Optimum Timetable for Starting a Practice

Beginning practice requires planning and organization. Using this timetable, you can fill in dates and note the parties responsible for the designated actions. Such forethought helps to assure that the opening of your office will proceed smoothly.

9 months to I year before beginning practice	Date:
6 months to 9 months before beginning practice	Date:
3 months to 6 months before beginning practice	Date:
2 months to 3 months before beginning practice	Date:
I month before beginning practice	Date:
Opening Day	Date:

NINE MONTH	IS TO ONE YEAR	BEFORE	E STARTING PRACTICE Date:
Check off as completed	Responsible Party		
		1.	Think about what you want in life. If you are married, discuss your goals with your spouse. Decide where you want to live work. Consider professional, economical, and recreational aspects of these areas.
		2.	Decide a location by checking with:
			Dental school and residency program directors in areas under consideration
			State dental societies
			Recruiting firms
			Ads in journals and information online
			Personal contacts
		3.	Investigate real estate availability and price, schools, "feel of the community". Best done by subscribing for several months to newspapers in towns you're considering or checking city and Chamber of Commerce websites in each community.
		4.	Obtain demographic data regarding possible location(s) from:
			Regional Planning Commission
			Census Bureau (local offices are in major cities and state capitols). Be specific about the type of information you want about the city or geographic area: characteristics, growth patterns, potential, etc.
			Chamber of Commerce
			Dental Society
		5.	Visit with other health care professionals about the area's need for dentists.
		6.	Schedule visits to practices you may wish to join.
		7.	Contact state dental licensing board regarding license procedures.
		8.	Make final decision on practice location.

 	9.	Check on membership for:
 		Local dental society
 		State dental society
 		American Dental Association
 		Specialty Association
 	10.	Obtain and compare contracts from practice you are considering joining.
 	11.	Begin to calculate your net worth in terms of capital available for moving, associateship or start-up costs.
 	12.	Reserve office phone number, if possible.
 	13.	Determine the printing date for the telephone book. List your name in both white and yellow pages. Research website designers and hosting companies in the area.
 	14.	Visit banks and begin "shopping" for a credit line or long term loan. Obtain forms for personal financial statements and loan applications, and meet loan officers to determine what information the bank needs to evaluate your application.
 	15.	Draw up an income/expenditure projection for first year of practice. Talk with several bankers about loans and submit applications.

Responsible Check off as completed Party 1. Check sites for leasing/buying dental office space. 2. Check zoning ordinances with local city offices and/or board regarding signage, type of businesses allowed in the area and ask about any anticipated changes. 3. Determine the office layout and design. 4. Check utility requirements for the office. 5. If leasing, determine needed leasehold improvements. 6. Evaluate office space lease or purchase contracts with your attorney before you sign them. 7. Determine dental equipment needed. If installing x-ray equipment, check with the state health department, radiological health section, to see if special registration or certificate is required. Same checks should be made for laboratory facilities. 8. Obtain bids on major office equipment. (Compare lease vs. purchase.) Get written guarantee of delivery date and intransit insurance. • Telephone equipment · Computer system • Intercom system (decide if it is to be separate from telephone system.) Photocopy machine, fax Reception room/office furniture and décor 9. If entering an associateship, finalize the details of the agreement. The senior dentist's attorney will write the contract. You and your attorney will approve. I0. Choose advisors: Accountant Attorney Banker Insurance broker(s) Investment counselor Management consultant

Real estate broker

Other (e.g. computer consultant)

Date: _____

SIX TO NINE MONTHS BEFORE STARTING PRACTICE

 11.	Obtain narcotic license:
	Federal: Application for registration available through the Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration. : www.dea.gov
 12.	Inform the state dental licensing board of your new address.

