



# CAD/CAM as a Marketing Tool

*Practice at Your Best with Technology That Sells Your Practice* | by Michael Kelly, DMD

Doctors know that computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD/CAM) eliminates the time-consuming mess of traditional impressions and gives practitioners more control when designing restorations.

Patients, on the other hand, value CAD/CAM for slightly different reasons—namely, it’s “cool” and it’s quick. CAD/CAM is an indispensable part of my practice that caters well to a modern patient base that is technologically driven and demands instant gratification. It not only allows for improved diagnoses and enhanced patient care, but the “wow” factor behind the technology keeps patients in awe and keeps them coming back.

In fact, I’ve found that my CAD/CAM system has allowed me to cut back on marketing, thanks to word-of-mouth referrals and online reviews.



## Technology as a marketing tool

In the past, my practice invested approximately 2.5 percent in print advertising. However, now we have been able to reduce our marketing budget to less than 1 percent, due to the improved internal marketing our technology does for us.

When creating restorations, I use an intraoral scanner to create a digital impression. In my opinion, there’s not a single doctor out there who shouldn’t be using digital impressions—the technology is an

absolute must in today’s society. Scanners are faster and more accurate, and cut back on the mess and cost of consumables associated with traditional impressions. Eliminating the need to fill patients’ mouths with alginate, polyvinyl or even the powder required by some intraoral scanners is also a selling point when it comes to case presentation.

For example, I recently had a patient who only agreed to go forward with extensive comprehensive treatment as long as I promised not to put “that gooey stuff” in her mouth. Modern scanner technology allowed me to make good on that promise, and the patient accepted treatment.

## Attract patients with procedures that fit their schedules

The scanner lets me be known around town as the doctor who does “goo-free”

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impressions, but where my patients appreciate CAD/CAM technology the most—and let their friends and co-workers know it—is the speed of the in-office milling machine. I even keep a glass jar of the stubs from the milling blocks on the counter as a conversation starter about same-day restorations.

Many of my patients travel internationally for work for months at a time. Such an intense travel schedule does not allow for the traditional restoration workflow—a two- to three-week turnaround; an unreliable temporary; and a second follow-up appointment. Instead, after using the scanner to create a digital impression, I use intuitive CAD software to design the restoration in two to five minutes. Then, the mill takes anywhere from 20 to 40 minutes to fabricate the restoration.

During that time, patients wait comfortably in our office's conference room,

checking work emails or making phone calls. We even offer the patient the chance to see the mill at work as he or she waits for the restoration to be completed. From start to finish, the whole appointment takes about 70 minutes. This efficient workflow even allowed me to fabricate two restorations for a patient who was on an eight-hour layover between flights.

Now, I don't do every restoration in-house, but for my jet-setting patients, my being able to design and mill in the office is a perk that gets them talking, and sends their co-workers my way.

### **Five-star technology—the importance of online reviews**

Giving my patients that up-close look at the CAD/CAM system plays a huge role in word-of-mouth referrals. We follow up with our patients through surveys

that are published directly to Yelp and Google+, and patients often thank us for the tour of the back office and comment on how grateful they are for the quick turnaround of their restoration, e.g., "It was so great to see that amazing technology," "The doctor can deliver my crown in one day," etc. These days, people won't even visit a burger joint if it has bad online reviews. How much more important is it, then, for potential patients to see good online reviews of a doctor?

We're also excited to start a new social media campaign, and have created small signs—"Crowns in one day," "No goo," etc.—to encourage patients to take pictures with them and then tweet or post the image to their personal Facebook page. Considering that most people's friends and followers live in the general area, posting the picture and tagging our practice puts us in front of hundreds of potential new patients.

As a doctor, my priority is to offer accurate diagnoses and propose the most efficient and effective treatments. My scanner, design software and milling machine help me to do that. It's a great side benefit that the technology that helps me practice at my best also helps with marketing my practice.

Patients know we're a cutting-edge office that uses the latest technology to provide exceptional care while keeping their appointment length at a minimum. I'm happy if my patients are happy, even if that means they're happy because the speed and efficiency of CAD/CAM technology lets them see less of me and my chair. ■



Has CAD/CAM technology benefited your practice? Comment on this article at [Dentaltown.com/magazine.aspx](http://Dentaltown.com/magazine.aspx).

### **Author Bio**



**Dr. Michael Kelly** practices at Aesthetic Dentistry of Scottsdale in Scottsdale, Arizona, and also serves as senior clinical instructor for Aesthetic Vision Seminars. He attended Stetson University in Florida for his undergraduate training in chemistry and then graduated from Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry in 1993. Before moving to Scottsdale in 2010, Kelly practiced in Florida for more than 17 years. He is committed to being a leader in the dental profession, evidenced by his serving as president of the Central Florida Academy of General Dentistry and serving as the dental director of the Good Samaritan Dental Clinic—an all-volunteer clinic for patients without the ability to pay for dental care.