

The Power of Digital Dentistry:

THE IMPACT OF CEREC IN THE NEW CONSUMER LANDSCAPE

A **CEREC 27 and a half** SPECIAL EDITION

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A SPEAR E-BOOK

SPEAR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR SUCCESS	3
A NEW ECOSYSTEM	4
A NEW WORLD OF INSTANT INFLUENCE	5
A NEW WORLD WITH NO BARRIER TO ENTRY	6
A NEW WORLD OF CONVENIENCE	7
A NEW WORLD OF MARKETING	8
YOUR NEW WORLD: A SELF-ASSESSMENT	9
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	10

FOREWORD

This e-book came out of my preparations for the **CEREC 27 and a half** event in Las Vegas in August 2012. As I was putting together material for my presentation—and later, on-site, as I felt the incredible level of enthusiasm throughout the event—I was reminded, in a very powerful way, of how much I love this era of digital dentistry.

I love digital dentistry because of the excitement it creates. This isn't just technology that incrementally improves what you were already doing. This is technology that creates whole new possibilities—possibilities that open our minds, possibilities that challenge the status quo, and that make us see our value systems, and business systems, with fresh eyes.

This is true for digital dentistry as a whole, whether we're talking about digital radiography, Cone Beam, or a whole host of other innovations. But it is especially true of CEREC. Because CEREC is a game-changer. It's the right technology at the right time, perfectly suited to today's consumer landscape. It is a powerful differentiator in getting patients' attention and motivating their behaviors, and can have a huge growth impact on your practice—***if you use it right.***

And that is the big question as I see it: Are you getting the full power of CEREC? Because many CEREC owners I see—even some very enthusiastic ones who come out to events like CEREC 27 and a half—are not. Many of them are doing wonderful things with it from a clinical perspective, but they are still just flirting with its possibilities as a value tool.

I want to change that. I want to help every CEREC owner to get full value from what is probably the most transformative technology in the history of dentistry. That begins with having an understanding of how CEREC fits into today's consumer landscape, and that is the focus of the pages that follow.

Imtiaz Manji

August, 2012



ACCORDING TO RESEARCH...

Patients in practices that have CEREC:

- Return more consistently
- Accept more recommended treatment
- Invite more friends and family

That's just the basic by-product of implementation that the average CEREC owner sees. Imagine the possibilities when dentists really understand how to use this technology to the fullest.

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR SUCCESS

Before we discuss the specifics of how CEREC fits into today's new landscape, it helps to have some context about who your patients are and how they perceive dentistry. To get that important context, I suggest you check out the first couple of e-books in this series:

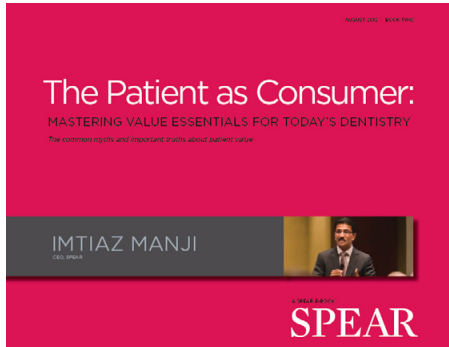


In **Trust and Value: A Field Guide to Today's Dental Patients**,

I introduce the concept of the Pyramid of Value and the 5 patient types who occupy the levels from bottom to top.

The people who make up your patient base come to you with different levels of appreciation for dentistry, and understanding where

they fit on this continuum of care is the first step in understanding how to reach them and how to move them upward toward ideal care.



In **The Patient as Consumer: Mastering Value Essentials for Today's Dentistry**,

I talk about the 5 myths of patient value, analyze the difference between “needs” and “wants” in terms of consumer choices, and reveal—in eye-opening detail—exactly how this kind of “value awareness” translates into possibilities in your practice's economics.

To really grasp how CEREC can be a phenomenal value tool you need to understand how the new consumer-patient has been conditioned to make value-based choices in today's world.

I encourage you to take the time to look over these e-books. They only take 30 minutes each to read at the most, which makes them a great centerpiece for discussion at a team meeting. They will also provide you with the right foundational knowledge as we explore how CEREC fits into this exciting new world.

