

YOUR STORY MATTERS

DENITE

ISS. 2



ALLISON
NORRIS

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Letter from the Editor

When I first reached out to Allison, I had only a vague vision for what would eventually become this special issue on non-clinical roles in dentistry. I was still early in the journey—navigating new waters, figuring things out as I went. I had hoped she'd write something on the topic. Instead, she asked if we could hop on a Zoom call.

I'll be honest—I was terrified.

But from the very first conversation, something shifted. As we spoke, I realized I wasn't just talking to someone knowledgeable—I was speaking to someone who deeply understood the needs of dental professionals seeking more. Over time, as our professional relationship grew, I learned three very clear things about Allison:

She's a perfectionist.

She cares deeply about the hygienists (and professionals) who come to her for guidance.

And she is refreshingly honest—a no-nonsense woman who tells it like it is.

And I've always appreciated that.

This issue wouldn't have happened without her. What started as a simple ask for a single article evolved into a collaboration that I'm incredibly proud of. Together, we've built something that goes beyond inspiration—it's a roadmap. Whether you're a clinician at a crossroads or someone who's always wondered if there's more out there for you beyond the chair, this issue is for you.

Inside these pages, you'll find insights, stories, and actionable paths from those who've successfully pivoted into roles in tech, consulting, education, business development, and more. Dentistry is changing, and the opportunities are greater—and more diverse—than ever before.

Non-clinical doesn't mean non-essential. It means possible.

We hope this issue lights the way.
Warmly,

Carl Demadema

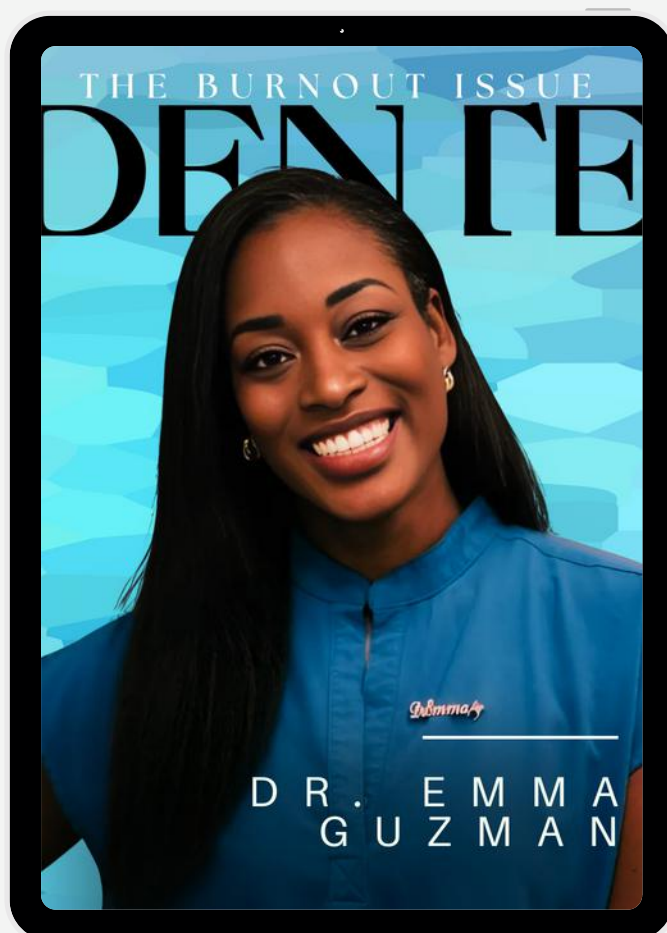
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When Allison agreed to be the cover feature for this edition in Dente, she had one non-negotiable request: That the pages be filled with stories from clinicians who aren't regularly featured—those who've never had the opportunity to be seen, heard, or celebrated in this way. Allison believes that everyone in dentistry has something meaningful to share. This issue is her tribute to those doing the work, making the impact, and quietly shaping the future of dentistry. This edition isn't just about nonclinical careers—it's about shining a light on the voices she's passionate about lifting up.



His Story

ALFONSO DELLA PORTA, RDH BS

More than a decade ago, I embarked on a career transition, building upon a foundation of over ten years of experience as a Registered Dental Hygienist. An intervening eighteen-month period as office manager for a multi-specialty practice provided crucial experience in managing diverse teams, implementing best practices, and handling marketing, insurance claims, and patient relations.

Upon returning to clinical practice, I integrated these management skills to enhance patient communication, clearly explaining both clinical diagnoses and insurance coverage. This fostered stronger patient relationships and fueled my ambition for broader professional growth. Subsequently, I explored non-clinical dental roles, networking with industry representatives and researching opportunities in sales, marketing, insurance, and customer service.

Early applications, however, proved unsuccessful. Feedback consistently highlighted a perceived lack of relevant experience—a limitation stemming from my primarily clinical background. To overcome this hurdle, I strategically leveraged LinkedIn and professional dental networking groups to connect with individuals who had also transitioned from clinical practice. These connections provided invaluable mentorship and insights, and I augmented my skill set with online courses in Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint.

This targeted networking yielded significant benefits. I refined my interview techniques, revamped my resume to emphasize transferable skills, and adopted a proactive approach to interview opportunities—even those outside my ideal role—which led to more interview invitations. Each interview served as a valuable learning experience, boosting my confidence and composure.

A pivotal moment came through a connection with a recruiter specializing in placing dental professionals in non-clinical roles. After several consultations, a suitable position was identified, and with the recruiter's support, I successfully secured an interview. Thorough company research and preparation enabled me to present myself effectively, emphasizing my fit for the team.

I've thrived in this role for nearly three years, constantly expanding my network and skill set within a dynamic environment. This experience underscores the importance of embracing discomfort and proactively seeking opportunities beyond one's comfort zone. My journey serves as a testament to the power of strategic networking, continuous learning, and perseverance in achieving career advancement. I'm now happy to share my experiences and encourage others to embrace change and pursue their professional aspirations.

Her Story



TAMERA DAVIS

For a decade, I built my career in the same dental practice—first as a dental assistant, then as a dental hygienist. When I pursued dental hygiene, it was for financial security, and it delivered. I loved my office, my team, and my patients. But deep down, I knew I was meant for more.

On an average day at the office, midway through cleaning my patient's teeth, I paused to rinse and forgot where I left off. You see, I had been daydreaming while delivering treatment. At that moment, I knew I was done with the monotony of day-to-day clinical work. I craved growth—both professionally and financially. I didn't want to be limited by a hygiene salary and the lack of career advancement opportunities. I wanted more control over my career and my income.

I was a single mom and couldn't just quit. I needed a plan. I had always admired our dental sales rep—confident, well-dressed, and driving a nice car. Could I do what she did?

I asked her how she got into the role. Her answer: "You'll need a bachelor's degree."

That night, I decided to go for it. For the next 18 months, I took night classes while working full-time and raising my child.

In the meantime, the CEO of a nonprofit medical clinic asked if I'd represent dental hygiene on their committee as they planned to add dental services. I was exhausted—I didn't have the time or energy. But something in me said, "Say yes." I served on that committee for a year, gaining insights into the business and operational side of dentistry. When the nonprofit clinic was ready to launch their dental department, I asked for the leadership position—and I got it. That was the first time I stepped out of full-time clinical care and into practice management.

I was completely unqualified for the role. But I trusted that I could figure it out.

