

The finishing touches to your new practice



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Fitting out a new surgery or refurbishing an existing one can be time consuming, exhausting and demanding to say the least. The precious few moments available outside of a full appointment book can be filled to overflowing with the demands of looking for real estate, organizing finance, upgrading systems, selecting new equipment, interviewing new staff or juggling appointments around the inevitable issues which arise unexpectedly. Family, fitness and finding the spare time required to absorb the changes in the work environment are all further demands humming in the background.

Even after the design and construction process is complete, there are still many things to consider before you can say that the practice is 100% finished and operational. Some things to think about that we consider the finishing touches to your stunning new healthcare environment include:

Directional signage

It's important that patients can comfortably find their way through a new practice. Clear, well-placed directional signage is essential to ensure they can locate the WC's, or surgeries when unaccompanied, as well as find their way back to reception at the end of an appointment.

Waiting area

If existing seating is being re-used, ensure the upholstery fabrics are in sympathy with the colours and textures of the new environment. Old furniture can often be at odds and 'pull back' the aesthetic if it isn't suitably updated. For

the comfort of patients, lamps may also need consideration if adequate reading light hasn't been provided in the ceiling lighting.

Refreshment station

Providing refreshments is a courtesy your patients will be grateful for. If they're provided through self-service, make sure an attractive waste area is provided to conceal any used cups or sachets etc... It's also important that staff are adequately briefed on the upkeep and maintenance of these areas to ensure they're maintained and don't become unsightly.

Patient courtesies

Coat hooks, chairs for those accompanying visitors, tissues and mirrors should all be provided for patient comfort.

Product display

Offering products for sale is an important part of servicing patients well, as it enables them to recommend the appropriate products to patients. Not only is this convenient and beneficial for patients, the revenue generated from product sales can be seen as a side benefit. It's important that product displays are placed effectively so patients can comfortably peruse selections. The best time to plan for product displays is during the floorplan development stage, as accommodating them effectively at a later date can be difficult.

Artwork

Focal points in the visual environment are critical. While a good budget for artworks



provides many great options for aesthetic and visual emphasis, inexpensive and well-framed reproductions can also provide the visual relief required. Any existing artworks may well have a new lease of life if re-framed to work with the new fit-out.

Tip: if artworks aren't particularly sizable, they can easily be given greater emphasis by framing them to increase the matt; this is the cardboard area between the artwork and the frame.

Decorative pieces

Sculptures, backlit panels, textured surfaces, upholstered panels; fiberglass, acrylic or resin panels within fills and graphic panels can all provide visually effective solutions for areas requiring focal emphasis. Such pieces aren't necessarily expensive either, for example, fabric panels with texture, pattern or colour can be used inexpensively to create a powerful effect where required. Special lighting pieces are another excellent way to create interesting effects; by emphasizing colour, texture, light or shadow they can add interest to a nook, corner or entire wall surface. Signature furniture pieces or mobiles hung in high ceiling areas can also be incorporated for engaging visual impact.

There's certainly no question that refurbishing or relocating is a demanding time. However, if you go the extra mile and offer attention to the finer details, you can sit back and smile at a job well done while your new patients start to roll in the door. ♦

