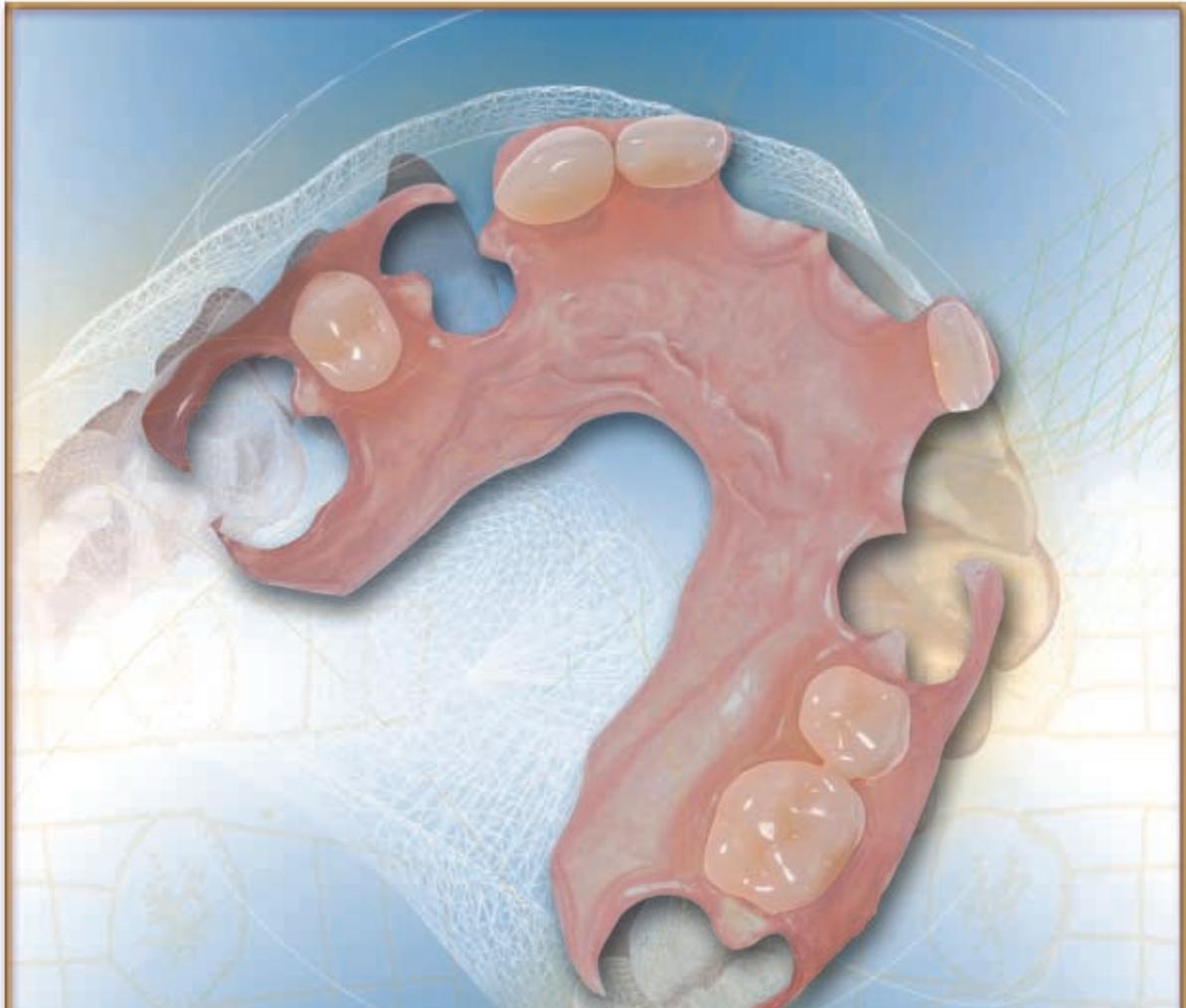


Perspectives

Dental Practice Building Strategies



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James P. Tasto, DDS



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**Dr. Levin Answers
Your Questions**

Roger P. Levin, DDS, MBA, FACD

Letter From the President



Laurence K. Fishman

Dear Doctor:

On behalf of Trident Dental Laboratories, it is my pleasure to introduce you to the inaugural edition of **Perspectives**. Over the past 14 years, we have had the distinct pleasure of servicing thousands of dentists like you who have benefited from the efforts of our restorative skills and guiding business principle—*expect quality, depend on our service, and receive value*. First and foremost, we thank you for your continued patronage.