A NEW ECOSYSTEM

It's no great revelation to point out that the world around us is changing at an incredible pace. Technology is not just changing lives on an individual level (like that smartphone in your pocket), it is changing things on a global scale (like the way the world economy is being reshaped by the fact that everyone carries a smartphone in their pocket). Consumers have never been more in control of their choices and they are getting used to making those choices "in the now." **Any barrier to that immediacy is just an opportunity for them to second-guess what could be a great decision.**

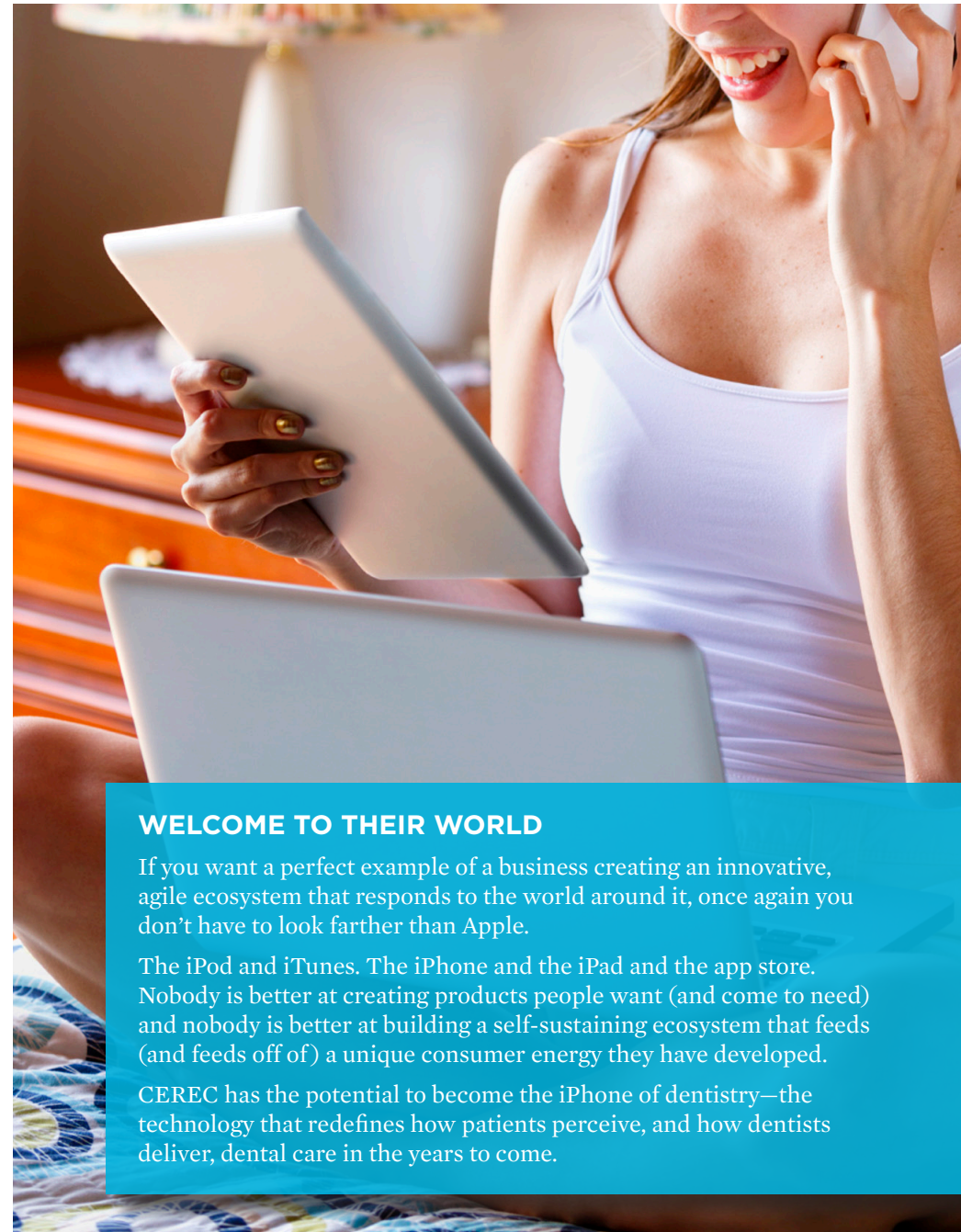
The businesses that are thriving in this new digitally-enhanced economic environment are not just keeping up with these changes, they are redefining what they do and how they do it—and rediscovering *why* they do what they do. They understand that the rules of the past no longer apply and they are creating a new world of their own—a unique ecosystem—within this evolving greater world.

