

Is there life **after** dental practice ownership?

Dentists often put off selling their practices because they are concerned about life after dentistry.

What will they do with all those extra hours, how will they cope with leaving behind the identity that has defined them for decades? This series of articles explores the very busy lives of some of Practice Sale Search's clients, former practice owners who have embraced post-sale life.

Name: Chris Frost

Age: I was 62 when I sold

Graduated: 1981 U QLD

Brief career history

In my first years after graduation, most of my work life was organised around being able to climb mountains in NZ, US, Europe, etc. I even spent two months in the Himalayas. I thought that I should remain an employee dentist all my working life so I could have the freedom to go mountain climbing whenever I wanted.

Later on, I had a family and came to the realisation that I would be far better off financially owning a practice. In 2001 I started Cav Road Dental in Coorparoo, Brisbane, with my friend. We both started working there part time, but within a year I was able to build up to be busy enough to work there full time. My friend was doing it as a second branch practice, and I bought him out within four years and became the sole owner in 2005.

I have had a few different associates along the way, with more stable associates



in the last 7/8 years. The practice was ticking along comfortably and, even with no advertising, I was busier than I wanted to be.

Why did you sell?

Owning a practice and starting a family put an end to the extended time off to go rock climbing and mountain climbing. But the desire never dissipated. It is still as strong as ever.

As a practice owner, I took the odd week off here and there, but from 2001 until I sold, the longest holiday I had was three weeks in 2008, when I went on a rock-climbing, mountain biking holiday with friends. I found that even when I was on holidays though, I was never able to disconnect from the business. It was always there and there were always phone calls. I remember one time getting a phone call from work at 2am in the Utah desert in a Winnebago ... I had to take the call and it woke everyone else up.

Over time, getting some of this freedom back has become crucial for me. It's not about having the days off each week, but being able to take longer stretches of time.

What is the best part about not owning?

The best part about not owning is not having the ownership issues anymore. I come in at 8:15 for the 8:30 patient; at 5:15 after the last patient I say, "Goodbye, see you tomorrow".



No staffing issues, ordering issues, etc. It puts a smile on my face, makes the actual dentistry so much more joyful. It's what will allow me to keep working another five plus years.

Now I am doing my dentistry to fund my adventures and get a balance in my life.

So, are you back to rock climbing now?

I am as keen as mustard now. Physically I am still pretty strong and fit. I am still climbing strong with younger fellows on the rocks. I think I can keep going another 10 years. I just can't do the same altitudes now that I used to do.

Covid kaiboshed my plans a bit as I couldn't travel last year. This year I am planning to take some longer trips. If I could jump on a plane tomorrow ... I'd go down south to Victoria to catch up with family and go climbing down there. After that New Zealand, Tassie, then off to Europe with the ice axes and the big boots in the European Alps again. Himalayas are not on the cards because of the high altitudes, but there are lots of mountains out there. I have a goal to do one of the harder Alpine north faces in Europe. At 13,000 feet it seems manageable. ♦