I learned how to build and manage a dental department, foster community partnerships, and navigate the business side of dentistry. The clinic thrived—and is still successful today! I even co-founded a nonprofit a few years later.

After this role, I transitioned into teaching dental hygiene. Teaching was the hardest job with the lowest pay I had ever taken. But it taught me something valuable—I had a gift for breaking down complex topics and helping others understand and apply knowledge. It was incredibly rewarding to work with students and watch them succeed.

Then, my family moved to Chicago, and I landed my first consulting job. As a consultant, I was hired as the expert—a terrifying thought. I battled imposter syndrome. I questioned whether I was good enough. But I committed to mastering the business of dentistry. I spent countless hours analyzing P&Ls, financial reports, and practice data—many nights ending in tears. But over time, I got good at it, and client results proved it.

After 3.5 years on the road as a consultant, I needed to be home more for my kids. Plus, sleeping in hotels and spending countless hours in airports and on airplanes isn't as fun as it seems.

Around this time, I started noticing that DSOs (Dental Service Organizations) were taking off. I didn't fully understand them, but I knew they were the future of dentistry—and I wanted in.

I landed a Director of Operations role at an emerging DSO and learned multi-site management, operations, and M&A (mergers & acquisitions). This role taught me how businesses scale and gave me a seat at the table where high-level decisions were made.

Through each transition, I was stacking my skills:

- **Clinical Knowledge** → Made me a better manager
- **Business & Financial Knowledge** → Made me a better consultant
- **Teaching & Training** → Made me a better leader & coach

Each role (except teaching) led to a bigger salary, greater impact, and even business equity opportunities.

Here's what I've learned:

You don't have to be "qualified." Trust yourself—you'll figure it out.

Skill stacking is the secret. Each role should build on the last.

Say yes before you're ready. The biggest opportunities come when you step outside your comfort zone.

Be willing to struggle. Growth is uncomfortable, but worth it.

You are not stuck. If clinical work no longer fulfills you, there is another path.

Leaving clinical hygiene was scary—but looking back, I wouldn't change a thing. I discovered that I was pretty good at the business side of dentistry, and I loved teaching and coaching dental professionals and teams.

A year ago, I took the biggest leap yet: I started my own coaching and consulting business. In under a year, it grew into a six-figure business. Now, I'm launching a course to help other dental professionals turn their skills into a thriving consulting business—just like I did.



HIS STORY

DR. KARTIK ANTANI

Can a full-time clinical schedule still leave room for fun? Can you pursue your ambitions and discover that you're capable of more than you were trained for? Can you supplement your income and make a broader impact?

The truth is—those answers are as personal as your DNA.

For me, ambition, perseverance, and creativity have always been core to who I am. Since childhood, I've dreamed of building something bigger—of owning businesses, forging new paths, and solving problems in innovative ways. My early inspirations came from video games and Legos, where imagination, structure, and strategy laid the foundation for what would later become an entrepreneurial mindset. I looked up to business owners who combined education with enterprise. Naturally, I assumed my path would mirror theirs.

If you're in dentistry, you probably know the “traditional” career arc: study hard, get into dental school, study harder, graduate, and choose your track—residency, specialty, associateship, or ownership. For many, the pinnacle of success is scaling: owning multiple practices, building a DSO, expanding endlessly. That's the model we're shown. That's the blueprint we're handed.

And for a while, I believed in it.

I thought fulfillment would come from scaling a group practice. After all, that's what success was supposed to look like. But eventually, I began to question that narrative. Did more practices mean more happiness? Was bigger always better?

Turns out, not always.

Yes, owning multiple practices can be part of your success story—but it doesn't have to be the whole story. As I scaled up, I found myself busier than ever. I had less time, less energy, and less room to explore the other things I loved. Business ownership was demanding, and scaling was a whole other beast.

I've always thrived in chaos—spinning plates, juggling roles, building and growing all at once. It was exciting... until it wasn't. When burnout began outweighing ambition, I knew something had to change. So, we scaled down. And in doing so, my quality of life improved. But the desire to do more? That never left.

Here's what I learned: just because your mentors did it one way, doesn't mean you have to. Many of mine built empires of practices. That was their joy. That was their success.

Me? I liked owning multiple practices.
But I also liked solo clinical dentistry.
I liked mentoring pre-dental and new grads.

I liked developing tech tools that solved real workflow problems in my own office—and then sharing those tools with others.

There were a lot of “also likes.”

Because for me, success isn't linear. It's not one path, but many. My ultimate goal has always been to solve problems. And that can take a hundred different forms.

I found deep satisfaction in owning one well-run practice while collaborating with tech companies to help shape the future of dentistry. I discovered that my skills extended far beyond the op—and that my career could, too.

In the past few years, I've had the opportunity to:

- Beta test software solutions that increased efficiency in my own office
- Offer design feedback for a European practice management system
- Collaborate on an AI-powered platform for lead generation and patient communication
- Mentor up-and-coming owners and emerging DSO leaders
- Write articles and appear on podcasts covering a wide range of topics
- Participate in market research and industry surveys

Dentistry is evolving. And with it, the ways we make an impact are evolving, too. There's room for consultants, creators, technologists, educators, and leaders. There's room for you—beyond the chair.

If you've ever felt the itch to do more, to build something greater, to redefine your role—you can. Success isn't a formula. It's a canvas. And you get to paint your own version.

Her Story



PAMELA GRABOSO-SAUL

I've spent years doubting myself—years wondering if I was good enough, if I was ever going to make it. Not just in school, but even after I graduated from hygiene school in 2018. I wasn't the top student, and honestly, I don't think my instructors believed in me. Maybe they expected me to flunk out by the second or third semester. But I didn't.

Sometimes, I wonder if my career has been built on spite—on proving them all wrong. Maybe that's what fueled me in the beginning. But now, I like to believe it was something deeper. Something stronger. Determination, maybe. Resilience. The unshakable belief that I was meant for more.

When I started my bachelor's program in dental hygiene, they sold me a dream—told me it would open doors beyond the operatory: education, research, sales. What they didn't tell me was that those doors required experience I didn't yet have. So, when I graduated and started applying for those roles, rejection hit me like a brick wall. Over and over again. I felt lied to, misled. Bitter. Like I had been set up to fail. But failure wasn't an option. If experience was what I needed, I would find a way to get it.

So, in 2019, I made a move—I pursued a Master of Science in Dental Hygiene with a focus on education. If I didn't feel supported by my faculty, I'd become the faculty I wished I had. I also left private practice and stepped into public health, joining a research program studying silver diamine fluoride (SDF) in NYC schools. It was a risk. I loved my private practice and my patients. But my mom reminded me: opportunities like this don't come twice. And at 22, I was in my prime.

From 2019 to 2021, I juggled grad school and public health work. For the first time, I felt like my career was taking shape. Then COVID-19 happened.

Suddenly, everything I had built felt like it was slipping through my fingers. The work environment turned toxic. I fought for better conditions—for myself and my coworkers. But the administration didn't care. They prioritized research over people. My mental health crumbled. I was barely holding it together, counting down the days until graduation—until freedom.

By December 2021, I had my master's degree, a resignation letter in hand, and a new title: Clinical Instructor at a dental school. I thought, this is it. This is where everything finally falls into place. I was wrong.

