

A New Dentist's Guide to Networking and Dentistry

By Mina C. Kim, DDS
NYCDS Treasurer



My friends and patients are always surprised to hear that I attend an average of two dental-related events a week. They are even more surprised to hear that I travel to different parts of the country for some of them. My main reason for attending dental meetings — other than educational enrichment — is to network.

Why Do I Network?

There are so many reasons why networking is so important to me, including the following:

• New Developments

Having a vast dental network helps me to stay in the loop of new developments. These include new technology in our field, research and regulations. If I had to do this on my own, it would be a full-time job.

• Career Opportunities

I have been offered jobs and learned of practice sales over cocktails. Many of the best opportunities are from word-of-mouth vs. online postings.

• Different Techniques

I was told that being a dentist is like being a magician. The more tricks you have in your hat, the better a practitioner you will be. For example, having multiple ways to fabricate temporary crowns makes us more versatile.

• Clinical and Practice Questions

Dentistry is called a practice rather than a science because we are constantly learning. Seasoned dentists have told me they are still learning more things about dentistry all the time. My colleagues have been a great educational resource.

• Emotional Support

We all have hard days. As wonderful as my partner and non-dental friends are, they do not understand the stress of dealing with a difficult patient, issues with staff or the feeling when a case does not turn out the way you wanted.

Building a Network

Everyone needs different things from their networks, but I think every dentist should have a minimum of one person in at least 5 groups (6 for recent graduates).

• Contemporaries

(Graduated within a few years of each other.) I have a text chain with two colleagues. Especially my first year in practice, these were the dentists I contacted when I had questions that I was too embarrassed to ask others. They have served as a support system when we faced the early struggles of our careers. We still share interesting cases in a non-formal setting.

• Peer Mentors for Recent Graduates

(Dentists who have been practicing 2-5 years.) For dentists in practice less than 2 years, it is important to have mentors who are only a few years more senior. The earlier years of practice is the rapid growth phase, so someone

10 years your senior may seem miles ahead in terms of experience and the path they took. Peer mentors will be able to give you current information on how to find a job, what CE's to take and what to look for in an employer.

• Track Mentors (Dentists who have been practicing 10 more years.)

I feel these mentors are the ones we trail and help us track our careers by observing theirs. They will share many of the same qualities as the peer mentor group. Many times, they know more in terms of technique. Also, they are likely to face similar challenges, like preparing for DSO's and dealing with dental insurance.

• Seasoned Mentors

These mentors have a wealth of knowledge. Some of their struggles will be the same as ours, and they can give great perspective. They tend to have more influence and are a great source for employment opportunities or practice sales. Mine have shown me the importance of organized dentistry.

• Dental Vendors

Our sales reps are widely underutilized resources. In addition to CE's, my dental reps have recommended new products and referred employees. Some have even sponsored events for me.

• Non-dental

My non-dental friends help me stay connected to the rest of the world. I feel they help me have a broader perspective outside of dentistry, which helps me relate to my patients. As a GP, they have also been a huge referral source.

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President's Message

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Upgrading the newsletter is just one aspect of how we are changing the status quo. We recently moved to a very contemporary space, increased our social media presence, and launched a new, mobile-friendly website. In April we live-streamed for the first time using Facebook Live to share an ethics panel program beyond the attendees in the lecture room. If these seem like small steps, keep in mind that for an organization that is over 150 years strong, even small changes can resonate in profound ways.

I hope that as you read the newest iteration of DQ, you feel free to give us feedback not just on the newsletter, but on how we are doing overall. NYCDS is here because of you, and for you, so don't hesitate to let us know the types of services and activities you would like us to provide.

Our Newest Corporate Friend -- Transcendental Suites



Transcendental

NYCDS is pleased to announce our latest partnership with a transformative company which will offer a new workspace vision for dentists in Manhattan. Transcendental Suites (TD) is a healthcare shared workspace company providing real-estate solutions to independently owned and operated dental practices, by licensing ("renting") luxuriously built, modern, state-of-the-art equipped, "turn-key" dental suites (operator with administrative supportive area) on a per diem, flexibly-termed occupancy basis. Transcendental facilities will also include a well-appointed dental lounge with lockers and kitchen area, coupled with supportive non-clinically based services such as patient referrals, basic disposables, reception and à la carte services such as temporary staffing, IT consulting and administrative support. TD Suites will be available for rent on a per diem, per suite basis, with rates based on variably termed occupancy as short as one day a week, a monthly basis, or longer.

In addition to providing dental suites, a focused public relations effort is planned by Transcendental Suites to promote its facilities to raise awareness and recruit patients, while establishing itself as an innovative company in touch with "community building" and executing a "forward thinking" business paradigm. Transcendental intends to become "the brand" identified with dental excellence, transcending expectations by delivering the highest level of dental/healthcare facility amenities and economies of scale to its dentist occupants and to visiting dental patients, a superior, highly elevated patient experience.

If you are interested in learning more about Transcendental Suites contact helo@transcendentalny.com or call (212) 679-6300.

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Where to Network?

To build your own network, I think organized dentistry is an excellent resource. I have met so many dentists that I admire and consider friends at NYCDS. Alumni association meetings are also a great way to meet other dentists. Social media is an additional way to connect. I am a member of Facebook groups that post cases, and I follow other dentists on Instagram.

How to Network?

Let's be frank. It can be very dry to talk about dentistry. I find the easiest way to connect with other dentists is by talking about non-dental topics. It is important to cultivate different topics of conversation. I love travel and food and can talk extensively about both interests. My restaurant recommendations have helped me network and opened many doors for me.

Dr. Mina Kim is NYCDS treasurer and the NYCDS representative on the NYSDA New Dentist Committee.