Through our long and collaborative relationships with our clients, it became evident that a communication venue dedicated to *practice-building strategies* would serve the dental community well. It is our goal that the information presented within this dynamic publication will provide you with valuable insight into our products and fabrication techniques to enhance both the profitability of your practice as well as improve the quality of care you can offer your patients.

Trident is honored to have Dr. Roger P. Levin contribute to the content and editorial focus within each edition of **Perspectives**. Clearly, Dr. Levin's accomplishments as an international lecturer, along with his dedication to practice-development excellence, uniquely qualify him to contribute to this publication. The balance of the editorial presentations within this inaugural issue are dedicated to the practice-expansion benefits associated with the use of Valplast®

removable partial prosthetics. Also featured within this issue are improved communication methods which can be implemented to make your experience with Trident easier and more satisfying than that with your local lab. It is through these reinforcements that we hope that your experience with Trident is both pleasurable and profitable.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on how we can better serve your individual needs and those of your patients. Please feel free to contact us at your convenience by e-mail at perspectives@tridentlab.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurence K. Fishman".

Laurence K. Fishman
Owner, President
Trident Dental Laboratories

Principles of Practice Profitability

I am delighted to have been asked to contribute to this and future editions of *Perspectives*—the national newsletter focused on enhancing practice profitability. One method to achieve increased profitability is through the improvement of dental laboratory relations. This is an area where most dental consultants and consulting firms have very little expertise, especially if dentists are not involved. As the founder and CEO of Levin Group, the largest and leading dental practice management consulting firm in dentistry today, my goal will be to bring you a series of information that will contribute to the efficiency and productivity of your practice.

As a dentist who has practiced extensively, I know the benefits of working with an excellent laboratory. I am also aware that poor laboratory relations can lead to lower quality care for patients, frustration of the dental practice, and disruption of the daily schedule. When cases are not returned to the office on time, if cases do not function or fit properly, or if extensive patient production time must be compromised so the dentist can talk to the dental laboratory, there can be a great deal of confusion. Who is at fault? All too often we dentists blame the laboratory rather than focusing on the best way to solve and eliminate problems.

Advances in Technology

In future additions of this column, I will discuss certain technological advances from the standpoint of speed, efficiency, and production that will allow practices to enhance their management and profitability. Today, we are not limited to a laboratory simply because it is local. Airborne Express delivery, electronic mail, and digital patient files have created an opportunity to communicate with laboratories anywhere in the world as if they were next door. It is time that dentistry

focused on the main goal of excellent patient care and the most efficient and productive manner, incorporating the technology and services available to make this happen. Communication with laboratories today should be simpler and better than ever before.

Laboratory Size

Dentists are also not restricted to using only one laboratory. It does not make much sense for a dentist to be loyal to a laboratory that does not match his or her efficiency, quality, and production goals. While there are many fine laboratories, the array of new services in dentistry makes it imperative for every laboratory to keep up. In some cases, a national laboratory has certain advantages over a local laboratory in that they have the resources to incorporate the newest techniques and technologies to achieve your goals. Many restorative doctors today are educating themselves on advances in restorative, cosmetic, and implant care. You want your dental laboratory to be a support system. Ask your laboratory if they have any support services, such as marketing materials for your patients or educational tools, for you and your staff. Talk to them about the level of customer service and technical support they can provide, especially when you are entering the realm of new services. Many of these value-added laboratory resources will be discussed in future columns.

Esthetics

It is also important to realize that there have been incredible advances in both the technical quality of laboratory products as well as esthetics. The American public is certainly becoming well aware of esthetics as evidenced by the \$90 million Procter & Gamble Crest Whitestrips™ campaign. Since the public is more demanding of esthetics, they are no longer willing to

wear full or partial dentures, or even crowns and bridges that are not pleasing to the eye.

Most Americans want to look healthy, young, and energetic. In fact, in certain states, plastic surgery is one of the fastest growing businesses. Although I am a strong advocate of dental implants as a first choice to restore missing teeth, the truth is that many patients will continue to wear partial dentures and dentures. Call your laboratory and ask them about materials and what advances they have made in regard to esthetic dentures. For example, products such as Valplast® removable prosthetics have made great strides in our profession. For your implant cases, Valplast is also ideal for use as a temporary.