Instead of feeling valued, I felt dismissed. Instead of being supported, I was made to feel like the problem. I woke up with panic attacks. I cried before work, on my commute, during my lunch break. Was all this effort worth it if I was miserable? I had spent years grinding, but the grind had broken me. By 2022, my body gave up. Stress-induced IBS. My breaking point. My wake-up call.

I walked away. I had to.

In the summer of 2022, I returned to private practice, but the itch for something more remained. A former employer recruited me to manage a public health clinic. It felt like a full-circle moment—like the perfect fit. I knew the program. I understood my team's needs. And I was promised we'd build something new—a bridge between clinical practice and public health for future students.

But the reality? Lies. Manipulation. Gaslighting.

The resistance to change was suffocating. My boss weaponized my emotions against me. In meetings, I'd break down, begging to leave. Instead of helping, they reminded me that quitting meant losing my health insurance. Losing therapy. They held my survival over my head.

I tried to tough it out, but by April 2023, I hit a wall. For the first time in my life, I quit without a backup plan.

People told me it was a mistake. That I was ruining my career. That I'd regret it. But the universe had other plans.

During a trip to visit my parents, my mom handed me a flyer for a nearby dental office. On a whim, I reached out. Just like that, I was back in private practice.

For the first time in years, I slowed down. I healed. I spent time with my loved ones. I started enjoying my life again. The weight of depression lifted. Therapy and medication kept me stable. But one thought haunted me: Had I worked this hard just to stay in the op?

Then, in the summer of 2024, everything changed.

I made two decisions: I applied for my MPH, and I took a shot on a job that felt too good to be true—a research dental hygienist position. I found the principal investigator's email, wrote a heartfelt message, and hit send. I just knew—this was meant for me.

I joined a research project in its infancy, where dental hygiene was a completely new concept to the team. But this time, I wasn't fighting alone. I had a boss who believed in me. A team that valued my expertise. They encouraged my creativity, trusted my ideas, and let me shape something from the ground up.

For the first time in a long time, I wasn't just grinding—I was glowing. No tears. No panic. No self-doubt. Just confidence. Passion. Purpose.

If I could tell my past self anything, it would be this: Going beyond the op wasn't going to happen overnight. I wish I hadn't pushed myself so hard that I burned out. I wish I had known that success has no deadline. I wish I had trusted that everything—every rejection, every failure, every breakdown—was leading me here.

Everything falls into place in its own time. And when it does, it's worth every battle.



Her Story

KATE KIRKPATRICK

“Become a dental hygienist,” they said. “You’re a natural—empathetic, great with people, sharp in science. The pay is great. The hours are flexible. You can have the career and be the hands-on parent. It’s everything you’ve been looking for.”

And honestly? They weren’t wrong. Dental hygiene did deliver—at least for a while.

I had stability. Flexibility. A damn good paycheck. It’s one of the few careers where an associate’s degree can take you straight to six figures. I was working 28 hours a week and living comfortably. The benefits? Solid. The flexibility? Life-changing. I built a schedule that worked around my kids, my life—me. And for a long time, that was enough.

But here’s the part no one tells you: it’s not all cleanings and compliments.

Over time, the physical grind started to catch up. Chronic neck pain. Backaches. Mental burnout from pouring everything into patient after patient, day in and day out. I kept pushing—until I couldn’t. And I know I’m not alone.

So many hygienists are stuck in silent survival mode. Numb to the discomfort, clinging to the perks—good money, decent benefits, predictable routine. We tell ourselves we should be grateful. That we chose this. That it’s “not that bad.”

But let me be clear: that nagging voice inside you asking, “Is there more than this?”—that’s not a weakness. That’s your wake-up call. It’s not a red flag. It’s a green light. A sign that you’re ready for the next level. That your skills, experience, and passion are meant for something more.

Yes, leaving clinical is scary. It’s familiar. It feels safe. But safe doesn’t mean sustainable. And it sure as hell doesn’t mean fulfilling.

The truth? Everything you’ve done as a hygienist—your communication skills, your precision, your ability to think critically under pressure—is pure gold in other industries.

I took the leap. After earning my BS in Dental Hygiene, I found a bridge program that opened doors I didn’t even know existed. It wasn’t easy. There was fear. Doubt. Impostor syndrome. But I kept going. I worked with a career coach. I determined what I was really good at. I leaned into my strengths. I learned to network. I listened to others who had walked this road before me.

And eventually? I got out.

This journey isn’t linear. It’s not a template. But with the right mindset, real mentorship, and a willingness to get uncomfortable, you can absolutely build a career that gives you purpose, growth, and freedom.

And here’s the best part: you’re not starting from scratch. You’re starting from experience.

The profession is shifting. More hygienists are stepping out and stepping up. We’re thriving in sales, education, research, tech, consulting—even running our own companies. The industry is finally catching up to what we’ve always known: webring the value. We are the value.

So yeah, the leap is scary. But staying stuck is scarier.

Here’s what I want every hygienist reading this to know: your clinical experience is not a cage. It’s your starting point. Every patient, every challenge, every damn day you showed up—it’s built you into someone unstoppable.

You have what it takes. You always have.

This isn’t the end of your story.

It’s just the beginning.

And it’s going to be so much bigger than you ever imagined.

NON-CLINICAL QUIZ



ANSWER THESE 10 QUESTIONS TO FIND YOUR
PERFECT NONCLINICAL FIT BASED ON YOUR SKILLS,
PREFERENCES, AND VIBE

1. What excites you most about your work?

- ☐ A Motivating someone to take action
- ☐ B Organizing systems and improving efficiency
- ☐ C Helping others learn something new
- ☐ D Solving problems with logic and creativity

2. What frustrates you most about clinical work?

- ☐ A Limited growth potential
- ☐ B Inefficient systems and workflows
- ☐ C Lack of time to fully support patients
- ☐ D Repetitive tasks with no room to innovate

3. How do you handle a challenge at work?

- ☐ **A** Talk it out and win people over
- ☐ **B** Make a checklist and tackle it step-by-step
- ☐ **C** Collaborate and guide others toward a solution
- ☐ **D** Step back, analyze, and design a smarter approach

4. Your coworkers would describe you as:

- ☐ **A** Persuasive and outgoing
- ☐ **B** Dependable and organized
- ☐ **C** Supportive and encouraging
- ☐ **D** Thoughtful and strategic

5. You're happiest when your day includes:

(A) Closing deals or winning someone over

(B) Checking off tasks and solving problems

(C) Teaching, mentoring, or guiding someone

(D) Creating, planning, or researching

6. What's your ideal work setting?

(A) Fast-paced, people-focused, full of energy

(B) Structured, task-oriented, clear goals

(C) Collaborative, service-driven, interactive

(D) Flexible, independent, intellectually stimulating

7. You prefer tools that help you:

A Track leads, communications, and deals

B Organize schedules, tasks, and data

C Communicate and educate others

D Analyze, strategize, or prototype

8. If you were handed a new software today, you'd:

A Try pitching it to someone immediately

B Look up a step-by-step guide

C Take your time learning it so you can teach others

D Tinker with it to see how it works and how it could be better

9. Your superpower is:

- ☐ **A** Turning “no” into “yes”
- ☐ **B** Seeing the big picture and keeping things on track
- ☐ **C** Explaining complex things in simple ways
- ☐ **D** Spotting problems before they happen

10. In your next role, you want to feel:

- ☐ **A** Empowered to grow and earn
- ☐ **B** In control and making things better
- ☐ **C** Helpful and people-focused
- ☐ **D** Creative and intellectually challenged

HOW TO SCORE:

For each question, count how many times you selected each letter.

