

Please Critique My "Breakaway" Office Design

Seasoned dentists offer advice to this Townie's proposed office design plans.

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1sdoc

Member Since: 11/28/08
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Introduction:

I am doing a startup practice and would appreciate any feedback on my office design. 2,000 square-feet, will plumb for five ops, but will equip two to start. I will be attending Breakaway Seminar in April. ■



MAR 27 2013

tooth80

Member Since: 02/18/10
Post: 2 of 43

Just curious – what is a "Breakaway" office design and how would this layout be any different than a traditional dental office design? ■

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1sdoc

Member Since: 11/28/08
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"Breakaway" refers to ideas and concepts from Scott Leune's Breakaway Seminar. ■

MAR 27 2013

TheHelpingHandInTech

Member Since: 10/19/07
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Doc, space costs money. Can I ask why you are outfitting only two rooms to start? Do you anticipate very little growth?

In my experience in business, we build the business to fit the space. Guys who work out of their homes for instance never seem to gross enough to get out of the home office, but when you have a space and you fill it with technicians and sales guys, you make sure you have the business to keep those employees busy.

I know that building out a room with A-dec can cost as much as \$40k a room, but there are many great companies to work with where you should be able to outfit these rooms at \$19k a piece with computers and everything.

Secondly, layout matters a lot with an office, but what matters more is cost, so no matter how you want to layout your office consider your build-out price and what you are paying for. I have a friend doing 1.3 million dollars out of a nice office, but no granite counter tops, a nice poured epoxy floor that will last forever and other build-out features that resulted in a very professional and pleasant space but kept that build-out price down significantly.

I've been in a lot of dental offices and you really need to take a step back and think like your patients. If in your area your patients have wood paneling and buck heads on their walls

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then consider what will impress them in your waiting room. I was in an office where they hired a professional interior designer. The doctor's waiting room was \$60k of his build out. Beautiful paintings on the wall, faux painting, expensive lighting and every time I was in there the patients would comment on the little 26" LCD on the wall. On the other hand, we threw a 60" LCD up a month later, \$1k plus \$600 installation, included the cost of the mount and everything. The doctor was ticked because he had a patient tell him he was glad he upgraded his kind of "blah" waiting room.

I guess my point is, be aware of what is going to make your patient base come to your practice when doing all of this planning. ■

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austindoc2

Member Since: 05/15/03

Post: 5 of 43

Do you have a hygienist at this time? If so, you should probably equip at least three rooms. ■

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1sdoc

Member Since: 11/28/08

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I plan on doing my own hygiene initially for the first six months and will then add hygiene as needed. I do not want to pay a hygienist from day one if I do not have a full schedule. Of course, if the business grows fast and I become busy sooner, I will add hygiene sooner. This is just my preliminary plan and I am open to suggestions on maximizing proficiency. ■

MAR 27 2013

TheHelpingHandInTech

Member Since: 10/19/07

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I think you would want a consult room, maybe dump your private office. I would also make sure you have plenty of space for your pano. Remember it needs to be wide enough for the pano and someone to stand next to the pano and position the patient. I'm a little confused about the hygiene room layout. It is cool looking but why have that hallway-like space between the two hygiene rooms? Shouldn't the two 12 o'clock cabinets just back up to each other? It looks like it would give you another four feet someplace else.

Other than that, it looks cool and I assume this is in a suite in a larger building based on the entries and exits. ■

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1sdoc

Member Since: 11/28/08

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Do I really need a consult room? I have worked as an associate for more than a year and have never used it. I suppose I can use my private office if need be? The space between the two hygiene rooms is there because there is a doorway that connects to the building next door and needs to be kept open as requested by the landlord. The building is actually a stand-alone building, which has been divided and is connected to an insurance office on the hygiene wall. ■

MAR 27 2013

pjmop

Member Since: 02/15/05

Post: 12 of 43

Is the outside entrance door fixed?

