



MY DENTAL PLAYBOOK

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THE SMART OPERATORY EXPANSION CHECKLIST

How to Add Capacity Without Killing Cash Flow or Creating Chaos



GROWTH DOES NOT COME FROM ADDING MORE. IT COMES FROM ADDING THE RIGHT THINGS IN THE RIGHT ORDER.

Operatory expansions fail because decisions are driven by emotion, reps, or fear of missing out, not by flow, uptime, or return.

EXPANSION READINESS CHECK

BEFORE YOU ADD A SINGLE OPERATORY

Use this section to decide if expansion is actually the right move right now.

- Hygiene and doctor schedules are consistently full**
- You are regularly pushing patients out due to lack of chair time**
- New patients are waiting weeks to get in**
- The bottleneck is physical capacity, not team performance**
- You can clearly articulate why you need another operatory**



If you cannot confidently check at least three boxes, pause.

Adding ops will not fix operational issues upstream.

THE EXPANSION TRAP MOST DENTISTS FALL INTO

Most dentists assume:

- More expensive equipment equals better outcomes
- Newer equals necessary
- Reps know best

In reality, many expansions fail because:

- Too much money is spent on items with low impact
- Flow is disrupted during construction
- Cash gets tied up in things that do not increase production

The real enemy of growth is downtime and cash strain.

“High cost does not mean high return”

EQUIPMENT PRIORITY FRAMEWORK

WHAT ACTUALLY DESERVES YOUR MONEY

Use this framework to decide where to invest and where to save.

CATEGORY A:

NON-NEGOTIABLES (SPEND HERE)

These items protect uptime. If they fail, production stops.

- ✓ **Compressor**
- ✓ **Vacuum system**
- ✓ **Infrastructure that supports multiple ops**

WHY THIS MATTERS:

If one of these goes down, you cannot simply move rooms. Protecting uptime protects revenue.

CATEGORY B:

FLEXIBLE ITEMS (SAVE HERE)

These items allow adaptability without shutting down the practice.

- ✓ **Chairs**
- ✓ **Delivery units**
- ✓ **Non-critical operatory equipment**

REMEMBER:

If a chair goes down, you can still operate. If air or vacuum goes down, you cannot.

FLOW OVER FEATURES

DESIGN FOR MOVEMENT, NOT IMPRESSIONS

Ask these questions before finalizing your layout:

- Does this improve patient flow or slow it down?**
- Can staff move efficiently between ops?**
- Does construction disrupt current production?**
- Can rooms be closed off without shutting the practice down?**



REMEMBER:

A beautiful operatory that slows flow is a liability, not an asset.

Flow First

THE HIDDEN COST OF OVERBUILDING

WHAT DENTISTS DO NOT FACTOR IN

Expansion costs are not just line items.

Consider:

- Lost production during construction**
- Team stress and disruption**
- Cash tied up that could fuel marketing or hiring**
- Slower decision-making due to financial pressure**

SMART GROWTH PROTECTS OPTIONALITY.

Once cash is gone, flexibility disappears

***What you don't budget
for hurts the most.***



THE SMART EXPANSION QUESTION

USE THIS BEFORE EVERY PURCHASE

Before buying anything, ask:

“Does this increase flow, protect uptime, or create flexibility?”

If the answer is no, delay the purchase.

This single question filters out most bad decisions.

FINAL EXPANSION CHECKLIST

USE THIS BEFORE YOU SIGN ANYTHING

- I know exactly why I am expanding
- I am solving a capacity problem, not an operational one
- I am investing first in uptime-critical systems
- I am protecting cash flow
- I am expanding intentionally, not emotionally

If all boxes are checked, move forward with confidence.

Smart, controlled growth, not chaos, is the true aim of expansion. A bigger office is secondary to achieving a more profitable, calmer, and scalable practice.