Mostly A's = Sales-Focused Roles

You're a natural communicator with an entrepreneurial edge. You thrive in high-energy, people-facing roles that offer growth, autonomy, and rewards.

Best-fit careers:

*Dental Sales Representative
Territory Manager
Business Development Executive
Sales Enablement Specialist*

Mostly B's = Operations-Focused Roles

You're organized, strategic, and love solving problems behind the scenes. You're the backbone of any business and excel in roles that require structure, process, and leadership.

Best-fit careers:

*Practice Manager
Regional Operations Manager
Compliance Specialist
Project Manager*

Mostly C's = Training & Support Roles

You're a teacher at heart, with the patience and empathy to help others thrive. You love sharing knowledge and creating smooth experiences for both teams and clients.

Best-fit careers:

*Dental Software Trainer
Implementation Specialist
Customer Success Manager
Onboarding Coach*

Mostly D's = Tech & Strategy Roles

You're analytical, curious, and love improving systems and experiences. You'd thrive in roles that let you innovate, analyze, or shape the future of dental care.

Best-fit careers:

*Product Manager
UX Researcher
Clinical Analyst
Marketing or Growth Strategist
Tied Results?*

If you have a tie between two categories:

Combine them! You may be great for hybrid roles like Customer Success with a Sales edge or Product Strategy with Operations experience. Consider your energy preference: Do you want to work with people daily or behind-the-scenes most of the time





BY ALLISON NORRIS

HOLD YOUR HORSES

Important Aspects to Consider Before Taking a Non-Clinical Role

Ready to transition from clinical to non-clinical? Good. The non-clinical world will be intimidating at first, but it's full of new and exciting possibilities. You just have to be prepared when the opportunity arises. Let's dive into what you should keep in mind as you start this new adventure.

Do Your Homework

Before you sign on the dotted line to accept a new position, it's important to dig deep and do some research on the company. Forget their cool website, their branding, and their logo—what's their real story? Research and find out details regarding their reputation, their values and goals, and their company culture. Ask specific questions about their future growth opportunities and have them explain what work-life balance means to them. Reach out to current and former employees for the inside scoop. Does their mission align with your goals and values? If not, it's time to reassess and move on to the next.

Set Boundaries

Starting a new role is a rollercoaster of emotions, but you have to establish clear boundaries from the start. Do you have hard stops about the hours you can work or specific responsibilities that you refuse to do? Don't be afraid to share those details. It's best if you lay it all out on the table during your interviews. Clear expectations now mean much smoother sailing, which will help you steer clear of unnecessary drama in the future. Establishing boundaries is crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance and ensuring long-term job satisfaction.

Know Your Value

Getting a new job will make you feel on top of the world, but don't forget your worth. You have to be confident in yourself and recognize the skills and experience you bring to the table. Do not, I repeat, do not settle for a role that undervalues you. Be your own advocate throughout the entire journey. Make sure your efforts are acknowledged. Back-and-forth salary and benefits discussions are common when hiring—your value, however, is not up for negotiation. Understanding your value not only boosts your confidence but also ensures you are compensated fairly for your contributions.

Embrace the Change

Transitioning to a non-clinical role can be a significant shift, and it's essential to embrace the change with an open mind. The skills you've acquired in your clinical career are invaluable and transferable to non-clinical positions. Be ready to adapt and learn new skills that are relevant to your new role. This flexibility will make the transition smoother and help you thrive in your new environment. Embracing change also means being open to new experiences and opportunities that can further your professional growth.

Build a Support Network

Moving into a non-clinical role can sometimes feel isolating, especially if you're used to the camaraderie of a clinical setting. Building a support network is crucial. Connect with colleagues in your new field, join professional organizations, and seek out mentors who can provide guidance and support. Having a strong support system will help you navigate challenges and celebrate successes in your new role. Networking can also open doors to future opportunities and collaborations.

Stay Enthusiastic and Eager

Your enthusiasm and eagerness to succeed in your new career are your greatest assets. Approach each day with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn. This mindset will not only help you excel in your role but also make you a valuable team member. Stay curious, seek feedback, and continuously strive to improve. Your passion and dedication will set you apart and ensure your success in the non-clinical world.

You are going to kill it in your new career, but you have to be strategic in this life change you're embarking on. Be enthusiastic and eager but keep your eyes wide open. Your non-clinical adventure awaits. Dive right in and stay awesome!



Dental Sales Representative

Dental Sales Representative

Alt Titles: Territory Manager, Account Executive

Salary Range: \$70,000–\$120,000+ (base + commission)

Where: Dental product companies, labs, device manufacturers

What It Entails: Promoting and selling dental products to practices and DSOs

Why You're a Fit: Deep clinical knowledge and credibility with dental buyers

How to Break In:

Build a strong LinkedIn profile with a sales-forward narrative

Shadow a current rep or request informational interviews

Apply to associate or entry-level sales positions



Clinical Trainer / Implementation Specialist

Clinical Trainer / Implementation Specialist

Alt Titles: Dental Software Trainer, Clinical Educator

Salary Range: \$65,000–\$95,000

Where: Dental software companies, implant manufacturers, DSOs

What It Entails: Training dental teams on new software, equipment, or clinical protocols

Why You're a Fit: Hands-on dental experience makes you relatable and effective in training

*How to Break In:
Get familiar with top dental software (Dentrix, Eaglesoft, etc.)*

Create training videos or SOPs to showcase skills

Apply for clinical onboarding or field trainer roles



Recruiter (Dental Focus)

Recruiter (Dental Focus)

Alt Titles: Talent Acquisition Specialist, Staffing Consultant

Salary Range: \$55,000–\$100,000+ (with commission)

Where: Recruiting agencies, DSOs, corporate dental groups

What It Entails: Sourcing, interviewing, and placing candidates in dental roles

Why You're a Fit: You know what makes a strong dental hire and can speak the language

*How to Break In:
Gain experience through agency or internal recruiting*

Start by helping peers with job searches or resume reviews

Consider certifications in recruiting (e.g., AIRS, LinkedIn Talent Solutions)



Dental Insurance Claims Analyst

Dental Insurance Claims Analyst

Alt Titles: Claims Reviewer, Insurance Coordinator (Corporate)

Salary Range: \$50,000–\$75,000

Where: Insurance companies, third-party billing services, DSOs

What It Entails: Reviewing and processing dental claims for accuracy and compliance

Why You're a Fit: You understand CDT codes and insurance workflows

How to Break In:
Take courses in dental billing/coding

Apply to insurance companies or third-party billing firms

Highlight experience with EOBs and claims appeals



Dental Consultant

Dental Consultant

Alt Titles: Practice Consultant, Clinical Advisor

Salary Range: \$80,000–\$150,000+ (often project or contract-based)

