



Going **it alone** as a solo practice with purpose

An interview with Dr Florian Fries

By Marlene Hartinger, OEMUS MEDIA

Right in the heart of the southern German town of Friedrichshafen, dentist Dr Florian Fries runs a modern practice for oral health, seeking to treat patients with empathy, mindfulness and transparency. To achieve this, he develops comprehensive treatment plans based on state-of-the-art prevention. In this interview, he discusses his practice philosophy and points out how the practice format he has chosen supports this.

Dr Fries, larger practice structures are the current trend. Why did you decide to do the opposite?

You are quite right, dental practice chains and franchises are increasing significantly, particularly in the larger German cities, and this has been the case for

some time now in Switzerland too. For me, however, a solo practice was the way to go. The practice which I established in Friedrichshafen in 2018 is the second one I have been able to pursue as a dentist in private practice. In 2009, I took over a practice in Überlingen and managed it as a solo practice until 2014. After handing over this practice to two successors, I completed an MBA in healthcare management at the Munich Business School, enabling me to understand the complex German health insurance system from a business management perspective. I then considered a career in the dental industry and explored this area; however, having a passion for the intricate craft of dentistry, I ultimately decided to return to a career as a self-employed dentist.

“I decided to work with marketing professionals right from the outset and teamed up with WHITEVISION (www.whitevision.de), an excellent communications agency with expertise in the field of white-label brands, as it was clear to me that a start-up in a well-served location such as Friedrichshafen could only be a success if it had a clear communication and brand strategy.”

What are the advantages of a solo practice?

After my first practice, I made the conscious decision to start up a new practice in which I could freely develop and design my very own concept of a dental practice. A key factor for me in the conceptual design of my boutique practice in Friedrichshafen was to deliver particularly individual, personal and professionally demanding care for my patients. From the very beginning, it has been a special concern of mine and my team to engage with patients holistically, taking their personality into account too, to jointly achieve an individually optimal treatment result in a close, trusting and

cooperative relationship—an opportunity supported by the practice being small. I value the freedom to be able to determine independently all aspects of my practice, whether in patient communication and treatment, respectful staff management, interior design or external image.

Are there also trade-offs with this kind of practice? Do you see yourself in a larger structure in the long term?

Being able to practise almost entirely in an autonomous manner is in itself a great opportunity, but at the same





time also presents a constant challenge. There are certainly also days and weeks when I would like to have more of an exchange with colleagues, days when I would like to share some of the burden and be able to conceptualise and further develop ideas together

with a colleague. It would also make sense from a business standpoint to be able to extend practice hours and avoid closing the practice during holidays and to better amortise purchased inventory. Therefore, I cannot say conclusively whether there might one day be a Florian Fries and partner dental practice after all. It'll be exciting to see what the future holds in store in this regard.

You offer a wide range of dental services—what is at the core of your approach regarding your offering?

We do indeed offer a wide range of dental treatments in our practice, but we are also aware of our limitations. For example, we refer complex surgical therapies, such as complex augmentations, to experienced maxillofacial surgeons to be able to guarantee that our patients will receive reliable and optimal results.

Of course, your question quite rightly relates to whether general dentists or dental specialists achieve better and more reliable treatment results. I believe there is absolute justification for both approaches. Of course, in these times, it is very difficult to follow all the often-rapid developments in the individual disciplines; however, complex restorations often require a very broad and nevertheless optimal therapeutic approach on an ad hoc basis, and for this reason, it's not always possible to involve a specialist. Also, referral practices in small towns such as Friedrichshafen do not always cover all





disciplines; for example, we do not yet have a specialist endodontic practice.

Why did you integrate Guided Biofilm Therapy (GBT) into your practice concept?

From the very beginning, it was very important to me to offer my patients state-of-the-art prophylaxis. GBT is the right concept for me. On the one hand, the AIRFLOW Prophylaxis Master is a great device, and the instruments are proven to be effective and gentle on tissue and are therefore patient-friendly. On the other hand, the GBT protocol is clearly structured and can be individually adapted to all clinical indications. It is very well suited for preventive professional tooth cleaning but also for secondary prophylaxis treatment in periodontitis and peri-implantitis patients.

For the GBT certification, you first had to invest in equipment and the further training of your staff. Was that worth it?

Indeed, the costs were initially higher than for other methods, the equipment is more expensive, and I had three of my staff trained at the Swiss Dental Academy. But it has been worth it in every respect. GBT allows us to treat patients who were previously not interested in prophylaxis or who had reservations because of past bad experiences. Patients understand that the systematic preventive approach benefits them in the long term and are therefore much more accepting of an extensive treatment plan. For all these reasons, GBT prophylaxis is very well

booked and fits in perfectly with the positioning of my practice. It also facilitates my ambition of dealing with patients and my team with empathy, mindfulness and transparency.

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about



Dr Fries' treatment focus is aesthetic dentistry, microscopic endodontics and guided implantology. Prophylaxis, based on EMS's Guided Biofilm Therapy protocol, forms an integral part of his practice concept. Complex overall restoration leading to lasting, stable and aesthetically pleasing outcomes is the primary focus of treatment.

After the initial diagnosis, Dr Fries prepares a detailed treatment plan, depending on the patient's needs and wishes, with the objective of restoring oral health, aesthetics and function. In addition, reliable backward planning with digital support such as intra-oral scanning, digital radiographs, CBCT and digital photography plays an important role in detecting any stumbling blocks early on and in supporting a predictable outcome.