

Client Profile

Learn how real businesses achieved success in their industries through innovative strategies such as expansion into new markets, new and differentiated product and service offerings, enhancing operations and cash flow management.

Local company fills a gap for dentists

Software startup keeps clinics on track

When Bob Hope and his brothers started their business 30 years ago, the world was a very different place. The Winnipeg-born Hope had just graduated with a degree in behavioural science and went to work for his two older brothers, who had developed software for dental clinics.

“When we first started, it was slow sledding because it was the '80's,” Hope recalls. “I’d go to a dental office and say, ‘Hey, there’s this thing called a computer...’ It was all so brand new back then.”

Hope stuck with it and created Timeshift Solutions (timeshiftsolutions.com), producing software called OPES that helps dental offices organize and computerize.



Bob Hope, founder of Timeshift Solutions, and his team recently released OPES- Connect, a software add-on that makes the process of booking and confirming dental appointments more efficient. Jon Nicholls Photography

“A typical dental office is between four and 15 staff, with larger practices employing up to 40 people – still a small business,” says Hope. “They don’t have the resources for HR services, staff recruitment or business analysis. Most of them do okay, but the truth is they could do significantly better.”

In the early years, before he developed OPES, Hope would meet with dental teams and, as he says, “show, explain, motivate and inspire” staff on how to perform their duties to get results. But in follow-up visits, he would often find that many things were still being overlooked. “When we decided to re-engineer our product, the intent was to have a much more intelligent piece of software that could create accountability,” he says. “In dentistry, along with providing exceptional care, the goal is for the schedule to be filled. Open time is very costly. We set out to create a product that has those best practices built into it – Bob in a box.”

In recent years, Timeshift has evolved OPES into a complete paperless solution. Moving from a paper system to one that records patient visits electronically is a tall order when, as Hope notes, “a dentist’s license is on the line if information isn’t recorded properly or if something is mistakenly deleted from a file.” When converting offices to OPES, “my formula is this: if this is going to cost you X dollars to upgrade to OPES, then one year from now your bottom line should increase at least three times that investment.” He adds: “We’re all about relationships. We’re invested in their success.”



Aside from data conversion and training, Hope and his staff follow up with routine check-ins to analyse how the practice is performing, ensuring targets are met and team members are on top of the changes. Timeshift recently released OPES-Connect, a software add-on that sends appointment confirmations to patients, relays the responses back to the schedule and logs the details – all automatically. Similarly, when a patient comes for an appointment, they can check themselves in rather than waiting for a busy receptionist to take their name. “It’s all about efficiency,” says Hope.

The technological advancements of the last 30 years that have benefited Hope’s clients have also been a boon to his business. When the brothers started their company, it served 20 clients all within Manitoba. Today, Timeshift’s staff of seven works remotely from as far away as Newfoundland on internet-based databases, serving about 1,000 dentists and hygienists, mainly in Canada but with some newer business in the United States and Barbados.

Hope is looking to grow his business south of the border while continuing to expand across Canada. “These doctors go through all these years of education. They don’t take any courses on management practices or how to grow a business,” he says. “Typically, the doctor comes out of dental school and becomes an associate under a previous doctor who didn’t have that training either. They learn by accident and by mistake.”

CIBC Tips – Execute Your Unique Idea

Create a business plan: Do you have an innovative product or service? Are you addressing a niche market need? Whatever your idea, draft a thorough business plan that has assessed the product or service need, addresses the competitive environment and articulates how you will viably bring your concept to the marketplace.

Understand your client needs: To ensure the success of any idea, it is important that you talk to your clients. Understand their wants and needs and gather their input. This will help you validate the feasibility of your concept and allow you to address their input before releasing your product to the market.

Be open to growth and change: After releasing your product, to ensure you remain relevant, continuously explore new opportunities for product development. Changes to your offering can help provide new value to your customers and generate new revenue streams. Without a focus on growth and change, you risk becoming stagnant and irrelevant in the marketplace.

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