Dentistry has had its own ecosystem for a long time now. It's based on a model established about 50 years ago, when widespread dental insurance was introduced. In this traditional ecosystem, most dentistry is routine and tooth-based, and a lot of it is funded by insurance. It's a model that is built around basic, reactive care—and it is as outdated as a typewriter in a world of iPads.

The new ecosystem of dentistry is going to be built around a philosophy that recognizes the value of comprehensive, ideal care. It is a model that appreciates and respects the fundamentals of basic dental care, *and* is agile, responsive and centered around comprehensive mouth-based dentistry. **It is an ecosystem that recognizes the world as it is, and promotes dentistry as it can be.**

So what does this new world look like? What does that mean for dentistry? And how does CEREC fit in?

Let us count the ways...



WELCOME TO THEIR WORLD

If you want a perfect example of a business creating an innovative, agile ecosystem that responds to the world around it, once again you don't have to look farther than Apple.

The iPod and iTunes. The iPhone and the iPad and the app store. Nobody is better at creating products people want (and come to need) and nobody is better at building a self-sustaining ecosystem that feeds (and feeds off of) a unique consumer energy they have developed.

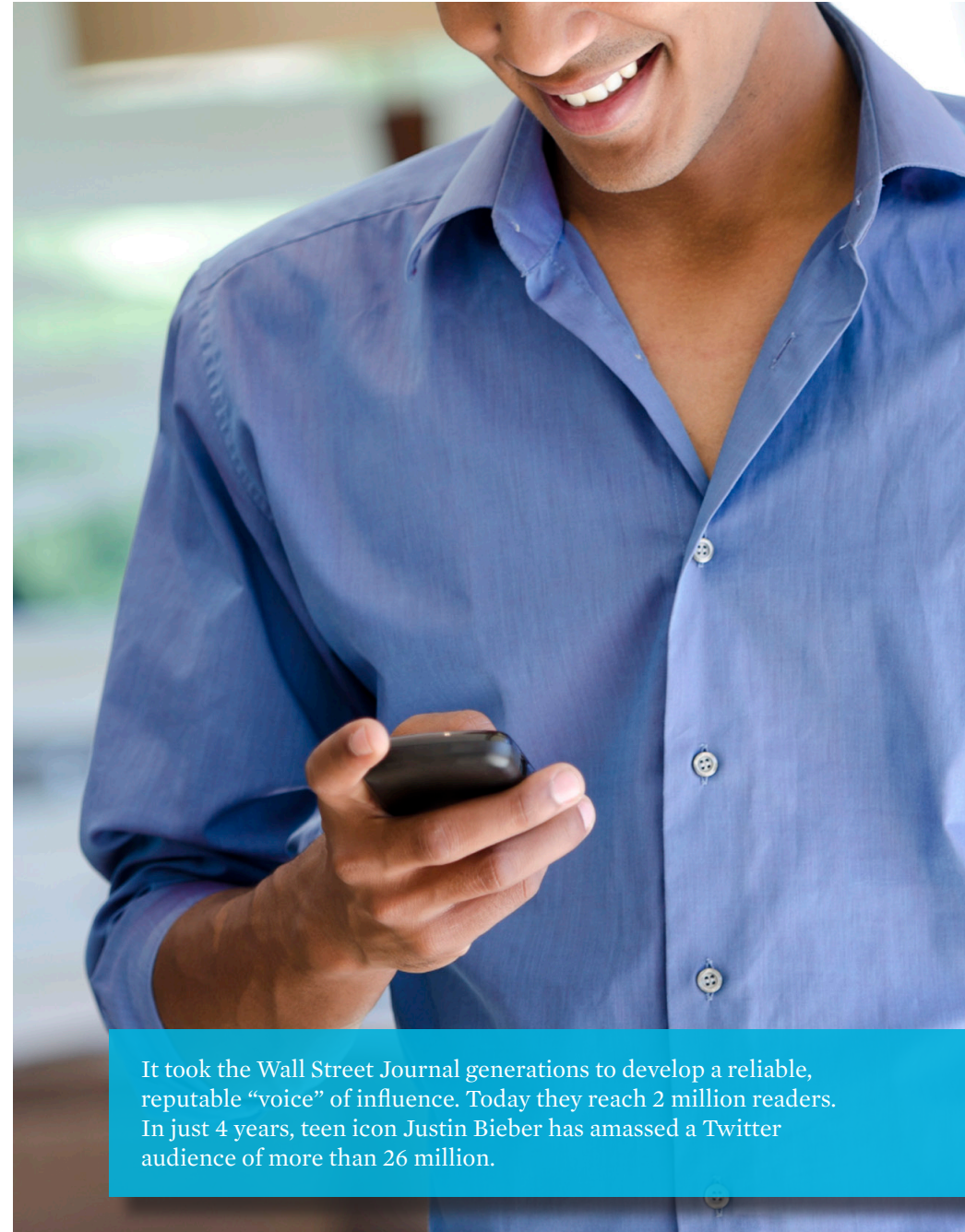
CEREC has the potential to become the iPhone of dentistry—the technology that redefines how patients perceive, and how dentists deliver, dental care in the years to come.

