



A Few words from Rick Renstrom

Rick Renstrom, CDT and co-lab owner of Renstrom Dental Studio for the past 24 years, shares his thoughts regarding the current trends in the industry and what we're doing about it at Renstrom

Having been in the dental lab business for over 34 years, it's interesting to look back and reflect on how the times have changed. The current economic condition has had an effect on dentists, labs, and most of us for that matter. With gold prices reaching an all time high of \$1400 compared to \$800 in November of 2008, metal free restorations are becoming more of the norm rather than an alternative option for doctors. Both e.max and zirconia materials are more appealing, not only for their strength and esthetics but also a fixed price which in many cases could be less than a PFM. We encourage offices to be sure they are using the correct insurance codes and taking advantage of the fact that reimbursement levels may be higher with metal-free restorations. The implant sector seems to be growing, possibly in part due to the direct consumer advertising by implant manufacturers and specialists.

Advancements in technology continue to play an active role in dental laboratories and operatories as more CAD/CAM systems are being used. Keeping up with all of these changes can be time consuming, confusing, and costly. Aside from these drawbacks, long term advantages including reduced costs and improved quality could eventually attract more dentists and labs. As a smaller family owned lab, we are familiar with the traditional ways of fabricating crowns. Pouring models, trimming dies, waxing, casting, finishing, and layering porcelain. Now with the advanced technology we see digital impressions, margin marking software, design centers, milling centers, printers, pressing, glazing, and still layered porcelain. Although the process and materials continue to change, our quality and services at Renstrom do not. Our goal is always to consistently meet or exceed the expectations of our doctors and their patients.

The majority of my time is either spent at my bench or case planning with our doctors. Many of the questions that came up in conversations this past year were in regards to cost. How much is it and why does it cost that much?

Cost is the amount of time, materials, and overhead that is involved in producing a particular product. At the lab we are always looking at different ways to save time, reduce material costs, and also use our overhead more efficiently. While doing all of these things we are also maintaining and striving to increase the quality of our products and services. You have these same costs in your dental practice, and as your lab we are one of them. Although it may not be apparent but the price shown on the bottom of your invoice entails a lot more than just a crown if it is coming from Renstrom. I know how valuable your time is and we will do whatever it takes to see that we save you chair time. We go to extraordinary measures to ensure that fit, contacts, occlusion, and shade, consistently meet your



specifications. I am not willing to compromise the quality of our work because I care about the success of the doctors we work with. We hope for a positive experience for their patients and that doctors will get patient referrals with every case we do.

Aside from the superior crown and bridgework, there is so much more that we can offer our doctors. I have been fortunate to work with a group of experienced and knowledgeable technicians and staff. They are always available to assist in many areas such as case evaluations and problem solving.

Communication is critical and so if we can work closely with you and assist you where needed, then we can be confident that we will get a great end result. We are happy to offer you continuing education classes or lunch and learns on topics that you and your staff are interested in. In other words, if there is something you feel you need to know more about, just let us know and we will gladly arrange it for you.

In conclusion, every doctor we work with has specific requests and it is our job to see that those requests are met. However, there may be times when you have concerns or opinions regarding the products and services we provide. If so, I encourage you to please inform us if there anything we can do to better serve you. Many of us at the lab would be happy to join you at a seminar, study club, luncheon, or even happy hour. I would also like to thank those doctors that we currently work with and look forward to what the New Year has in store for us.

Thanks,

Rick Renstrom