The Guide To
Digital Transformation

How do oral surgery practices thrive
In today's digital landscape?

In This Book

The Guide To Digital Transformation

Don't Confuse Digital Workflow With Digital Transformation

Digitization of implant dentistry involves utilization of a digital platform to standardize implant-related workflows in an implant practice. It is associated with cost cutting and operational excellence. In essence, digitization imposes new discipline on practice processes that, over the years, were executed by practice owners in a variety of creative (but not always optimal) analog ways.

Today, we are confronting something new and different: **Digital Transformation**. It refers to a cultural transformation of an oral surgery practice and to capitalize on powerful, accessible, and potentially game-changing technologies like social, mobile, cloud, internet of things, digital scanning and 3D printing. It also refers to the transformation that organizations must undergo to take advantage of the opportunities these technologies create. A digital transformation involves rethinking the products and services of an oral surgery practice, not just its operations.

The problem is this: We have found that many oral surgeons are thinking of digital transformation as a single advanced digital workflow, which will enhance patient care by incorporating different technologies. Oral surgeons assume it will automatically improve their clinical operations but "becoming digitally transformed" requires a different mentality from "integrating digital workflow". In most industries, digital transformation is already a business imperative. Digital transformation is an important enabler of digital workflow. All the digital workflow in the world won't, on its own, make an oral surgery practice a fully functional digital practice. Failing to distinguish the difference between vendors' increased push to sell their digital workflow components and true digital transformation could be a fatal and costly mistake for any oral surgery practice.

Digital Workflow is an Operational Necessity

The benefits of digital workflow are significant: efficiency, operational excellence and predictability. For all the pain that it entails, digital workflow is an essential undertaking for any oral surgery practice. Without digitization, oral surgery practices no longer can compete and scale up their implant practices; they cannot absorb the complexity of expanded implant related product portfolios; they cannot personalize services. Digital workflow is disciplined, standardized processes. Digital workflow makes data accessible and reliable to all the parties involved with patient treatment.

Big companies actively seeking for transformation

Big, old companies have started to define visionary digital value. Kaiser Permanente views itself not as a health care provider but as a patient-provider collaboration. BMW is not just an automobile manufacturer; it's a provider of individual mobility. Philips has sold off multiple businesses, including its foundational lighting business, to focus on "improving lives through health care innovation.

Most oral surgeons have grossly underestimated the challenge of digital workflow. Shedding practice habits of the past 50 years has been a lot harder than industry leaders and technology vendors imagined. In many cases, implant companies' CEOs have committed to digital workflow initiatives thinking they are funding new and better technologies. Consequently, most digital workflow efforts have become costly unproductive initiatives in oral surgery practices and generated fewer benefits than anticipated.

This is a problem because oral surgery practices must digitally transform first if they hope to fully utilize and benefit from digital workflow. Without digital transformation, oral surgeons' and their practice management team's attention will be distracted from innovating the practice's operations to support a digital ecosystem. As a consequence, practice owners won't have the necessary human resources to support their product and services.

Digital Transformation creates customer centric operating model

To become a digitally transformed oral surgery practice, practice owners must clearly define their digital products and services . Also they need to determine how digital technologies and information would enhance the practice's existing assets and capabilities to create new values for patients and referring dentists. Being a digitally transformed oral surgery practice is not just introducing mobile apps for tracking implant cases or online appointment scheduling, it is taking advantage of the opportunity to redefine the oral surgery practice — and possibly even the specialty of maxillofacial surgery.

The 10 Most Common Mistakes Made By Oral Surgeons During Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is a complicated, comprehensive process that affects all aspects of an oral surgery office. To ensure the success of their digital initiatives, oral surgeons must understand how to identify and minimize common mistakes.

1. Not understanding what it truly means to digitally transform an OMFS office

One of the biggest mistakes oral surgeons make is not having a complete understanding of what digital transformation entails, particularly what it requires and, above all, how and when to start. *Digital transformation of an oral surgery practice is very different from a digital workflow set up by an implant company.* The majority of oral surgeons have not been able to successfully digitally transform their offices because their main focus had been on purchasing and learning how to use digital equipment; there is no focus on truly integrating these technologies into their daily activities.

2. Not having clearly defined goals

No oral surgery practice should begin its digital transformation without having a clear, defined strategy. This strategy must include a timeline, employee roles during transformation, an analysis of current digital assets, and other relevant information. *Strategies must be detailed, yet flexible* enough to respond to new opportunities and considerations and to adapt and evolve throughout each phase of the digitization process.