A NEW WORLD OF INSTANT INFLUENCE

Years ago, we all learned about the “tipping point” (as outlined in Malcolm Gladwell’s book of that name)—that moment when an idea reaches critical mass in the community. What matters now is the *speed* of the tipping point. Today it only takes days, or even just hours, for an idea to take over the world. This world of instant influence is going to have big implications for you and your practice.

Dentists have earned a reputation for integrity over many years, being acknowledged in poll after poll as being among the most respected professionals. It’s a position that gives you an automatic measure of influence among your patients and in the community. But if you, as a professional, are going to maintain that status as a leader in society, and be a truly relevant force in your patients’ lives, you’re going to have to compete in “real time.” And you’re not competing with other dentists; you’re competing with all the other enticing things tugging at consumers’ discretionary dollars. You’re going to have to be part of the conversation, and that means creating “buzz” about what you do.

CEREC is all about “speed to market.” It’s dentistry for a world that values instant feedback and on-the-spot results. What’s more, as a value tool, it has the ability to immediately change expectations, to influence patient perceptions, and to get them excited and talking about you. If you want to get the word out in a fast, viral way that you are leader in dentistry, you have to drive home your CEREC advantage.



It took the Wall Street Journal generations to develop a reliable, reputable “voice” of influence. Today they reach 2 million readers. In just 4 years, teen icon Justin Bieber has amassed a Twitter audience of more than 26 million.

A NEW WORLD WITH NO BARRIER TO ENTRY

The technological revolution of recent years has democratized power. Political activists in oppressed nations that used to have to organize in small secret meetings have overturned governments using Twitter and Facebook. Performers that used to have to wait for someone to give them their big break are launching their own careers on YouTube. There has never been a better time to break down doors, because many of those doors simply don't exist anymore.

Dentistry has had to deal with a lot of barriers over the years. The insurance barrier that kept patients from exploring solutions beyond what is covered. The pain and discomfort barriers that kept people away. The inconvenience barrier that required them to come back when the lab work was done. The clinical barrier that limited what you were able to do in a single visit.

CEREC is designed to help you leapfrog over barriers. Thanks to CEREC, in many cases there is no more need to wait for lab restorations. Even when you do work with a lab, CEREC makes the process easier and faster. CEREC helps you get past the comfort and convenience barriers (as we'll see on the next page) and when that happens—when patients get excited about the possibility of same-day treatment—that helps you vault over the insurance barrier too, because this is the kind of value people are willing to pay for.