The bottom line is that the dental laboratory is both a vendor and a partner to dental practices. While we are highly dependent on them for final case results, they must also be aware of our needs and how to satisfy them. Communication, technology, and excellent case results are all key factors.

I look forward to bringing you new information in each issue of *Perspectives* in order to make your practice more successful and more efficient. ▲



Roger P. Levin, DDS,
MBA, FACD

Valplast® Partial Re Discover the

Partially or fully edentulous patients comprise nearly half of the aging patient population, and this age group is projected to triple by the year 2005. While the fabrication of denture prostheses that provide secure fit and function is essential, maintaining a natural-looking appearance remains a priority for today's esthetic-conscious patients. As a more attractive and fully functional alternative to traditional metal partial dentures, Trident Dental Laboratories now offers the Valplast® partial denture to fulfill clinician and patient demands.

The Traditional Metal Partial Denture

For years, clinicians have turned to traditional metal partial dentures to fulfill the needs of their partially edentulous patients. However, metal prostheses were often brittle and stiff, resulted in tissue irritation, had a high incidence of breakage, and contained unsightly metal supports and clasps. Previous flexible partials that were available demonstrated excessive rigidity, opacity, inconsistency, and/or unnatural color properties.

The evolution of removable prosthetic materials included the introduction of elastic labial straps or soft gaskets around the abutment teeth to remedy retention problems—without the use of a metal clasp to preserve esthetics. However, these strap/gasket appliances used acrylic that had to be thicker than usual to provide adequate strength. This added thickness increased the bulk of the denture and resulted in a clumsy, easily breakable appliance.

The Flexible Partial That's Guaranteed for Life

For more than a decade, Trident Dental Laboratories—the world leader in removable partials—has been providing restorative solutions for the dental industry. To satisfy clinician and patient demands for an esthetic partial denture for cases when fixed restorations or implants are not preferred, Trident is pleased to offer Valplast—a flexible denture base resin ideal for partial dentures or unilateral restorations.

Since its introduction in the 1950s, the original flexible partial resin has remained unchanged and has been the key ingredient to the quality and success of Valplast. The biocompatible nylon and thermoplastic resin of Valplast provide the perfect degree of flexibility and stability when processed and finished to the recommended thickness. The color, shape, and design of Valplast partials blend seamlessly with the natural appearance of the gingival tissues making the prosthesis virtually invisible. Valplast partials are available in several basic shade categories including light pink, medium pink, and meharry (to match African-American skin tones). The strong, durable plastic snaps securely and comfortably into place around the

existing natural dentition and gingiva. The strength of the nonallergenic plastic eliminates the metallic taste and enables the partial to be fabricated thinly enough with nonmetal clasps to avoid the bulky feeling often encountered with unesthetic traditional metal partials.

To date, more than 100,000 Valplast cases have been fabricated by Trident Dental Laboratories—without failure to perform as promised. Based on this experience, Trident offers clinicians a lifetime guarantee against breakage with every Valplast partial. Every case is inspected to ensure that each prescription is followed and that the quality meets your expectations as well as those of your patients.

To educate your patients on the latest in partial denture technology, professional communication tools are available from Trident, which include a complimentary Valplast Practice Development Kit and a product demonstration video. Patient education literature is also included in the kit to stimulate patient interest in the more esthetic Valplast partial as well as to enhance patient confidence and satisfaction with your services. For more information on Valplast, see the special offer on the business reply card or call Trident at **800-221-4831**.



Figure 1. The biocompatible nylon and thermoplastic resin of Valplast® provide the perfect degree of flexibility and stability.

movable Dentures — Advantages

Experience the Benefits of Valplast:

- ▲ 100% flexible
- ▲ Soft and comfortable
- ▲ Absolutely unbreakable
- ▲ Superior esthetics
- ▲ Nonallergenic
- ▲ No metallic taste
- ▲ Minimal tissue irritation
- ▲ Cost-effective
- ▲ Lifetime guarantee

Laboratory Fabrication for Valplast Partial

The Valplast fabrication process begins with a thorough evaluation of the patient's restorative requirements; both the clinician and patient should actively discuss the treatment options and alternative products that will benefit the patient's oral needs.