Where: Consulting firms, self-employed, DSOs

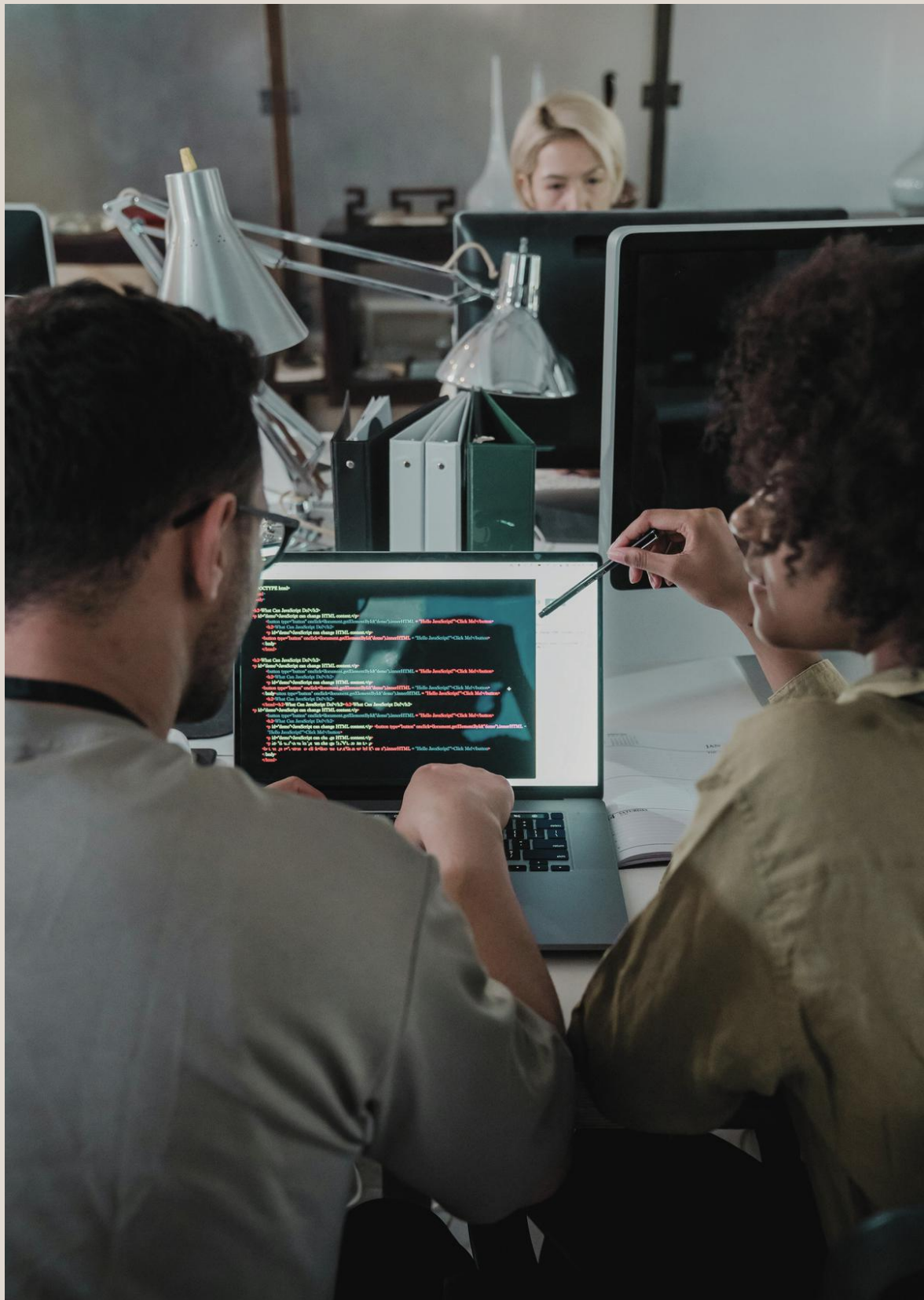
What It Entails: Helping practices improve operations, compliance, or production

Why You're a Fit: Your clinical background and operational insights are invaluable

How to Break In:

Niche down (compliance, hygiene, growth) and build a brand

Start consulting locally or with your network
Create educational content or workshops



Product Manager (Dental Tech)

Product Manager (Dental Tech)

Alt Titles: Product Owner, Solutions Manager

Salary Range: \$90,000–\$140,000

Where: Tech companies, dental SaaS startups, device manufacturers

What It Entails: Overseeing development of products tailored to the dental industry

Why You're a Fit: You bring user empathy and can help bridge tech and clinical

How to Break In:

Learn product management fundamentals (Scrum, Agile, Jira)

Join startups in customer-facing or QA roles first

Take a product management certification course



Dental Content Creator / KOL

Dental Content Creator / KOL

Alt Titles: Thought Leader, Industry Influencer

Salary Range: Highly variable – \$10,000–\$150,000+
(brand deals, speaking, content)

Where: Self-employed, consulting firms, brands

What It Entails: Creating educational or marketing content for dental professionals

Why You're a Fit: You have real-world experience and a niche perspective

How to Break In:
Start building content on LinkedIn, Instagram, or YouTube

Partner with brands for reviews or education

Apply to be a Key Opinion Leader (KOL) with product companies



Customer Success Manager (Dental Software)

Customer Success Manager (Dental Software)

Alt Titles: Client Success Rep, Customer, Experience Manager

Salary Range: \$65,000–\$100,000+ (plus bonus)

Where: Dental software or technology companies

What It Entails: Supporting dental clients post-sale to ensure retention and satisfaction

Why You're a Fit: You understand pain points in dental offices and can guide them

How to Break In:
Get familiar with CRM tools (Salesforce, HubSpot)

Transition from support, admin, or training roles

Highlight relationship-building and problem-solving skills



Dental Compliance Officer

Dental Compliance Officer

Alt Titles: Risk Manager, Quality & Compliance Coordinator

Salary Range: \$70,000–\$110,000

Where: DSOs, corporate groups, consulting firms

What It Entails: Ensuring dental practices follow HIPAA, OSHA, and state board rules

Why You're a Fit: You know what compliance looks like at the chairside

How to Break In:
Take a HIPAA or OSHA compliance course

Create mock audits or templates to show your expertise

Apply for compliance coordinator roles at large practices



Dental Marketing Specialist

Dental Marketing Specialist

Alt Titles: Marketing Coordinator, Growth Strategist
Salary Range: \$55,000–\$90,000+

Where: Agencies, DSOs, product companies

What It Entails: Promoting dental services or products through digital and traditional media

Why You're a Fit: You know what attracts patients and professionals alike

How to Break In:
Learn SEO, email marketing, and Canva

Take a role in a dental practice focused on outreach

Volunteer to help a dental business improve its marketing



Operations Manager (Dental Group)

Operations Manager (Dental Group)

Alt Titles: Regional Manager, Business Manager

Salary Range: \$80,000–\$130,000+

Where: DSOs, multi-practice groups, startups

What It Entails: Overseeing daily ops, staff, and practice performance

Why You're a Fit: You've lived the inner workings of a dental practice

How to Break In:
Gain team lead or practice manager experience

Take business or leadership courses

Apply to assistant regional or floating manager roles



Dental Tech Support Specialist

Dental Tech Support Specialist

Alt Titles: Technical Support Rep, Help Desk Analyst

Salary Range: \$50,000–\$75,000

Where: Dental software or hardware companies

What It Entails: Helping dental clients troubleshoot issues with technology

Why You're a Fit: You speak the dental language and tech doesn't scare you

How to Break In:
Get familiar with common platforms (DEXIS, iTero, etc.)

