



Hassle-free fit out

Busy dentist found the perfect “auto pilot” team to renovate his practice

By Danny Chan

When the shopping centre that houses his dental practice underwent major redevelopment about two years ago, Dr Karan S Baran saw an opportunity to expand his two-chair clinic. The revamp of Warriewood Square, a shopping centre located in the Northern Beaches region of Sydney, meant that new space was being made available to existing tenants, and the astute dentist jumped on the chance to do some redeveloping of his own.

With additional square footage, the owner of United Dental Clinic wanted to increase the number of surgeries at his suburban practice and make room for an in-house CBCT unit. These were necessary changes to accommodate the increasing demand and influx of new patients. At the same time, Dr Baran wanted to modernize UDC's look and feel, create a more efficient workflow and incorporate an open-concept sterilization zone.

The dentist already had a fit out firm in mind for the job – healthcare design and construction specialist, Perfect Practice. In fact, it was a decision he made years before even starting his own practice.

Dr Baran was so impressed by the renovation works the team at Levitch Design Australia had done for a former employer and a friend's clinic, that by the time it came for his own clinic's makeover, his mind was made up.

“I worked at a practice on the central coast that was designed by them. They also designed and built my friend's practice in Queensland. I loved everything that they did for these clinics and I made up my mind that if I ever decided to have my own practice, I would use their services.”

It wasn't just the beautiful designs or efficient layouts that convinced the Practice Principal. Dr Baran knew that he needed a

team that could work autonomously, and that includes managing all liaisons with the council and shopping mall management.

“As a company specialising in healthcare design and construction, I knew Levitch Design had tons of direct experience working on establishments very similar to mine, so I went into this project feeling confident that they could work with minimum input from me.”

“As it turned out, the shopping centre's design team wanted to be involved in every aspect of the design, from colour scheme to the entire look of the place. The design team at Levitch Design dealt with the shopping centre management throughout the building process so that I did not need to get involved at all. To me, this was a big blessing as I was running a busy practice and could not afford to give any time to attend the frequent meetings required to iron out the nitty gritty aspects.”





It wouldn't be surprising if the design team at Warriewood Square had been a little pedantic about maintaining a consistent look and feel in keeping with the centre's stylish \$84 million makeover. And if the look they were going for was "elegant chic with a touch of modernity", then the revamped United Dental Clinic was perfectly dressed for the party.

As soon as you step into the clinic, an impression quickly gets formed, that of a modern, professional and customer-oriented practice. These positive attributes are conveyed through the contemporary flair of the design, urban decor and lighting as well as a clever mix of colours.

If there were ever future-proof colours that exude unassuming charm and contemporary sophistication, it must be the combination of ash grey and bluish tones that were used to sublime effect here. The grey walls provide the solid background colour while scattered blue tones in objects and fixtures add visual interest.

The most eye-catching blue object at the front desk area is the logo's central motif, a cyan streak that depicts a reclining patient. The backlit logo emblazoned across the grey wall behind the reception counter sets the colour theme for the entire waiting room: Grey rug with bright blue lines, grey and blue chairs, TV area with grey wall and blue-top floral display table.

The rug, which demarcates the waiting zone, cleverly contrasts, both in tone and texture, with the "back wall" of tinted glass windows. Subtle hints of modernity may be inferred from the front counter design – stark black lines that separate neutral-coloured panels – as well as hexagonally shaped ottomans. A hanging lamp adds an orange glow of warmth to the front desk, conveying a welcoming atmosphere for interaction between receptionist and patients.

Beyond the beauty and ambience, the design team's experience also shone in the layout. Shopping centre shop units are not exactly known for their generous size or proportionate dimensions, so space limitations can be very challenging. Thankfully, LDA made

optimal use of the elongated 103-sqm floorplan. Each operatory has a neatly apportioned space with smart considerations for window placements, wall-hugging cabinetry and lighting. "The team considered all the important elements that make up an ergonomic workspace for efficient workflows," Dr Baran commends.

The dentist is most pleased with the design and execution of the open steri area, not least because of the challenges involved. In keeping with its QIP (Quality Innovation Performance) credentials, the steri area design needed to conform to stringent guidelines for sterilization and disinfection as set out by the general practice accreditation provider.

"Once again, the healthcare-specific experience of Levitch Design proved to be immensely beneficial, if not critical. The steri area looks as good as it is functional and ergonomic."

Levitch Design did much more than just tick boxes, Dr Baran says, but went out of their way to make sure everything progressed smoothly. He singled out lead designer, Dharmi Vora for praise.

"Dharmi is very experienced and made the whole process very enjoyable. We had the freedom to choose whatever we wanted and then Dharmi would also put forth her expert recommendations."

Whether it was Dharmi's work ethic, the tradies' workmanship or the design team's effective communication skills, Dr Baran is grateful that they all translated to a hassle-free customer experience – understandably, the recurring plaudit of a busy dentist.

"The project was finished on time and I WAS ALWAYS (emphasis Dr Baran's) kept informed about the progress. From a business point of view, it is comforting to know that you are entrusting the entire construction to a capable team so that you can focus on your own work."

Time is money, and the savings do add up considerably. Although he declined to reveal the renovation costs, Dr Baran says the money was more than well spent:

"They are not the cheapest but it's an investment and I will do it again." ♦