There is little or no tooth preparation needed to fabricate a Valplast partial. Rest seat preparations are optional at the doctor's discretion. Primarily,

Valplast is a tissue-borne restoration which utilizes soft tissue undercuts for retention—a concept known as the “retento-grip” technique.

Alginate is the ideal impression material for any Valplast case; a mucous static impression material provides an accurate master model. With this exact replica, a counter model, and a proper bite registration, Trident laboratory technicians can focus on the survey and design for clasp positioning. This procedure also highlights the patient's existing undercuts and soft tissue ridge condition for proper block out.

A duplicate model is then fabricated, which the laboratory technician mounts and places on a rigid metal articulator for the tooth setup stage. The technician then proceeds with the tooth mould selection, shade preference, and any other specific instructions requested by the clinician.

The wax setup/try-in stage is an important step in the fabrication

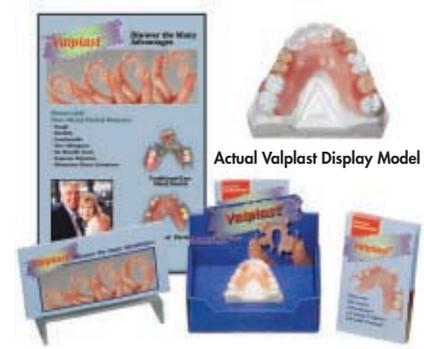


Figure 2. The Valplast® Practice Development Kit.

process and enables the clinician to double-check the shade accuracy and the setup arrangement—midline, vertical dimension, and centric occlusion. Upon return of the case to the laboratory, the technician will make minor adjustments and proceed to the final processing stage. For more information on the fabrication of Valplast partials, call Trident Dental Laboratories at **800-221-4831**. ▲

What's New at *Trident*

- ▲ Experience our expanded laboratory services at our new facilities in Marina del Rey, California
- ▲ Enhanced customer service team and highly skilled technical staff mean more individualized attention for our clients
- ▲ Visit our updated comprehensive website (Coming soon this summer)
- ▲ Request our 2002 product catalog which features an entire line of high-quality restorative, fixed, removable, and preventive materials—including special discounts
- ▲ Promote Portrait IPN Teeth and other specialty products with complimentary educational tools for chairside demonstrations to your patients
- ▲ Trident offers lifetime guarantees on all Valplast® partials and Captex™ crowns

Practice-Expansion Possibilities with Valplast®



James P. Tasto, DDS

Utilizing Valplast® partials in my practice has changed the way I restore smiles in patients with missing teeth, specifically in those patients for which fixed bridges and/or implants are not options. I have introduced Valplast as both a permanent and temporary treatment option for patients with missing teeth with much success.

To increase case acceptance of Valplast, it is essential that dental professionals have an extensive working knowledge of the product, including its benefits, indications, and contraindications. The educational materials available through Trident Dental Laboratories make acquiring this information extremely simple. Once this product knowledge has been attained, clinicians must target each patient's desires and individual needs (ie, esthetics, fit, comfort, function, durability). Educating patients through models, brochures, and photographs facilitates comprehension and interest in order to successfully upgrade patients to the esthetically pleasing Valplast partial.

The Valplast Practice Development Kit from Trident Dental Laboratories assists my efforts to educate my

patients on the benefits of Valplast partials. The patient education brochures and product poster are ideal for the reception area and stimulate interest in this esthetic partial removable while patients are waiting for treatment. I have also observed that patients are more apt to ask questions about possible replacement of their current dentures with the Valplast partials after being exposed to the product information. In addition, the cast model included in the Trident kit enables me to demonstrate the esthetic appearance of the Valplast partials in the mouth and also allows me to demonstrate the inherent comfort and strength properties of the prosthesis.

The simplest application is the replacement of metal removable partial dentures due to the comfortable fit and practically invisible Valplast clasps. However, I have had much success utilizing Valplast for other indications, such as temporary flippers and stayplates, as Valplast provides an effective alternative to acrylic and wire clasps. In my experience as the dentist to the San Diego Gulls hockey team, I often use Valplast during the course of treatment for patients who have sustained traumatic sports injuries, such as an avulsed tooth.