Practice writing out troubleshooting steps

Apply for Tier 1 or Customer Support roles in dental tech firms



Dental Educator / CE Speaker

Dental Educator / CE Speaker

Alt Titles: Continuing Education Instructor, Speaker

Salary Range: \$250–\$2,000+ per event or \$60,000–\$100,000+ full time

Where: CE companies, universities, product companies

What It Entails: Teaching dental professionals through courses or lectures

Why You're a Fit: Your clinical credibility brings trust and relatability

How to Break In:
Start presenting at local study clubs

Create a CE-approved course

Reach out to event organizers and pitch your topic



Hygiene Coach / Consultant

Hygiene Coach / Consultant

Alt Titles: Clinical Coach, Hygiene Growth Advisor

Salary Range: \$75,000–\$120,000+ (contract or employed)

Where: DSOs, consulting firms, self-employed

What It Entails: Supporting hygienists with protocols, performance, and systems

Why You're a Fit: You've been in the op and understand how to drive value

How to Break In:
Offer coaching in your local area

Develop a framework or protocol that scales

Network with DSOs and join hygiene-focused communities



Dental Writer / Editor

Dental Writer / Editor

Alt Titles: Medical Writer, Dental Copywriter

Salary Range: \$50,000–\$100,000+ (freelance or full-time)

Where: Publishing, agencies, product companies

What It Entails: Writing content for professionals, patients, or industry stakeholders

Why You're a Fit: You understand terminology and can translate it effectively

How to Break In:
Build a writing portfolio (blog, LinkedIn, articles)

Pitch to dental media sites and CE providers

Join writing groups or take freelance gigs



TRANSITIONING FROM CLINICAL TO NON-CLINICAL ROLES: A DENTAL HYGIENIST'S JOURNEY

In the world of dentistry, there has been a noticeable shift in empowerment among clinicians, with many recognizing and acknowledging the allure of non-clinical career paths. This trend reflects a desire among dental professionals to escape the confines of traditional clinical practice and explore new avenues for personal and professional growth. However, before making the leap into non-clinical roles, there are several factors to consider. Understanding the journey of individuals like Sarah, a dental hygienist seeking to transition into a non-clinical career, can offer valuable insights and guidance for those looking to embark on a similar path.





Meet Sarah: A Dental Hygienist Seeking Change

Sarah's story begins like many others in the dental profession. As a dental hygienist, her passion for her work and dedication to her patients were evident to all who knew her. Patients admired her warm demeanor, while colleagues respected her commitment to providing top-notch care. However, as the years passed, Sarah began to experience signs of burnout. The repetitive nature of her clinical duties left her feeling constrained and unfulfilled. She longed for professional growth and craved opportunities to challenge herself intellectually and creatively.

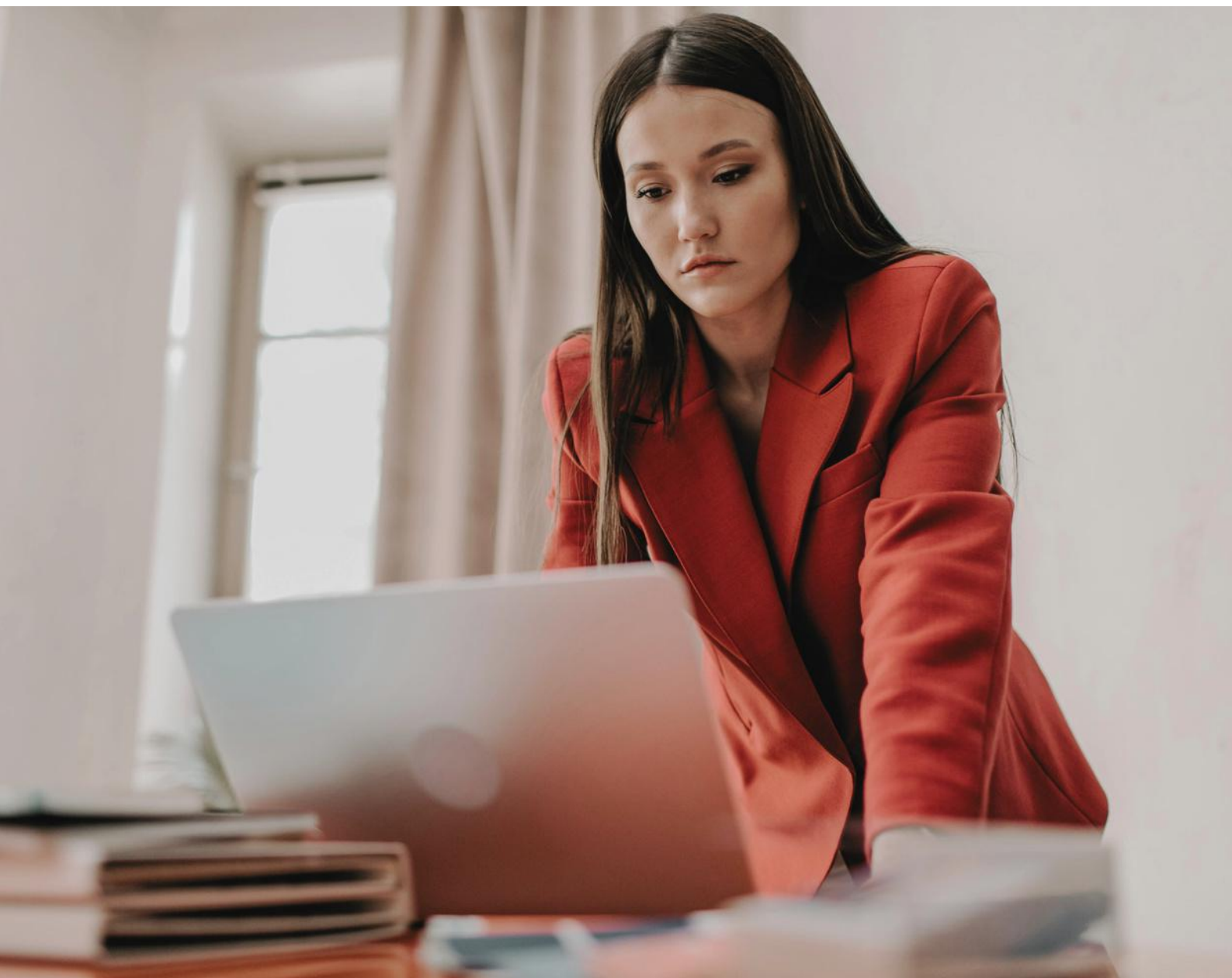
Recognizing the need for change, Sarah embarked on a journey of self-discovery. She researched alternative career paths, attended seminars, and sought guidance from mentors. Despite encountering obstacles along the way, Sarah remained determined to explore non-clinical opportunities that would allow her to make a meaningful impact beyond the confines of traditional dentistry.



Navigating the Transition:

Sarah's transition from clinical to non-clinical roles was not without its challenges. However, through perseverance and resilience, she was able to overcome obstacles and forge a new path for herself. Here are some key lessons that Sarah learned along the way, which may offer valuable insights for dental hygienists looking to make a similar transition:

- **Self-Discovery and Research:** Before embarking on any career transition, it's essential to take the time to reflect on your interests, values, and goals. Sarah's journey began with self-reflection and extensive research into various non-clinical career paths available to dental professionals.
- **Networking and Building Relationships:** As a natural relationship builder, Sarah recognized the power of networking in advancing her career aspirations. She revamped her LinkedIn profile to showcase her skills and experience beyond clinical dentistry and actively sought out opportunities to connect with professionals in her desired field.
- **Continuous Learning and Professional Development:** Sarah understood the importance of continuous self-improvement in preparing for a non-clinical career. She enrolled in courses and sought out opportunities to expand her skill set, leveraging her clinical expertise to align with the demands of her desired role.
- **Resilience in the Face of Setbacks:** Transitioning to a non-clinical career path inevitably comes with its fair share of challenges and setbacks. Rejection can be disheartening, but Sarah refused to let setbacks define her. Instead, she viewed failure as an opportunity for growth and used it as a catalyst to propel herself forward.