3. Procrastinating and delaying plan execution

Digital strategies are ineffective if there is not a strict timeline in place. Many oral surgeons do not realize that excessive planning and strategy revision will have the unintended consequence of delaying their goals. Within digital transformation, *the most important metric of success is strategy execution*, and progress must continually be made.

4. Rushing the digital process

Adherence to a strict strategy timeline should not mean rushing the process. Digital transformation often inspires a sense of urgency as products and equipment are constantly evolving. But failure to develop a comprehensive strategy may lead to wasted time, energy, and financial investment. There must be a balance between patience and progress.

Type of Mistakes	Not understanding what it truly means to digitally transform an OMFS office	Not having clearly defined goals	Procrastinating and delaying plan execution	Rushing the digital process	Failing to acknowledge all relevant stakeholders	Buying technology that does not suit practice needs	Failing to recruit necessary professionals	Inconsistent monitoring of the digital process	Considering digitization as a cost, not as an investment	Imitating the digital transformation of competitors
Aha-moment mistake	✓				✓		✓			
Stretch mistakes		✓				✓				
Sloppy mistakes			✓	✓				✓		
High-stakes mistakes							✓		✓	✓

The graph above has separate the 10 common mistakes into 4 different types of mistakes:

- **Aha-moment mistake** happen when we achieve what we intend to do, but then realize that it was mistakes to do so because of some knowledge we lacked which is now becoming apparent.
- **Stretch mistakes** happen when we're working to expand our current abilities. We're not trying to make these mistakes in that we're not trying to do something incorrectly, but instead, we're trying to do something that is beyond what we already can do without help, so we're bound to make some errors.
- **Sloppy mistakes** happen when we're doing something we already know how to do, but we do it incorrectly because we lose concentration. We all make sloppy mistakes occasionally because we're human.
- **High-stakes mistakes** is mistakes that sometimes we don't want to make because it would be catastrophic. For example, in potentially dangerous situations we want to be safe. A big mistake from the person in charge of security in a nuclear power plant could lead to a nuclear disaster.

5. Failing to acknowledge all relevant stakeholders

There are many oral surgeons who believe that development of a digital transformation strategy should be limited to the activities of their practice. In reality, ***successful transformation involves and affects many different stakeholders, including patients, referring dentists, implant companies, milling centers, dental labs, and freelance designers.***

6. Buying technology that does not suit practice needs

Investing in the wrong technology is an expensive mistake. It is critical not to be distracted by the latest technologies or swayed by a vendor's sales pitch. Equipment selection significantly impacts practice operation, and cannot be based on inadequate information. ***Oral surgeons must use technology where it matters to drive efficiency and accelerate change.***

7. Failing to recruit necessary professionals

In a recent study, MIT revealed that an investment in technology is of equal worth to an investment in talent. Attempts to digitally transform a practice without the necessary professionals in place are more likely to fail. ***Transformation is a lengthy, labor intensive process that requires involvement from dedicated and effective staff.*** Oral surgeons must be prepared to add new members to their team, if necessary.

8. Inconsistent monitoring of the digital process

Digital transformation of an oral surgery office does not end with the blind purchase of equipment. Successful transformation requires adherence to new, digital protocols by all relevant team members, as well as consistency across all digital processes. ***To assess the success of implementation, systems must be developed to directly monitor staff compliance.***

Efforts must also be made to monitor patient experiences and referral engagement among GPs, which will improve both following successful transformation. Red flags within any of these metrics may signal larger issues within the digital system, and must be addressed in a timely fashion.

9. Considering digitization as a cost, not as an investment

Digital transformation does not come for free, and requires heavy, front-end financial investment. However, ***efforts to reduce cost cannot be made at the expense of function.*** Attempts to cut corners jeopardize the success of the digital transformation process, and will ultimately cost oral surgeons more in the end. Fulfillment of equipment and hiring needs represent short-term costs that will yield long term revenue.

10. Imitating the digital transformation of competitors

Each practice is different, and oral surgeons cannot base their digital strategy on strategies employed in offices offering similar implant services. ***The uniqueness of a business model is its most important competitive advantage***, and what works in one office may fail in another.

