

Be ready when the right dental practice buyer appears

Dr. Harrison found a buyer unusually well suited to his two locations. He wanted to wait until January. By then, the buyer had chosen another practice.



THE TAKEAWAY

Decide what would make you ready before a suitable buyer appears. Your preferred calendar and a buyer's available opportunity may not line up.

Two offices made buyer fit more specific

Dr. Harrison split his week between two small dental offices about 45 minutes apart. Both had three operatories in older converted buildings. One relied heavily on an insurance plan; the other was fee-for-service. Each location had strengths, but the facilities and the two-office schedule narrowed the buyer fit.

A buyer needed to be comfortable with both the operating arrangement and the communities. That made the arrival of Dr. Julie especially promising: she lived between the offices and was interested despite their limitations.

The seller's timing did not match the buyer's

When the opportunity became concrete, Dr. Harrison said he was not ready and suggested waiting until the following January. Dr. Julie continued her search and purchased another practice.

A seller has every right to choose a timetable. The consequence is that an interested buyer may not remain available while that timetable runs. The buyer's decision was not a reason to rush into unsuitable terms; it was a reminder that readiness and market opportunity are different things.

Waiting did not improve the offering

Dr. Harrison returned in January ready to sell, but there were no interested buyers. Consolidating the second office into the primary practice was suggested as a possible way to create a more coherent operation.

He did not carry out that consolidation, and the practices remained unsold. The passage of time had neither preserved the original buyer nor resolved the limitations of the two-location structure.

Consider consolidation as a decision, not a slogan

Combining locations may reduce duplicated operating demands and make a practice easier for a buyer to understand. It is not automatically the best answer, and it should not be treated as a promise of higher value.

Before changing locations, assess patient travel, retention, capacity, staffing, lease obligations and the cost of the move. The question is whether the resulting business would be more sustainable and transferable—not simply whether two revenue streams can be added together.

Define readiness before you go to market

An early conversation can identify what is negotiable, what must happen first and what would make an offer worth pursuing.

- Set a preferred transition date and identify any flexibility around it.
- Clarify the financial and personal conditions you need to feel ready.
- Discuss how an interested buyer's timing might differ from yours.
- Address facility or operating issues that narrow the likely buyer pool.
- Evaluate realistic alternatives if the current buyer chooses another practice.
- If you decide to wait, agree on what will improve during that period.

Use time to prepare, not simply postpone

A suitable buyer is not a guarantee that every term will work. It is an opportunity to test a real transaction against your goals. Be prepared to make that assessment while the opportunity is still available.

Talk with us before your target retirement date becomes a deadline. Preparation gives you a clearer basis for deciding when to proceed and when waiting serves a specific purpose.

Start a conversation: adsmidwest.com

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