Sarah's experience of transitioning from clinical to non-clinical roles is a shining example of the potential that awaits dental professionals who seek to explore different career paths. By embracing self-discovery, networking, continuous learning, resilience, and a growth mindset, dental hygienists can successfully navigate the transition to non-clinical roles and unlock new opportunities for personal and professional fulfillment. While the journey may be challenging, the rewards of stepping outside the confines of traditional clinical practice are well worth the effort.



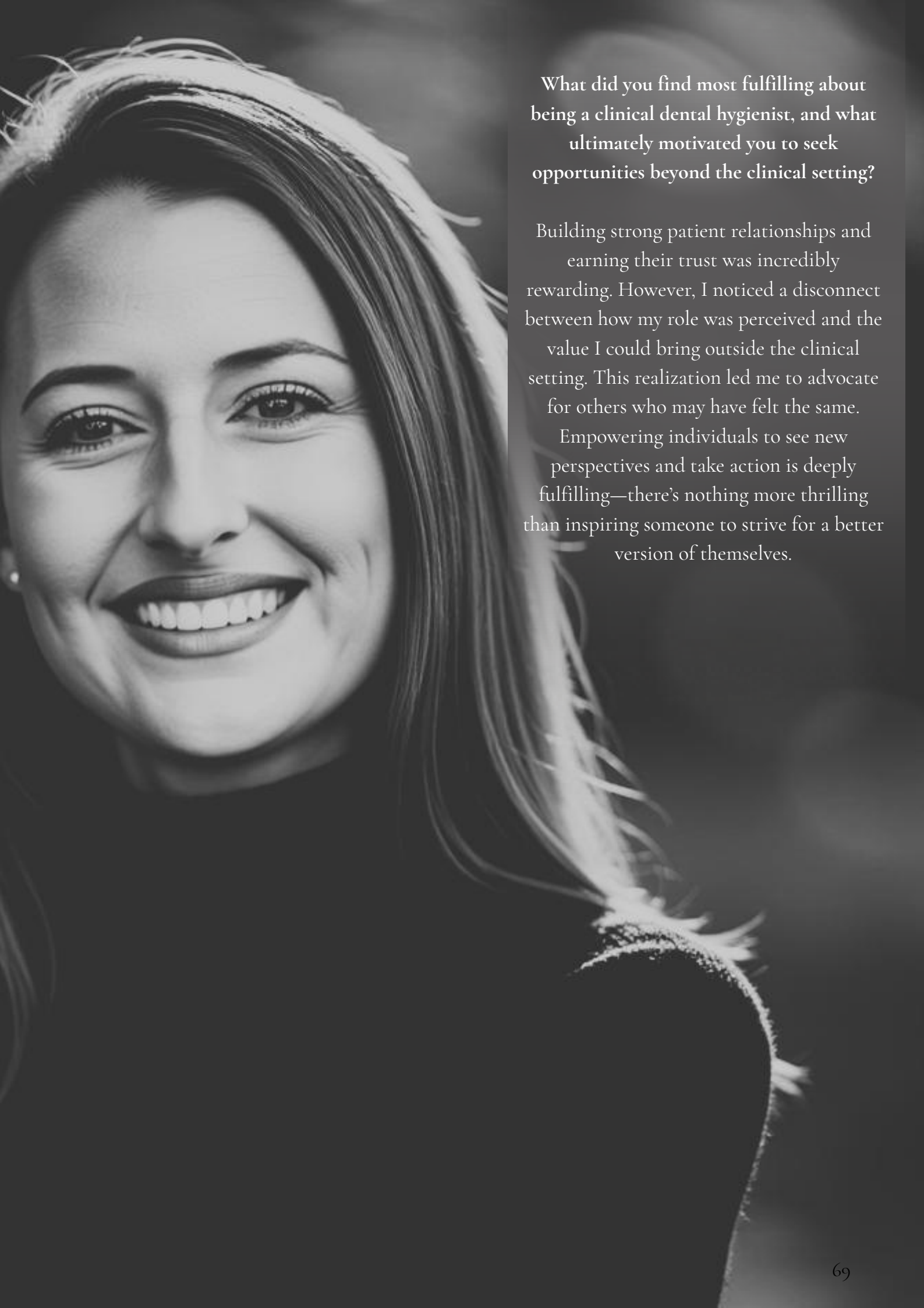
Allison NORRIS

Allison Norris is a trailblazer in the dental industry, redefining career possibilities beyond the operator. As the founder of The Dentele Group, a premier non-clinical recruiting agency, she has dedicated herself to helping dental professionals explore new opportunities in executive, sales, operations, and technology roles. With a background in clinical dental hygiene, Allison's journey from patient care to entrepreneurship has been fueled by a passion for advocacy, mentorship, and innovation. In this exclusive interview, she shares her insights on transitioning careers, improving workplace culture, and the future of non-clinical roles in dentistry.



What inspired your decision to transition from traditional dental hygiene practice to business management and entrepreneurship in dentistry?

After months of job searching, I realized I wasn't meant to build someone else's dream—I was meant to create my own. I had a strong desire to make a greater impact within the industry and prove to myself that I could succeed on my own terms. My skills and experience allowed me to support others, especially those seeking new career paths. This, combined with my determination to prove past naysayers wrong, ignited my entrepreneurial spirit.