In today's technology-driven world, digital transformation represents an important opportunity for oral surgeons. Digitization is not without risks, but, if managed correctly, offers improved efficiency, higher employee and patient satisfaction, and a competitive advantage over other oral surgery practices.
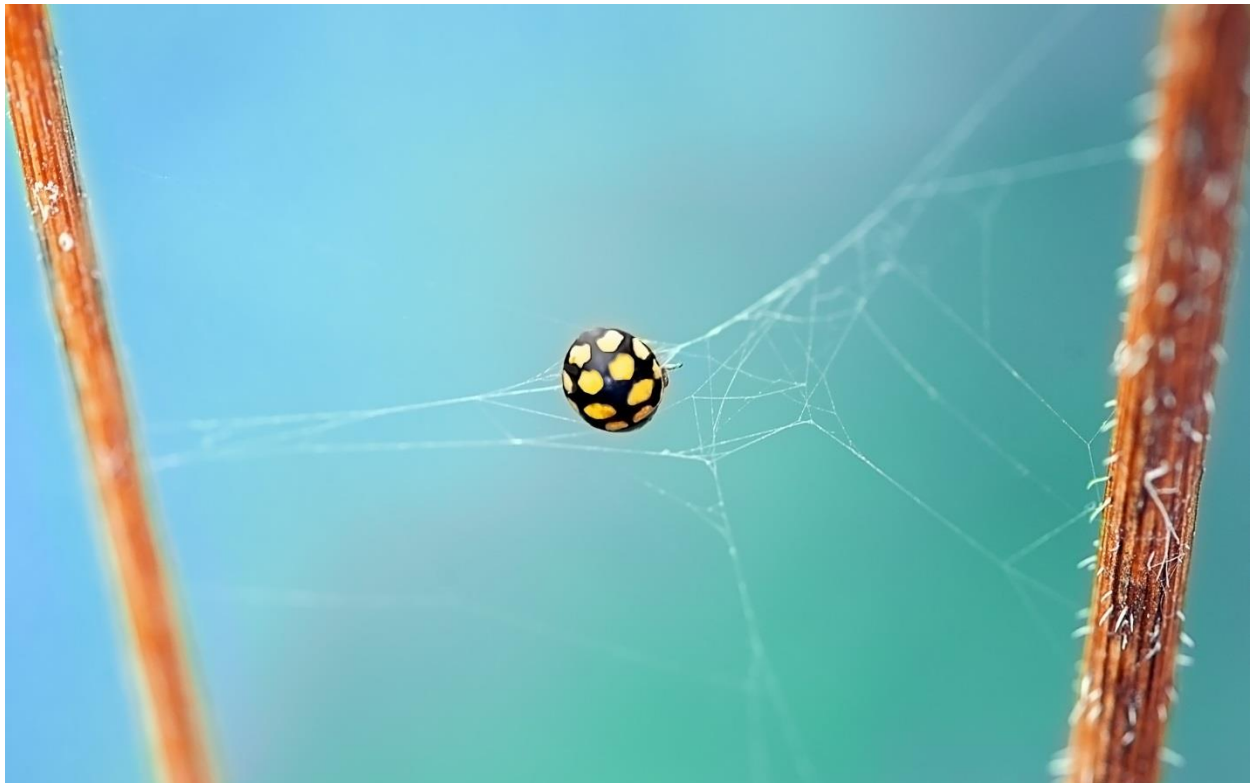
Lesson 3.0

Impact Of Digitization On The Oral Surgeons/Patients Relationship

Traditional relationship formed by a referral from patient's dentist

The traditional teeth and titanium business model was established before the invention of the Internet. Patients are now more informed about their treatment options than ever before. Prior to this turn of the tides, the implant dentistry growth was heavily dependent on the relationship, which was established between an oral surgeon and his/her referring dentists.

Patients are transitioning from dentist-referred to self-referred

As the Internet grew and patients started having access to more information about different aspects of implant treatment and providers, patients started using online resources such as Google review, Yelp, and other peer review websites to make their decision about which oral surgeon or full-service implant treatment facility they should choose. During the past 10 years, implant patients' relationships with implant surgeons have moved steadily in the direction of self-referred. This has brought the importance of online reputation management to the forefront of digital strategy for any oral surgery practice.

I want everything! And I want it now!

It is built into our genes. Even as small children we want to try everything, do everything by ourselves. And when we discovered we couldn't, we immediately turned to mom and dad for help - and expected them to be there.

