

This being the digital age, starting a podcast can help your practice strengthen relationships with existing patients—and attract new clientele. By **Angela Tufvesson**

Listen up

Dr Vijaya Molloy has witnessed many trends in patient behaviour in her 25-year dentistry career. When she noticed many of her patients had started following the advice of experts they listened to on podcasts—for everything from what to watch on Netflix to how to look after their health—she decided to broadcast her expertise outside the four walls of her practice.

The result is *Mind Body Mouth*, a podcast that explores the relationship between oral wellbeing and the rest of the body and encourages listeners to focus on dentistry as a key part of their overall health. Each month, Dr Molloy interviews leading practitioners about topics like orthodontics, facial yoga, dental implants and the link between gum and gut health.

She says the podcast helps to educate patients at her practice, Vitality Dental Tuggerah on the NSW Central Coast, about their clinical needs. “I like people to be as informed as they can be and have accurate information because there can be a lot of misinformation out there,” says Dr Molloy.

“If a patient with gum disease comes to see me, I’ll refer them to the podcast I recorded with a periodontist in America about the relationship between gum disease and gut bacteria. If I see a child that I suspect to have enlarged adenoids and I want to refer them to an ENT, I’ll ask their parents to listen to the episode about childhood development.”

The business case

Podcasts are incredibly popular in Australia, with more than 1.9 million Australians downloading audio or video podcasts in an average month in 2019—up from under one million in 2015. Even



last year, with many people working from home during the pandemic and losing valuable commuting time to listen to podcasts, downloads continued to increase.

Everyone from global celebrities to your next-door neighbour has a podcast, and there are podcasts for every conceivable topic and niche interest area. A recent report by the University of Canberra found specialist podcasts—in areas like science, business and health—are our most popular genre and our top reason for listening to podcasts is because they cover diverse subjects and perspectives.

It's not hard to see why podcasts are an effective branding tool for small businesses with specialist services looking to build connection and credibility. "One of the amazing things about podcasting is people can hear your voice, which really builds trust and makes people more likely to become your customer," says Christina Canters, CEO of podcast development and training firm Podcast Services Australia.

For dental practices, Canters says podcasts can help to strengthen the relationship between patient and dentist, as well as forge new connections. "Having a podcast specifically showcasing the personality of your dentist and making them accessible to patients is really valuable because people can be wary of dentists," she says. "And having a level of trust and rapport with a potential client before they've even become a client is absolute gold."

Dr Rohan Krishnan, a Sydney dentist who hosts a series of podcasts called

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Outside the Mouth for The Dental Practitioner, ADA NSW's podcast for dental professionals, says podcasts can be a key differentiator for dental practices. "The general public has so much they would like to know about dentistry, and we have so much to share," he says. "Providing this information in podcast form is a real differentiator because it shows you're focused on your patients' best interests and you're willing to put yourself out there as being a little different to other dentists."

Podcast production

The first thing to know about producing a podcast is it takes a lot of time—especially in the beginning. You'll need to come up with a compelling topic and name, and perhaps commission a logo and intro music. Then there's episode planning, sourcing interviewees, recording and editing the podcast, creating a blog post and image to promote each episode, and uploading

the podcast to media hosts. "You can simply record it, do minimal editing and put it out there, but it's not going to be as effective or successful as if you put in some effort," says Canters.

Thankfully, it's easy enough to outsource the technical stuff to technical experts. Dr Molloy uses a company that edits episodes, researches interviewees and writes blog posts, and uploads the podcast to popular platforms like Spotify. She also uses a tracker to record the number of downloads for each episode—a common method for measuring a podcast's reach. "If you don't know how to do it yourself, outsource as much as possible because the time is better spent making money doing dentistry," she recommends.

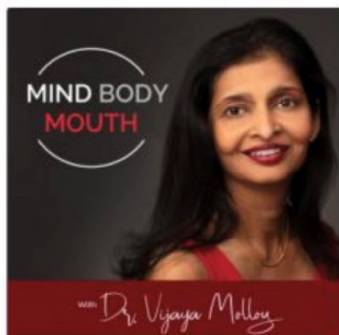
Dr Krishnan agrees a good editor is essential, especially if you have limited experience. "The beauty of podcasts is they aren't live, so you can have someone chop out bits that might not be as interesting or where you might have stumbled over a few words."

Ultimately, creating an authentic connection to your audience is key to podcasting success. Drs Molloy and Krishnan both say it took a few episodes to find their rhythm before easing into a friendly, professional tone similar to the one they use with patients. "I recorded the first episode three times and I spoke so slowly I sounded like I was reading," says Dr Molloy.

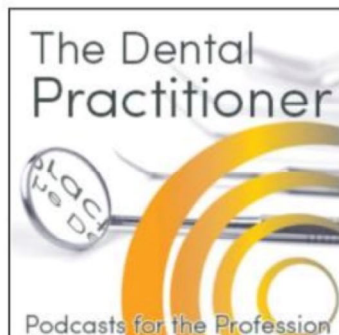
It's an approach endorsed by the experts. "With a good podcast, you feel like you're eavesdropping in on a conversation with a friend," says Canters. **Bite**

Popular Aussie dental podcasts

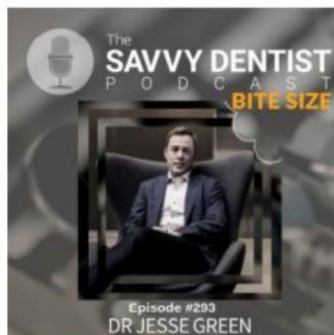
Mind Body Mouth with Dr Vijaya Molloy explores the relationship between the mouth and rest of the body.



The Dental Practitioner is the ADA NSW's podcast for dental professionals looking to keep up with trends in dentistry and oral health care.



Savvy Dentist with Dr Jesse Green shares business leadership and dental practice management tips.



Dental Head Start helps dental students become great dentists through interviews with successful practitioners.

