankly, just hiding from the synchronous stuff so that you can get your own work done or find the time and space to think.

Here is what COVID-19 did to us regarding attention demands:

1. increased the amount of synchronous communication we are expected to be available for, so that we risk burn-out
2. added pressure to treat asynchronous communication as if it were synchronous: the ping of an incoming message that we delude ourselves into thinking requires our immediate attention when it does not
3. decreased the amount of asynchronous communication that we allow for ourselves so that we do not suffer burn-out.

I am going to give away one of my big secrets of success: I ruthlessly minimise my availability for synchronous communication. This is going to sound terribly pompous (and I am sorry), but NO, I have not got a minute (unless it really,

really is a genuine emergency—and there are very few of them), and so if you want my attention you either have to book a slot with my business manager, Phillippa (my synchronous communication guardian), or send me an asynchronous message, and I will answer it when I am able to.

In summary, my advice is to:

1. create boundaries around your time;
2. prioritise your tasks;
3. conserve your energy; and
4. protect your attention.

My advice to anyone who is in a management position is simple and stark (and I am paraphrasing the late, great Thomas Leonard, father of modern coaching): become incredibly selfish, so that you can best serve those who need you.

about



Chris Barrow has been active as a consultant, trainer and coach to the UK dental profession for over 24 years. His main professional focus now is through his Extreme Business company, providing coaching and mentorship to independent dentistry around the world via face-to-face meetings, a workshop programme and an online learning platform.