

Client Experience in Oral Healthcare is the Doorway into Better Wellness

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by Besa Begu, Dental Hygienist, Oral Health Promoter, Kosovo

By occupation a dental hygienist, I see myself as the natural link between healthcare in its traditional understanding, and the ever-expanding sector – or industry – of wellness. This link embodies the multiple dimensions and nuances shaping the profile of the dental hygienist and oral healthcare of the future. We are clinicians, healers, healthcare providers, educators, administrators, entrepreneurs, and influencers of behavior change.

This behavior change is two-faceted. It helps shift the mindset of oral health providers that they are not merely providing a dental procedure. It helps educate patients – who in my practice I call “clients” – as they should get what they pay for.

For some ten years, I worked as a “traditional” dental hygienist in Kosovo, where I came to live as an adult (as I grew up and was educated in Sweden), which is an entirely different context in many aspects, including the approach to dental prevention and care, and overall wellness. During those ten years of practicing the traditional way of dental care, the feeling that there was a lot more I could do for the clients and for the concept of oral healthcare among the people in my country began to build up inside me every passing day.

Kosovo lags behind as far as a preventive dental hygiene care system is concerned. Clients have little awareness of the steps they can take in advance, have a limited knowledge of the range of services they can get from a dental hygienist, and they feel apprehension when making dental appointments. As a result, “dentophobia” is widespread.

On the other hand, most dental hygienists also still follow a more “by the old book” approach, following a rather strict “doctor-patient” rapport, treating the “problem,” and giving advice post treatment procedures.

To me, this is no longer enough. Technological advances, how we communicate even through social media, and a growing focus on wellness and preventive care have shaped a new reality, one that we must join before it is too late. In 2019, I went through a major change in my own

approach to my work, and that was incited by two key elements: using social media to promote my work, and the decision to focus on personal growth and self-development. I began the new journey as a dental hygienist investing my resources – time above all – in creating a space where I could implement my philosophy of oral healthcare. In addition to a dental hygienist, I became an entrepreneur when I opened my clinic: the first one in the region that combines oral health education with innovative techniques of dental hygiene. My clinic operates from one of the largest beauty and wellness studios in the region, also founded by a woman.



It was a strategic thought process that led me to open my clinic inside this beauty and wellness studio, to reinforce the message I wanted to give – that oral health is a key component of wellness, health, and beauty. Also, by operating from an “unlikely” setting, I would be reaching my clients in a different way, and, thus, push them towards thinking about oral health and preventive measures from a different perspective.

I overcame my fear of being on my own and finally gave life to my dream of running an avant-garde clinic to serve my clients better. The idea of starting my own business was a bit stressful, especially since Kosovo as a market was not yet ready to comprehend the value of preventive dental care. Yet, I wanted to persevere in my hopes and ideas.

I already had an amazing product, called the Guided Biofilm Therapy, which is a pain-free and non-invasive dental cleaning method. Once the clients become aware of it and try this method, it becomes their preferred way of looking after their oral health.



I had already gained experience and mastered the needed skills over the years. I already had a workflow in place, which is based on professionalism, patient integrity, and sales. A key component of my process is a good and reliable CRM (client relationship management) tool. This tool maintains patient data cards and their engagement through recall systems, impacting the awareness among clients of how important prevention is, and encourages them towards recall visits. Just to illustrate my point, in the second year of the business operation, **80% of clients were on recall visits** thanks to such processes put in place, and, of course, quality of service.

This is how I have succeeded in strongly positioning my business in the market: through a combination of company values, integrity, top-class service and client-centered experience, state-of-the-art equipment, and, above all, my passion for making a difference.



Around the time that I opened my business, I was approached to become a GBT ambassador for EMS dental. The timing could not have been better. I had already put in place my workflow, which clients seemed to appreciate. They kept coming back. I was harnessing the power of social media to promote, not just my new business, but most importantly, the new philosophy and approach to oral healthcare that I am seeking to embed in the mindset of the people in my country, especially the younger generations.

In conclusion, what this journey has taught me is not so complicated but often overlooked in the field of oral health in our part of the world. Setting up a proper system set you up for success.

BOX: Besa's Tips for Beyond Mere Oral Care

- From the moment patients check in to the very end, explaining the process step by step in easy-to-understand language and in a friendly manner, uphold the business values and demonstrate integrity.
- Creating an inviting and calming environment, visually and emotionally, nurtures client-practitioner long term relationships.
- Honouring the time and presence of clients by giving them your undivided attention and unwaveringly top-notch professional service.
- Committing to using the power of social media for education of clients, general population, and humanizing the dental hygienist profession.

About the Author



Experienced Swedish graduated Dental Hygienist with a demonstrated history of working both clinically and within oral health promotion in fieldwork. She has a passion for oral health promotion and choose to proudly call herself Oral Health Promoter. Her passion of promoting oral health among people in her home country, Kosovo, but also worldwide (through social media), has been one of her priorities in her career. She is the founder of NGO- Center for Preventive Dentistry (non-government organization) where she educated more than 1500 children in oral health with different ethnic and social backgrounds. She is also the winner of 2004 scholarship of Swedish Dental Hygienist Association, where she was selected to implement an oral health care project among post-war children in Center for Mother and Children in Prishtina, Kosovo.