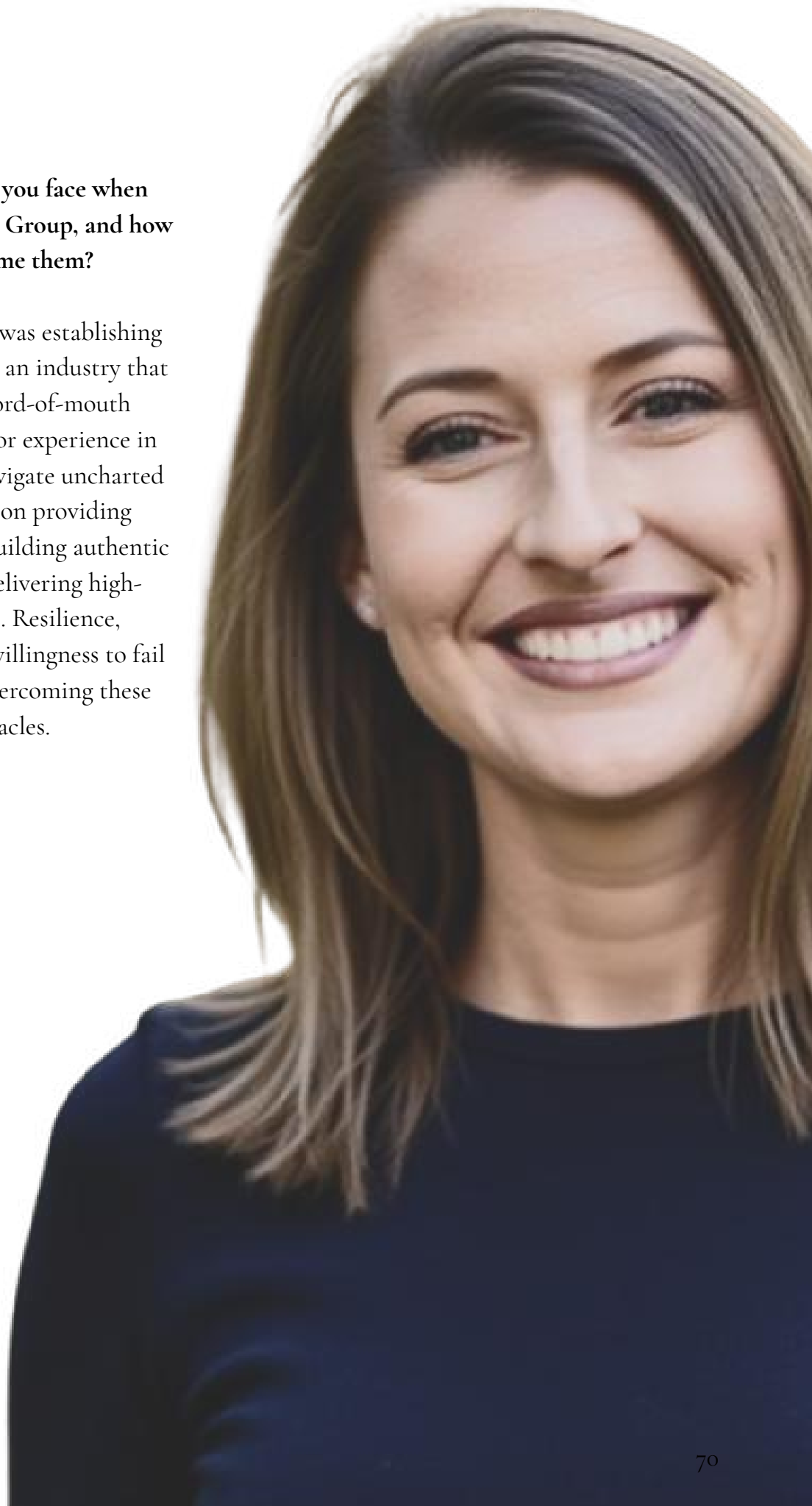
What did you find most fulfilling about being a clinical dental hygienist, and what ultimately motivated you to seek opportunities beyond the clinical setting?

Building strong patient relationships and earning their trust was incredibly rewarding. However, I noticed a disconnect between how my role was perceived and the value I could bring outside the clinical setting. This realization led me to advocate for others who may have felt the same.

Empowering individuals to see new perspectives and take action is deeply fulfilling—there's nothing more thrilling than inspiring someone to strive for a better version of themselves.

What challenges did you face when launching The Dentele Group, and how did you overcome them?

The biggest challenge was establishing credibility and trust in an industry that relies heavily on word-of-mouth referrals. With no prior experience in recruiting, I had to navigate uncharted territory. I focused on providing personalized service, building authentic relationships, and delivering high-quality candidates. Resilience, adaptability, and the willingness to fail (a lot) were key to overcoming these initial obstacles.



The Dentele Group is known for its concierge approach to hiring. How did you develop this unique model, and how does it set your agency apart?

My approach was inspired by my clinical experience. Providing exceptional patient care required empathy, attention to detail, and sometimes a bit of pampering. I applied those same principles to recruitment—understanding each client's unique needs and offering tailored solutions. This level of service ensures the right cultural and professional fit for both candidates and employers.

How do you ensure candidates align with the mission and culture of the organizations you partner with?

We begin with a comprehensive discovery call to understand each client's values and goals. This allows us to identify candidates who not only meet technical qualifications but also align with the company's culture, ensuring long-term success.

For those passionate about clinical practice, what changes can practice owners implement to create more fulfilling work environments?

Transparency and communication are key. Practice owners should involve their teams in decision-making, provide competitive compensation, and offer growth opportunities through leadership roles and continuing education. A supportive and collaborative workplace significantly boosts job satisfaction and reduces turnover.

How can the industry better support hygienists in addressing burnout, lack of autonomy, and workplace culture challenges?

The hierarchical structure in dental practices often creates power struggles. Leadership should foster a team-oriented culture by leading with a servant mindset. Additionally, investing in ergonomic tools can help prevent physical strain, and giving hygienists more autonomy in patient care decisions can improve job satisfaction and professional pride.

How can the field balance opportunities for non-clinical roles while maintaining the strength of traditional practice?

There's room for both paths. The industry thrives when people bring diverse strengths—some build, some test, some verify, and some apply the innovations. Recognizing the value of clinical roles while promoting non-clinical versatility fosters industry-wide growth.

What role do practice owners, educators, and industry leaders play in bridging these career paths?

Educators should introduce non-clinical opportunities in school. Practice owners and leaders can create hybrid roles and cross-train their teams, integrating both career paths effectively.

What advice would you give to someone considering a non-clinical career shift?

Reflect on what you truly enjoy and where your strengths lie. Research roles that align with your interests and connect with professionals in those positions. Find a mentor, network strategically, and stay eager but not naive.

Can you share a standout success story from The Dentele Group?

One hygienist initially pursued sales but had a strong background in digital dentistry and software. Though hesitant, she transitioned into an implementation role at a leading dental tech company. She now thrives in her new career, proving that stepping outside one's comfort zone leads to growth.

What's the biggest gap between clinical and non-clinical roles today, and how do you work to bridge it?

The biggest gap is a lack of awareness. Many professionals don't realize the breadth of opportunities available to them. If they aren't aware, how can they research and decide what they want to do? By educating candidates and providing resources, we help them confidently explore new career directions.

The Dentele Group was named a Startup Agency to Watch in 2022, and you've received accolades like the Rising Star Denobi Award. How have these milestones shaped your vision?

While I'm grateful for the recognition, awards don't define me. They validate the impact I'm making and motivate me to continue empowering professionals and transforming hiring in the industry.

"Recruitment, like patient care, thrives on empathy and attention to detail."

How do you use your platform to inspire and educate others?

Through articles, podcasts, and social media, I share insights and success stories to spark conversations around professional growth and innovation in dentistry. I love encouraging people to think outside the box.

What obstacles have you faced as a woman entrepreneur, and what strategies have helped you succeed?

Building confidence and resilience was essential. Early in my career, an executive from a larger organization spoke down to me. At the time, it bothered me, but I stayed focused. Six months later, that same executive sought me out for a job. That experience reinforced the importance of persistence and maintaining a positive attitude.

What advice do you have for women aspiring to launch startups in healthcare or specialized fields?

Believe in your vision, build a strong support network, and don't hesitate to ask for help. Resilience and authenticity will set you apart.

What trends do you see shaping non-clinical roles in dentistry, and how is The Dentele Group adapting?

Technology and data-driven decision-making are driving change. I'm investing in tools and training to stay ahead of these trends while maintaining our personalized approach. I'm also developing an app that will revolutionize hiring in the industry.

Looking ahead, what are your goals for The Dentele Group, and how do you see its role in transforming dental career paths?

I aim to expand our reach into the healthcare sector and become the go-to resource for professionals looking to redefine their careers. My vision is to reshape how the industry approaches talent placement and career development.

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