Today, digitally savvy patients show the same kind of behavior. The biggest part of the fun about Internet is searching for all the things that we need to know. The Internet has made the patients independent and it has also increased patients' expectations in terms of both service and time efficiency. Many people regard time saving as an important factor in their dealings with an implant practice. People don't like multiple visits and going back and forth between offices. But it doesn't stop there. Today, implant patients expect all of their prosthetic and surgical questions to be answered in a single consultation with an oral surgeon. In fact, the modern patients want everything - and they want it now! The highest-end patients want the shortest possible treatment journey, the most convenient availability of the surgeon, and the greatest efficiency of treatment. These are the new standard.

In a traditional analog referral-based oral surgery practice it is impossible to live up to these high expectations. This means that the oral surgery practices have only one alternative: adopting a digital ecosystem which enables patients to have access to all of the information and services they need as they wish based on their timeline.

Patients will transition from self-referred to self-control in near future

The Internet has given patients access to copious information. Social media added transparency to the equation. Digitalization will bring the element of self-control to surgeon-patient relationship. Patients' control over the entire process goes much further than a simple self-referral. Today, the world is reactive.
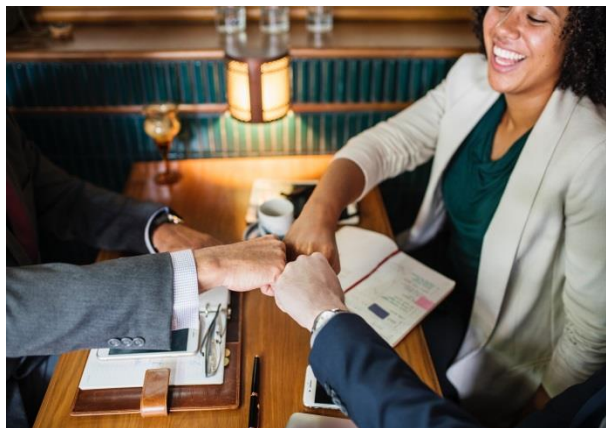
If a patient has a problem or a question, he/she will go and search for an answer. The world of tomorrow will be proactive. With self-control, the patient will be in the driving seat. Perfect proactive communication means that questions or problems will be tackled before they even arise. This will affect the entire implant treatment cycle. From the consultation visit, surgical procedure, post-surgical recovery, clinical prosthetic procedure, laboratory procedures and final delivery, the patient will have more control over all aspects of the process. As a result, oral surgeons will need to adjust far more to the wishes and expectations of their digitally savvy patients.

With independent information gathering, the patient will want to be much less dependent on the goodwill of the oral surgery practice, which he/she deals with. This trend will not only have a huge impact on the implant dentistry, but also on society as a whole. Oral surgery and implant dentistry will be radically transformed by this evolution. There will be no more confusion over selecting the best oral surgeon for implant treatment; all the necessary information about the procedures and surgeons will be provided to them proactively. Questions will be answered before they even arise.

Summary

As our patients continue to become more informed and demanding with respects to their treatment, the current patient referral practices will become increasingly obsolete. In its place will be a dominance of self-referred patients who will react strongly to the information they glean on the Internet, and will fabricate their own list of demands and features within their treatment modality. They will no longer rely on their provider to tell them their options. This is the era of patient autonomy and surgeons must embrace this change, maintaining a patient-engaged business strategy, or be left behind. Oral surgeons should seek help from specialized digital consultants who can assist them with digital transformation and establishing their digital ecosystem.

Do you accept MY terms and conditions?

Patients regularly need to accept the terms of services and the workflow of oral surgery practice that they are dealing with. In 2012, Doc Searls wrote a book titled "The Intention Economy: When Customers Take Charge

In this book he discusses the new role of the consumer in the customer relationship. He argues that the old roles will be reversed. In the future, companies will need to accept the conditions of the customer, not the other way around. Tomorrow's patients will want more control over their own data and decisions. Sites like Priceline are already offering a market place where the customer is in control of everything. Potential customers simply type in the destination of their choice and the amount of money they are willing to pay.

5 Considerations To Reduce Risk During Digital Transformation

With the rapid growth of corporate dentistry, an increasing number of general dentists have started performing their own implant surgeries instead of referring to oral surgeons. The dynamic of the implant dentistry market in the United States has changed. Established private oral surgery practices are perpetually challenged to grow their dental implant component.