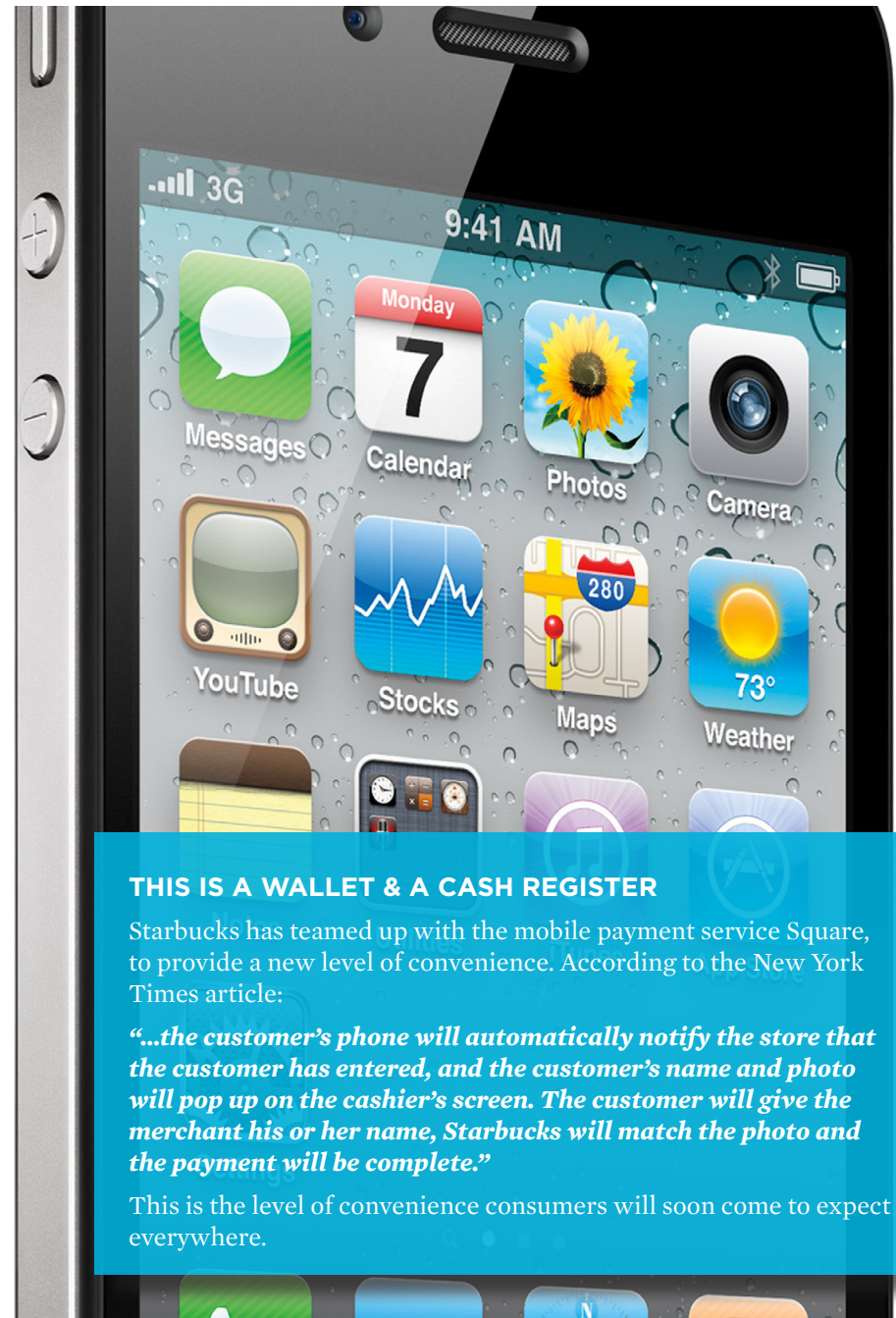
In Sub-Saharan Africa, home to some of the poorest people in the world, 73% of families have a mobile phone. How did this happen? It happened because there are practically no landline phones, which means there was no existing infrastructure putting up barriers. No barrier to entry meant these countries were able to “leapfrog” most of the developed world when it came to mobile phone service.

A NEW WORLD OF CONVENIENCE

Shopping used to be about going to a place where shopping is done. Now, most people are carrying the world's largest shopping center in their pockets. There are whole marketplace categories—music, movies, games, books—that are not just available online, they are *primarily* bought online. Convenience is no longer just a perk—it's becoming essential to today's consumer.

