

Predictable Dental Lab Tech Success

Predictable and consistent quality, in your dental casework, saves time and eliminates redo headaches. *Imagine what a perfect fit the first time, done in a shorter period of time can do for your sanity and your patients' view of your expertise.* Your next crown and bridge case should be MORE about quality and LESS about worry.

Here we present eight strategies to improve your dental lab technician's quality quotient. Start achieving the most predictable, esthetically pleasing, and longest lasting results possible. Your patients will smile more confidently and your chair-time will be less consuming.

1. **Adequate reduction** (especially facially and occlusally) will give your laboratory technician room to create natural looking dental restorations. Ideally, 2mm of occlusal and 1.5mm facial reduction gives ample space for porcelain.
2. **Avoid sharp** angles and edges on tooth preparations. This is very important when working with all-ceramic dental materials, even zirconia. The leading cause of failure in all-ceramic restorations is fractures over a sharp corner of the tooth prep.
3. **Stumpf shades** are important for any all-ceramic case. This will help your dental technician in using the correct degree of opacity and translucency when they build your case. When taking a stumpf shade, it isn't absolutely necessary to use a stumpf shade guide. A reference from any dental shade guide can work.
4. **Pre-op models** are very useful for determining tooth function and to visualize what the dental patient's dentition was like and where the dental lab technician can go with the crown and bridge design. Pre-op models will give your dental laboratory tech a foundation from which to build upon.
5. **In large dental cases**, a diagnostic wax up can be very helpful in communicating case design with the dentist and the patient before tooth preparation. A diagnostic wax up can also be used to make temporaries and allow the patient to "try-out" their new smile. This is the best way to ensure a predictable result.
6. **Photos** are an extremely useful tool in communicating tooth shades and characterization. The better the photo quality, the more accurate the dental laboratory technician can relate the information. Emailing the photos to the lab makes it quicker and easier to print a clear photo for the case.
7. **Communication** with the lab technician, whether positive or negative is absolutely crucial to providing excellent dentistry. (Renstrom and Crocus send report cards with all our cases, and pay close attention to your responses!)
8. **Discuss the patient's interest** in teeth bleaching before any crown or bridge case. We have had many occasions where dental patients want to bleach after their case has been prepared when coming in for a custom shade match. The patient should be done with their smile whitening for at least 2 weeks to assure an accurate shade match.

For more on consistent, predictable dental casework, contact Randy Renstrom, CDT - randy@renstrom.com or call 1-866-556-6213 ext 254

Randall Renstrom, CDT is a NDA Member and Dental Lab Owner

<http://www.northerndentalalliance.com/about/renstrom-dental-studio/>

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Renstrom Dental Studio & Crocus Dental Technology

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