Consider how the entire dental implant industry has been up-ended by GPs as new entrants who also have much lower clinical knowledge compared to oral surgeons. GPs have been successfully leveraging digital technologies to bring value to their patients while also changing the dynamic of competitiveness with oral surgeons. The results are more treatment options and more convenience and delight for patients because they can have their entire implant treatment journey under one roof with radically lower prices. While the incumbent oral surgeons possess undeniably superior clinical skills and capital resources, these are no longer considered competitive advantages by themselves since oral surgeons have not been able to stop GP challengers who are leveraging digital technology.

In response, incumbent oral surgery practices have the opportunity to not just defend their businesses but to lead the implant industry again. To do so, they must transform their practices into digital enterprises. These practices should embrace digital technologies across the entire practice value chain including services and products, patients and referral retention, and relationship management with labs or milling center and implant companies.

Seamless integration is the key to a successful digital transformation of an oral surgery practice. In order to do so, oral surgeons have to learn how to develop a digital ecosystem, how to capitalize their financial capabilities to achieve maximum result, and how to better serve their patients and referring doctors with innovation and agility.

Following are five keys to a successful digital transformation

- **Pick a defined goal**
- **Adopt a gradual and progressive transformation instead of introducing rapid changes**
- **Optimize for choice**
- **Automate application security**
- **Take an evolutionary approach to revolutionary innovation**

1. Pick a defined goal

Digital transformation does not happen overnight, and it rarely progresses in a consistently smooth, linear fashion. The success is guided by your "defined goal" – target outcomes or objectives that everyone in your practice is aware of and can refer to. Obviously, this will help to define priorities and resource allocation.

Importantly, the defined goal of successful digital transformation in an oral surgery practice should revolve around creating a sustainable, mutually beneficial relationship that maintains a high level of referral engagement and patient satisfaction. A useful defined goal should not be a technology implementation goal, e.g., "move to the cloud." The defined goal of successful digital transformations should avoid confusion between the desired business outcomes and the technical implementations.

2. Adopt a gradual and progressive transformation instead of introducing rapid changes

A defined goal and owners' vision for digital transformation should demonstrate an exciting future for the practice and be motivating enough for the employees so they embark on the digital transformation journey. Digital transformation will stall when practice owners and managers attempt too large a jump in technology, processes, and/or required skills.

Oral surgery practices should begin their digital transformation journey with what they already know and what digital technology they already have. Generally, updating the existing processes and upgrading and modernizing existing technologies will deliver the best ROI. Following this step, new technologies, applications services, and technologies can be implemented. This approach transforms legacy application and existing data assets into sources of competitive advantage against new digital entrants. For example, oral surgery practices can leverage their existing data generated from intraoral scanner and CBCT machine to create a new mobile experience for its referring dentists by utilizing an application container such as Docker.

3. Choose a technology which provides the highest level of flexibility and connectivity

The rate of technological change at every aspect of digital implant dentistry is only accelerating. Of course, everyone from technology vendors and implant companies are trying to take advantage of this to sell more products and services to oral surgeons and anybody else who is involved with implant dentistry. However, oral surgeons who are pursuing digital transformation can, often unknowingly, find themselves locked in to a particular vendor's digital technology and platform, which is not compatible with implant companies' platform. When the treatment protocols landscape suddenly shifts or their chosen technology

from that particular vendor doesn't support their digital and operational objectives, they're stuck.

Be aware of the quickly changing technologies and the environment of digital implant dentistry. Oral surgery practices, which are planning to drive a successful digital transformation, should optimize their choice of technology by assessing its flexibility, connectivity and compatibility features. Choice of clouds, choice of app technologies, choice of infrastructure, choice of equipment vendors will determine the level of flexibility and responsiveness to market and technology changes. Wise choices will minimize the risk of ending up with a handicapped business operation.

4. Automated security applications

Successful digital transformation requires security system integration from the very beginning of the digital workflow and technology lifecycle. Oral surgeons should invest in platforms that enable them to automatically secure their digital ecosystems from the very first step of implementation and then automate the enforcement of security policies throughout the technology and workflow lifecycle. Doing so allows the oral surgery practices to move fast in the digital age without compromising security.

5. Take an evolutionary approach to revolutionary innovation

A successful digital transformation takes a "crawl, walk, run" approach in which each phase of the digital transformation journey has clear, measurable objectives coupled with transparent and frequent feedback. Such an evolutionary approach enables the oral surgery practice to adapt to changes, quickly learn from and correct the inevitable setbacks, and bank early "wins" that serve to align internal resources and secure support for the next, expanded phase of the journey.

