



A Fresh Start with Material Management

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2021 is upon us and it's time to start fresh, reset, and get organized! I'm challenging your group practice to make a resolution – to streamline your clinical systems so you can control the abundance of dental materials and products that can create chaos and clutter! But don't worry... you don't have to do it alone!

When I met with my accountant, he noted that our office spends less on supplies than almost all of his other clients – 10-20% savings would be a conservative estimate.

Dr. Derek Abramowski, 2020

Let me introduce myself – my name is Kay, and I am an LDA and clinical efficiency consultant with Zirc Dental Products. Zirc is an innovative company that has been helping practices become safe, efficient, and happy for over 50 years. We have an incredible team of efficiency consultants who are all former clinicians who have walked the walk and talked the talk, and we are ready to help!

Let's address the issue — dentistry requires so much inventory management due to the overabundance of materials and supplies that tend to be stored in way too many places. There

are materials shoved in cabinets, treatment rooms, storage areas, hall closets, the sterilization center – you name it! This can make managing inventory time consuming and ineffective.

Without a decent inventory management system in place, practices can acquire so much extra stuff over time. Dental reps drop off product samples that may never get used so they live in drawers. You jump on the “buy 10 cartridges of bite registration material, get one free” deal, because heck, it’s a great deal! And when new materials are purchased, the old, unused materials get to hang out endlessly in a cabinet with all the other old, replaced materials... just in case. But what if this group practice location only has one or two dentists? How likely is it that some of that material will expire before it gets used? What if there’s another great deal you can’t pass up? Unless your practice has a huge storage area or multiple clinicians that will use up a large quantity of materials in a reasonable amount of time, this is only creates a storage nightmare.



Dr. Derek Abramowski of Southside Dental in Monticello, Minn., recently had Zirc’s efficiency consultants come into his practice to help the team get organized. After cleaning the practice out, Dr. Abramowski was surprised to say, “We found a ton of expired products. We ended up with an entire bin with hundreds of extra instruments. That is a ton of money just sitting in drawers we didn’t even know we had.” Southside Dental was very clean and orderly – like most practices – before the Zirc team arrived, but you just don’t realize how much extra unusable or unneeded stuff you have until you really start digging through *everything*!

So... what problems can arise when there’s excess inventory stored in multiple locations?

- Money is lost due to expired materials
- Clutter creates a stressful and less productive environment
- Time is wasted looking for needed items
- Supplies and materials are ordered too often and overstocked
- Stock is unintentionally depleted
- Treatment rooms need to be restocked often
- Procedures are stopped midway to get missing or lost materials
- Schedules fall behind

- Extra time spent in room turn-over
- Training new team members is difficult and time-consuming
- Patient perception is poor, and referrals and treatment plan acceptance may decrease

Feeling inspired to reset and get organized? Start by removing procedure-specific materials, such as etch, composite, retraction cord, or articulating paper from treatment room drawers. Clinicians may find creative ways to get all of these procedure-specific materials organized in treatment room drawers but having all of these materials in multiple drawers in multiple rooms can create lengthy room setups; lost, expired, or missing materials; and an over-abundance of stock. Not to mention, we all know what a few hectic and busy weeks can do to even the most organized drawers! When we're in a hurry, the supplies can get pushed to the wayside and soon the drawers are scattered with materials that have strayed from their original spots.

The messier the drawers become, the more time-consuming it is to find the materials needed to set up for a procedure. When the assistant or hygienist cannot find what they are looking for right away, they tend to either run to the other treatment room or get a new one from the storage area. Eventually, this results in having multiple opened materials hiding in the drawers and when finally discovered, they are often expired. Materials and money wasted!

This can cause problems during appointments as well. The dentist and assistant are in the middle of a procedure when the assistant discovers they are missing one of the required materials – it's happened to the best of us! But now the procedure comes to a screeching halt as the assistant rushes to remove their gloves, wash their hands, run to the storage area to grab the material and run back to the treatment room. Then they have to wash their hands again before quickly trying to stuff damp hands into gloves – and any clinician knows how difficult it is to get damp hands into gloves!

It's estimated that three minutes are lost each time a procedure is stopped to run and find something. Not to mention, this adds stress and frustration for clinicians and patients. Just think about how often you or a team member have to leave to find a missing material... that can really add up to a lot of time wasted throughout the course of a day! This wasted time affects your patients too. Dr. Cappy Sinclair of Virginia Beach, Va., revealed, "My biggest pet peeve is having to get up mid-procedure. There is nothing that can break the confidence more of the practitioner than to tell the patient to wait while we have to go get something."

We at Zirc recommend taking all procedure-specific materials from the treatment room drawers, separating them by procedure, and then organizing them in a color-coded tub with a locking cover. By choosing a different colored tub for each procedure, you'll be set up for quick identification and grab and go organization that benefits everyone in the practice! Whether a doctor is setting up for an emergency patient after hours or a temp is in office for the first time,

everyone is set up for success. Simply grab the blue composite tub and all the materials will be right at your fingertips and safely nestled into our variety of tub accessories.

Tubs are truly the key to maintaining control over material inventory. Think of it as a portable drawer! Ideally, we recommend storing the tubs and overstock inventory in the central sterilization area. This gives everyone easy access to the tubs so that they can grab and go to the treatment room, move to a different room for another patient if needed, and then back to central sterilization for storage. Since the tubs and the materials inside them will always be returned to that same spot, treatment room set up will be faster. And you'll easily be able to see when an item is running low.

A team member should be assigned to restock all the tubs each week. Having overstock products stored in the same vicinity of the tubs make restocking fast and easy. I remember how time-consuming it was to run up and down the halls from the treatment room to the many different storage areas and loading up on supplies before heading back to the treatment room to stock the drawers. Then I'd move on to the next room and start the process all over. It was such a waste of time when I could have been doing something much more productive! If a material happens to run low before the weekly restock, you'll be able to swiftly refill it between patients when you return the tub to central sterilization. Material inventory management no longer has to be the major task it once was!

Start off 2021 on the right foot and stop wasting time and money due to the lack of a good material management system. Dr. Abramowski has been seeing results ever since, "When I met with my

accountant, he noted that our office spends less on supplies than almost all of his other clients!" Dentistry will always require a lot of supplies, but Zirc can help you find a scalable solution that will help make each day easier and less stressful for your team. We know it can be an overwhelming process, so Zirc offers several services that help your team each step of the way. Let's get started with a free [Organization Conversation](#) and chat about your current frustrations, concerns, and goals! Head over to bit.ly/OC_FreeTub to sign up and you'll receive a FREE Complete Tub kit just for chatting with us — a \$72 value!



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