"Breakaway" style is to have a designated entrance and exit door – this way the patients who are walking out with bloody gauze don't have to walk through the waiting room. It also creates separation between greeting patients and collecting/billing patients. Ideally, the patients should be greeted as soon as they walk through the door, so the reception and entrance door need to be close together.

I don't think you need a separate consult room. ■

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1sdoc

Member Since: 11/28/08

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I made a few changes after reading the suggestions. I added a consult room, enlarged the pan room and reconfigured the waiting room so that the entrance is close to reception. I appreciate the feedback so far. ■

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pjl_desergo

Member Since: 02/14/06

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As others have mentioned, this plan needs some work.

- Front area has too much wasted space and the proportions are off.
- The treatment rooms look a little awkward. You may need a little more space if using a full side cabinet.
- Consider moving pan and maybe IT closet, or an area for mobile technology at the side (staff) entry.
- Sterile, lab and mechanical should be connected.
- There is some wasted space in the doctor's office, however this could potentially be a hygiene room in the future.

I think you may want to try a few different front desk/waiting room combinations to see what gets you the most efficient layout. There could be a decent amount of square footage to be gained by reconfiguring this area. ■ **Paul**

MAR 28 2013

nopper

Member Since: 01/18/03

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Here's my \$.10 having done a startup similar to yours about 10 years ago. I disagree with the opinion that suggested outfitting everything at once. There is no use paying a loan for five chairs if you are only going to use a couple. I would outfit two ops and one hygiene room. You will find that doing your own hygiene gets tedious in a hurry and it only takes about a year to get a hygiene following and keep a hygienist busy. The ops are where you are going to make your money, so have a couple available to use as you pick up patients. If you must only outfit two, make them both ops that way you can do restorative or hygiene out

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Pay down your equipment loan, get some revenue stream, then take out another loan to pay for the rest of the build out when you have the patient volume.

Layout: Move the waiting area into the area now occupied by reception and the doctor's office. Move your reception into the area now occupied by the waiting area. You want the reception to be able to easily access the doc and hygiene if needed and not have to walk the length of the office. You don't need that much space for reception with paperless offices nowadays. You'd be amazed at how little space reception can occupy and still be efficient. Also, you want your patients to have a nice, friendly, familiar face greeting them right as they walk in the door and checking them in. Your hygiene ops seem big and the space between them doesn't seem necessary. Share an X-ray head between the two hygiene ops in a shared cabinet if cost is an issue. Any usage conflict can be resolved by staggering your hygiene appointments.

It sure looks like you could put another space for a future op where the staff lounge is and move the lounge across the hall. If you moved the reception area as noted and shrunk it down you'd have more than enough space for another op. The docs office doesn't need to be big, just a small desk with a computer. I put mine in the same room as the electrical closet. It keeps me productive and moving throughout the office not wanting to go back and sit in my closet. Plus if your office is a closet they can't moan about having a small staff lounge.

Maximize operatories or future options for operatories. Those make you money. Staff lounges and big waiting areas and cozy doc offices do not make you money. If anyone is sitting in my waiting room long enough to get cozy then I have a problem. Run an efficient schedule, stay on time and do not make patients sit and wait. That has grown my practice more than anything. Good luck. ■ **Dave**

MAR 29 2013

1sdoc

Member Since: 11/28/08

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I would like to thank everyone for all the positive feedback. I have attached an updated floor plan design with several changes. I am currently seeking a local architect with dental experience in my town to design the structural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing for my contractor to work off of. (My contractor is a family friend who has built six dental offices.) ■



MAR 31 2013

culberson

Member Since: 11/08/02

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All I can say is we remodeled nine years ago. We have a three-doc space-sharing arrangement. We hired a dental specific designer, which of course cost a bit. She made some choices that I was skeptical of. Well, almost 10 years later, I would not change a thing in her design. Some of my favorite things about the office are the things I was initially skeptical of in the first place. To my point, hiring a designer saved a lot of future regrets, and I still love the place so many years later! ■

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