

THE LEADING SURGERY DESIGN TEAM AT LEVITCH DESIGN ASSOCIATES ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT

BUILDING, INTERIORS AND MARKETING IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PRACTICE PRESENTATION

Style Guide #2 2010

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The right type of lighting can effectively replicate natural light throughout your practice.

Q: *“I’m looking to relocate my surgery, and have found space that would otherwise be suitable, however it is on the lower ground level and lacks the natural light I would like. Is there any way this can be addressed?”*

A: Historically, daylight was the primary light source within many buildings, and architectural designs aimed to make the most of what natural light was available. Over the last few decades however, electric lighting has transformed workplace design by meeting most of the occupants lighting requirements. As a result, there are many buildings that offer very little natural light to some areas. The point to note is that this space may still be suitable for your practice, if appropriate lighting elements are incorporated into your surgery design.

Different wavelengths of light effect the human body in numerous ways – beyond controlling our circadian rhythms, natural light stimulates other essential biological functions including metabolic processes and brain function. Studies have also revealed the effect of light on our Nervous and Endocrine Systems¹.

Sunlight itself is composed of ultraviolet, visible, and infrared radiation. This visible portion of the spectrum comprises a relatively even distribution of colours². Artificial lighting aims to replicate, and therefore replace natural light.

- ◆ Incandescent light bulbs produce a significant amount of infrared radiation, while the visible light they produce is usually at the red-orange end of the spectrum. This

type of light source is being phased out in favour of more energy efficient lamps.

- ◆ Fluorescent (cool white) light bulbs produce light at the blue-green end of the spectrum, whilst producing very little ultraviolet radiation.
- ◆ ‘Full Spectrum’ fluorescent bulbs are designed to replicate the special characteristics of natural light. These light bulbs are designed to replicate the ultraviolet portion of the natural light spectrum, across all colours, to provide the benefits of natural light.

Lighting is an essential component of the aesthetic appeal of any practice. Just as the finishes within a practice must be carefully chosen to create your desired effect, lighting levels, and the types of lighting used must also be given considerable thought.

Incorporating various types of lighting into the design of your practice can work to create an appealing uplifting atmosphere, or a moody, more sedate tone. Lighting can take on either ‘cool’ or ‘warm’ characteristics, depending upon which end of the spectrum they utilise. Cooler tones are generally more vivid, whilst warm tones are more muted and relaxing.

It is generally accepted that brighter, more intense lighting can increase operating efficiency, by directly impacting on our sense of alertness and well-being, as this most closely replicates the effect of direct natural sunlight.

In clinical areas the lighting level generally needs to be much brighter than other areas of a practice to ensure fatigue is eliminated and productivity is maintained at

optimum levels. Fluorescent and full spectrum fluorescent lighting should be incorporated into clinical areas to ensure these benefits.

In waiting and reception areas, more ambient lighting is appropriate, and can be created by using low voltage, or halogen light bulbs. A subtle lightbox can be used to effectively imitate natural light filtering through a window. Task lighting should be incorporated where needed for staff to avoid affecting the overall ambience of the space.

Q: *I'm looking to refresh my branding. I have appointed a designer to create my new visual identity, but I can't brief them as I'm not sure what I want. Can you give me some guidance as to how to approach this?*

A: Creating a totally new look for a brand can be a daunting experience, and quite often it can be difficult to know where to start.

Your brand is a visual representation of you and your practice. It tells your story. As such, for your designer to be able to create this 'story', the best starting place is to cover the core elements which also happen to be the essential elements of any good piece of journalism – who, what, when, where, why and how.



◆ **Who are you?**

Who are you and who are your staff? Are there any ideas that you and your staff believe your new branding is important to represent about you?

◆ **Who are your patients?**

What is the demographic profile of your patients in terms of age, income, lifestyle?

◆ **What is your business?**

What is it that you do? A general dentist that provides dental care for the entire family and a Periodontist will need their branding to provide very different visual clues as to what it is they do and who they provide care for.

◆ **When will your patients and potential patients be coming into contact with you?**

This element ties into 'What is your business', and relates to the circumstances under which your patients come to see you. Do they come to see you to maintain general oral health, or for cosmetic reasons? Will they be seeing you of their own accord, or due to an issue that has arisen?

◆ **Where are you based?**

If you are based near the coast or in a regional area, are there elements of your surroundings that you could reference in your branding? This can be effective in places where tapping into a sense of community can be beneficial for business owners.

If you are based in a city centre, do you want your brand to reflect the fast-paced nature of the area, or is your desire to intentionally create contrast with a more serene feel?

◆ **Why do your patients choose you over competitors?**

Do your current patients come to you because of your convenient location, or is it because they feel comfortable in your practice? Did they seek you out because of your fantastic reputation, or were they referred to you by other patients or a referring dentist?

◆ **How do your patients come to you?**

If you are a specialist and your patients are referred to you by other dentists, then your brand should also appeal to both the dentist and the patient.

Once your designer has all of this information, they will have a good mental picture not only of you and your practice, but also your target demographic. A good brand is one that marries the image you are hoping to project with elements that appeal to your target demographic.

In creating a brand identity, designers aim to tap into our preconceived ideas of what different visual clues represent. Brands aimed at teenagers generally utilise brighter colours to grab attention and edgier fonts, whilst black, white and metallics and classic, structured fonts are used by higher end brands to show exclusivity. These branding principles have proven to work just as well in marketing different types of dentistry as they have for consumer brands. ◆

References

1. "A Literature Review of the Effects of Natural Light on Building Occupants", *National Renewable Energy Laboratory*, July 2002.
2. *Underground Space Design: Part 1: Overview of Subsurface Space Utilization*, J Carmody & R L. Sterling, 1993.

If you need help with interior or graphic design, we would be happy to evaluate your current situation and answer any of your queries. Kimberley Ward and Anne Levitch can be contacted at: info@levitch.com.au or + 6 12 9880 9300.



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