The scene in a dental office reception area from at least the 1950s until just a few years ago was virtually unchanged: a bunch of patients sitting there waiting, leafing through old magazines. Take a peek into your waiting room now. How many people are thumbing their smartphones? And who knows how many of them are buying something online while they wait to see you. That patient who is telling you your treatment plan is too expensive may have just purchased a flat screen TV while waiting to see you. And it will be in their home tomorrow.

As much as you may not want to admit it, the number one thing most people want from dentistry is to go to the dentist less often. CEREC is *the* dental technology that is designed to take advantage of this new consumer mindset of instant decisions and instant delivery.



THIS IS A WALLET & A CASH REGISTER

Starbucks has teamed up with the mobile payment service Square, to provide a new level of convenience. According to the New York Times article:

“...the customer’s phone will automatically notify the store that the customer has entered, and the customer’s name and photo will pop up on the cashier’s screen. The customer will give the merchant his or her name, Starbucks will match the photo and the payment will be complete.”

This is the level of convenience consumers will soon come to expect everywhere.

A NEW WORLD OF MARKETING

Marketing now is not just about visibility, it's about reputation. Where businesses used to spend their resources on promoting a carefully crafted, internally-developed "image," they now spend just as much time and energy promoting and protecting their reputations in a world where every customer is a potential "broadcaster."

If you are old enough, you'll remember when the biggest marketing expenditure dentists made was taking out a Yellow Pages ad. Nowadays, patients make their connections online. They do a Google Map search to find you. They check out your website to judge you. And then, after they visit you, they go to **Yelp** or other sites to rate you. Marketing is now a two-way street. You still want to get the word out, but your patients have a voice, too.

CEREC is one of the most potent marketing tools you have. Patients who know about it seek out practices that offer it. Patients who have never heard of it are amazed when they discover what it can do. This is why you have to promote CEREC prominently externally (so the in-the-know shoppers will find you) and create value for it internally (so your existing patients will talk about it). Remember, you're not just a dentist anymore, you are a CEREC dentist—and that means a lot.



REDEFINING RELATIONSHIPS

1 in 6 people worldwide use Facebook

1 in 12 use it every day

If that patient you just saw is one of those 1 in 12, guess what they're going to be posting about in a few moments.

What are they going to say about you?

YOUR NEW WORLD: A SELF-ASSESSMENT

I think, if you're like most dentists, you can clearly see the truth of what I have laid out on the preceding pages. You can see how the world is changing, how dentistry is changing with it, and how CEREC can be the catalyst that helps lead you through this new consumer landscape.

Still, it can be difficult to let go of the old model of dentistry that has served the profession so well for so long. It takes courage to re-imagine what dentistry can—and should—look like now. It takes vision to really think about what today's agile practice can deliver, in terms of dental possibilities, and let *that* be your guiding focus.

So let's start over.

Imagine you are launching a new dental practice today, knowing everything you know now about what's possible in the world and what's possible in today's dentistry with digital technology and CEREC. Imagine your facility is an empty shell, your team has not been hired, and you have not yet seen your first patient.

- How would you start?
- What would be your plan for growth?
- How would you focus your team?
- What would your facility look like?

If you answer these questions honestly and really think about the implications in a serious way, I think you will see the need for change. You'll see that you simply must make digital dentistry the centerpiece of the value story you give to patients.

It doesn't just have to be a dream. It can happen with you and your patients and it can happen now. It all starts with a commitment to creating the ideal patient experience—and that is the focus of my next e-book.



WANT TO LEARN MORE FROM IMTIAZ?

Watch for Imtiaz's next e-book in this series:

The New Patient Experience: 8 Proven Steps to Establishing a High-Value Relationship

To find Imtiaz's latest e-books and get more information about Imtiaz's courses and seminars, visit speareducation.com/everythingimtiaz.

To find Imtiaz's online lessons for dentists and teams, visit www.speareducation.com/digital-learning.

Don't have a membership yet? Take advantage of the free 5-day trial and see what's waiting for you online.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In his current role as CEO of Spear, Imtiaz reaches thousands of dentists each year with his speaking engagements, [online education](#), published articles and [popular blog](#), all the while providing the strategic vision and corporate leadership behind the industry's premier destination education center. In addition, Imtiaz lends his skills and passion to the [Open Wide Foundation](#), whose mission is to bring quality dental care to impoverished communities around the world.



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