Summary

Digital transformation initiatives are not without risks, but non-stop demands from patients, technological advancement in implant dentistry, and competitive threats from GPs who are perfecting their surgical outcome by leveraging digital technologies have made digital transformation of oral surgery practices an imperative.

Lesson 5.0
Digital Transformation: An HR Problem, Not A Technological Challenge

Over the past 20 years, digital technology has proliferated the field of implant dentistry. As software and hardware have become cheaper to acquire, the barrier to adaptation has decreased significantly, allowing higher numbers of clinicians to pursue digital solutions. Traditionally, oral surgeons have prioritized equipment selection as the most important part of digital transformation. They believed that if the right equipment was purchased—and the right technician was hired—their implant practices would automatically reap the benefits of their investment. However, as many oral surgeons have found, this approach is difficult to scale up and often does not yield the desired results. In order to successfully leverage digital transformation, oral surgeons must understand the impact of technology on their non-technical staff and, most importantly, its role in their long-term practice goals.

The Role of HR

In addition to becoming cheaper to acquire, digital technology has also become easier to use for a broader range of activities. In other words, software and hardware once restricted to lab technicians is now available to surgical assistants, office managers, and other team members within a practice. Access to technology and ease-of-use are no longer the primary limiting factors of digital transformation efforts. Instead, it is how to motivate practice team members to incorporate newly available digital technology into their daily activities.

No oral surgery practice will succeed in digital transformation without the right strategy and the right team. Oral surgeons need to learn the process of streamlining new complex work environments and aligning them with their clinical and business objectives. This requires developing comprehensive, long-term strategy that reflects the strengths and capabilities of all team members. This plan must be communicated to all relevant team members. In turn, team members must understand their role, responsibilities, and upcoming changes to their daily operations.
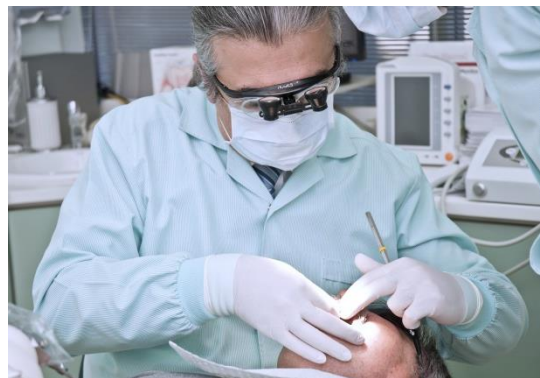
HR Strategies for Successful Digital Transformation

In the digital age of the implant dentistry market, an oral surgery practice is only as innovative and successful as the talent it attracts and energizes. Oral surgery practices that are planning to digitally transform must seek team members with not only the right skills (clinical and technological), but also an aptitude for innovation. While each practice has its unique set of needs, practices in general should:

• **Have a credible, forward-looking leader managing the digital transformation process.**
The leader needs to understand how technology can improve business operations, including referral engagement and the patient experience. This leader must have the necessary vision to develop a detailed digital strategy.

• **Focus on developing a detailed role for team members, including information regarding the role of digital technology in their daily activities.**
Team members with a clear understanding of their responsibilities and goals—as well as an understanding of the role of digital technology in achieving these goals—will be motivated to support digital initiatives.

• **Understand the limitations of technical knowledge.**
While technical know-how remains an important aspect of digital transformation, it should not be the sole focus of training initiatives. Beyond understanding the functionality of hardware and software, team members must also understand the benefits of technology to their daily activities.

• **Develop a plan for workload management and performance appraisal.**
Digital transformation is a complicated process, and compliance must be monitored closely. Efforts must be made to support team members struggling to adopt new technologies.

• **Be prepared for staff changes.**
It is important to understand that not all team members will be well suited for digital transformation. Similarly, not all practices will be able to fulfill their digital needs with their existing team. Throughout the digital process, practice owners must be prepared to hire and replace staff as necessary.

Conclusion

With the advent of many technologies, there are numerous tools that allow process enhancement, streamlining, and quick turnaround in an oral surgery office. In order to successfully incorporate these technologies, team members must understand their changing roles, objectives, and key performance indicators. Newly digitized oral surgery practices must adopt a new operational model, wherein senior surgeons and practice managers must empower their team members by providing necessary HR framework, tools, and incentives. Team members with a thorough understanding of digital changes will more effectively communicate with patients, lab technicians, and referring dentists to overall improve practice operations.

Thanks For Reading

We're here to help!