Valplast is a great product, and I am confident that once you experience its superior properties, you will be able to satisfy the esthetic denture demands of your patients. Valplast also includes a lifetime guarantee against breakage, which means you can't go wrong. ▲

James P. Tasto, DDS, maintains a private practice specializing in cosmetic and sports dentistry in San Diego, CA.

Trident

Diagnostics

The following key components enable our staff to fabricate your Valplast® case more efficiently and effectively:

- ▲ On complex cases, our technicians will fabricate a custom tray which fits the individual patient's mouth. Clinicians should be advised that this additional step will require multiple patient visits.
- ▲ For distal extension cases, a wax bite rim is critical to the fabrication of the Valplast partial. Trident Dental Laboratories can provide a standard wax bite rim to facilitate the bite registration, or clinicians may provide their own.
- ▲ The desired shade selection should always be included with the prescription to ensure optimal esthetic results.
- ▲ Adjustment kits may be obtained; these kits include stone wheels, rubber wheels, and rag wheels for minor adjustments chairside. A special cleaning solution is available for patients to maintain their Valplast partial dentures.
- ▲ Trident advisors are readily available to assist you should you have any questions or concerns regarding your case.

Q&A

Letters to Levin

Dr. Levin Answers Your Practice Management Questions

Q. How do we attract, hire, and retain a better staff?

A. First and foremost, do you provide your staff with all of the tools and training they need to succeed to your level of expectation? Many times we hire personnel, literally throw them into their jobs to learn on their feet, or we train new employees by a staff member whose performance is less than satisfactory! How can they succeed? We have a saying at Levin Group — “Teach, Train, or Tolerate!” Your staff needs scripting, documentation, training timelines, and checklists for every position in your office. Teach them the tools they need, train them consistently, and review their performance on a weekly basis until they are fully trained. If you are not happy with them, realize that you are choosing to tolerate their subpar job performance! This will allow for a happier staff that stays longer with the practice.

Q. How can I run my office more efficiently?

A. The easiest way to answer this is SYSTEMS! Levin Group finds success with clients because of complete documentation and IMPLEMENTATION. Books that are placed on a shelf and are not part of every staff meeting and every yearly planning meeting mean NOTHING to your office. The schedule must be made according to the goals of production and collections. This should include the coordination of scripts for an effective staff, the implementation of strict collections and account receivable management guidelines, and the presentation of cases for acceptance. No one area of the practice stands alone, and to have a truly efficient office, you must address every aspect of your practice with focus and detailed attention to attain optimal efficiency.

If you have a practice-management question for Dr. Levin, e-mail the question to perspectives@tridentlab.com.

Wet Finger Report

I have utilized various methods of impression taking in my quest for the most reliable, efficient, and cost-effective combination of impression trays and impression materials. Triple-bite disposable trays resulted in too many remakes. Metal trays and putty for a custom tray and wash as well as metal trays with a high- and low-viscosity impression material have kept my laboratory and patients smiling (no distortion). The impression materials were easier to remove than putty, but these trays still required cleaning, to my assistants' dismay.

I then discovered BORDER-LOCK® disposable trays (Accu-Liner Products, Woodinville, WA). In combination with a high- and low-viscosity impression



material, the BORDER-LOCK satisfies all my requirements. There is no distortion or cleaning of trays, and only one impression is required (no putty or custom tray is needed).

The BORDER-LOCK disposable tray is made of Plexiglas, has a border-locking design, and rivals metal in dimensional stability. It is cost-effective, relative to other disposable trays, with a device to measure cross arch width that eliminates the try-in of different trays.

To inquire about the BORDER-LOCK tray program, contact Accu-Liner Products at **1-800-458-6627**. ▲



David Fishman, DDS

Valplast®



Free Practice Development Kit

Kit Includes: Valplast® Display Box with Model, 25 Patient Education Brochures, 25 Practice-to-Patient Letter Stuffers and a Valplast® Poster

Removable Non-Metal Partial Denture

Guaranteed for Life Against Breakage*

- Tough
- Flexible
- Comfortable
- Non-Allergenic
- No Metallic Taste
- Superior Esthetics
- Minimizes Tissue Irritation



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**Call Today
for a Free Valplast®
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800-221-4831

Valplast® is a registered trademark of Valplast® International
*Terms & conditions apply

Expect Quality • Depend On Our Service • Receive Value

Visit us at the 2002 California Dental Association Meeting in Anaheim, CA (April 5-7) at Booth #785