THREE TO SI	X MONTHS BE	FORE STA	RTING PRACTICE Date:
Check off as completed	Responsible Party		
completed	r arry	1.	Obtain answering services:
			Dentist's exchange
			Personal (office)
			Call forwarding
		2.	Begin investigating retirement funding.
		3.	If you plan to treat welfare patients, meet with the professional representative from Medicaid (administered by your state Health and Human Services Department), Blue Shield, and other major commercial carriers regarding:
			Participation requirements Provider number(s) Procedure codes Prevailing fees
		4.	Apply for hospital staff privileges
		5.	Decide on a logo and color theme for stationery and other paperwork.
		6.	Shop, compare and order computer system and equipment.
		7.	Plan payroll system.
		8.	Order sign for office.
		9.	Notify dental supply company representatives and other appropriate sales people that you are beginning practice.
		10.	Send personal notes to individuals in the community that may help "spread the word"; e.g. real estate agents, pharmacists.

Check off as Responsible completed Party 1. Obtain professional malpractice insurance. 2. Obtain office insurance **Premises Liability** Business interruption --some advisors say this insurance is not necessary depending on elimination period. Follow advice of your insurance broker Employee fidelity bond to protect against embezzlement. Office contents Umbrella: provides comprehensive catastrophic liability claims beyond the limits of your regular liability program. Worker's Compensation: this is often required by law and is determined on a state-by-state basis. Check with your state Worker's Compensation Board or industrial commission. Health insurance for you and your family Disability Life Automobile 3. Install telephone equipment and computer system 4. Make arrangements for patients to pay via online payments or by credit cards through your local bank or other agency. Rates are competitive and vary greatly. Shop for the lowest rate. 5. If there is a patient referral service available through the local dental society, provide essential information. 6. Investigate memberships in civic and social organizations. 7. Arrange for movers, if necessary. 8. Contact your state Department of Labor for state employment regulations. 9. Write job descriptions for employees. 10. Write policy manual for employees

11. Start interviewing for business and clinical personnel.

Date: _____

TWO TO THREE MONTHS BEFORE STARTING PRACTICE

 	12.	Apply for your Federal Employer Identification Number through your local Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office, (SS-4 Form).
 	13.	Apply for your State Employer Identification Number through your state office/labor department.
 	14.	Obtain "Small Business Tax Guide" and your federal estimated income tax forms through your local IRS office or attend small business tax seminar at your local IRS office.
 	15.	Obtain state estimated income tax forms through your state tax office or from your accountant.
 	16.	Hire a payroll service or seek training about preparing payroll and records, etc.
 	17.	Review tax requirements with your accountant.
	18.	If needed arrange:
 		Janitorial service
 		Laundry service
 		Lawn maintenance
 		Snow removal
 	19.	Order clinical supplies and set up inventory control system.
 	20.	Order formal announcements.
	21.	Order business supplies:
 		Patient records
 		Appointment cards
 		Business cards
 		Patient recall cards at <u>www.practicon.com</u>
 		Stationery and envelopes. Use your logo on all printed materials.
 		Deposit stamp for checks
 		Prescription pads
 		Preprinted telephone message pads.
 		Practice brochure
 		CDT insurance code book. Available from Praticon at 800-959-9505 or order online at www.practicon.com .

 	22.	Determine office hours.
 	23.	Determine fee schedule. Do not undercharge.
 	24.	Subscribe to magazine/periodicals for reception room. Subscribe to professional journals and newsletters.
 	25.	Purchase office equipment and furniture based on bid obtain earlier.

ONE MONTH	BEFORE STAF	RTING PRA	CTICE Date:
Check off as completed	Responsible Party		
		1.	Decide on collection/insurance assignment policies and other work systems such as block scheduling patterns, recare system, inventory control for clinical and office supplies.
		2.	Hire and train office personnel regarding:
			Telephone techniques
			Collections
			Appointments
			Policies of your office
		3.	Have utilities turned on:
			Telephone
			Electricity
			Gas
			Water
		4.	Begin setting up office. Install sign for high visibility.
		5.	Install all remaining office and operatory equipment.
		6.	Start making appointments.
		7.	Establish a petty cash fund.
		8.	Establish a benevolent fund for donating to local charities and projects.
		9.	Announcement in community paper and online:
			News release
		10.	Announcements mailed to dentists, physicians, pharmacists, hospitals, health groups, real estate agents, etc.

Check off as Responsible completed Party	Date:		
	,	1.	See first patient.
		2.	Congratulate yourself and celebrate. You are now in private practice!