

At Dee for Dentist, Technology Makes the Difference

Amy Bowman



On her path to becoming a dentist, Dee Dee Meevasin, DMD, had a lot of good fortune. Now she's paying it forward. Her journey started with her childhood dentist, turned employer, turned mentor – Dr. James Saycich. “I worked as his assistant while in high school,” said Meevasin. “He was just so passionate about dentistry. He was fun and enthusiastic, even a little kooky sometimes. I loved seeing him interact with patients – he inspired me to become a dentist.”

After graduating from the University of Las Vegas, Nevada dental school in 2007, Meevasin worked as an associate to Saycich for five years. She rented space at his practice, built a clientele and was given responsibilities including billing insurance, handling payroll, and managing front office staff. “James taught me how to run a practice,” said Meevasin. “But the most important thing he taught me was to always do my best. He said that if you do your best and do what's right, nothing can go wrong. I think about that every time I see a patient.”

Although the two dentists shared a similar philosophy, they were on very different paths. Meevasin was anxious to work with new technology – a goal that her mentor, who was running a successful practice and nearing retirement, didn't share. Instead, he encouraged Meevasin to branch out on her own and practice exactly the way she wanted.

That's when Meevasin and her husband, Mike Cruz (who is also her office manager) began searching for the perfect space to fulfill their vision: a modern, green, technology-driven practice with cutting-edge equipment. After looking at nearly 20 locations, they found a former dental office with existing technology. "It just felt right. The price was right and the space offered room to grow," said Meevasin.

In December 2011, the couple opened Dee for Dentist in Las Vegas. They gave the space a modern look with a redesign and fresh paint, but technology is what has made the difference. "Technology sets the tone for your practice," said Cruz. "It's one of the big ways to differentiate yourself. But most importantly, it works. The right technology can help diagnose and treat patients more efficiently. These are the things that make a practice successful."

The newly purchased space came with computers, workstations, a Sirona XG5 digital panoramic, Sirona C8+ chairs, autoclaves and Eaglesoft, which Meevasin and Cruz updated to the newest version. Eaglesoft simplifies scheduling, insurance and the tracking of important forms including HIPAA paperwork and updated medical history forms. "It's really organized; it dates and catalogs images, notes and treatment plans," explained Cruz. "It's a great system that makes everything quick and easy, providing staff members access to the information we need."

When deciding what new technology to add, integration is key. "If it integrates smoothly, it saves steps, saves time, is easier to use and easier to train staff on," said Cruz. That's why Schick WiFi Elite sensors, which are versatile, portable, wireless and provide great images, were one of the first additions at Dee for Dentist. In August 2013 Meevasin and Cruz purchased a CEREC, which tripled the number of crowns Meevasin places. "Without a doubt, it's made the biggest impact on our practice," Cruz explained. "We purchased it knowing it would be useful, but didn't expect it to be as productive as it's been. It changed the way we diagnose, changed treatment plans, and has increased case acceptance dramatically."

Because Meevasin wanted to do guided-implant surgery, the couple purchased a Galileos in September 2014. Many of the machine's capabilities have yet to be released, but its easy integration with CEREC and ability to diagnose more than ever have made it a favorite.

“If I were to give advice to a dental graduate seeking an associateship, I would say to look for a forward-thinking practice that stays up-to-date with technology. The pace of change is exponential, so you want to get in as soon as you can,” said Meevasin. “And if you’re looking at starting a practice, include technology in your business plan so you can start out on the right foot. Technology is expensive, but if you’re investing in it to make yourself a better clinician, the investment will be completely worth it. Your patients will be able to see that you care about providing them with the best treatment possible and it will set you apart.”

Opening Dee for Dentist has allowed Meevasin to use the updated technology she wanted and gives her the chance to pay it forward. The practice runs a charity program called Fills Good with the goal of raising \$1,500 every three months for a local non-profit organization. Each quarter, 100 percent of cash received for filling services goes toward the program until the goal is reached. More than \$7,500 has been donated to five organizations since late 2013. In addition, Meevasin and her team regularly volunteer their time and even open their doors to provide free dentistry for members of the community who otherwise could not afford the care.

Meevasin was named alumna of the year at her alma mater in 2014 for being technologically advanced and for giving back to the community. “For me, it’s important to give back,” she said. “It’s an awesome feeling when people who can’t afford it are able to get the care they need.” Meevasin is paying it forward as she continues on her journey, and it seems her good fortune just keeps growing.

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