

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: Jay Gaffey

Age: 44

Graduated: 2007

Practice Owned: Gerringong, Since Nov 2010, sold 2020

Brief career summary:

I was born in Grahamstown in South Africa. My dad is English, he met my mother while at uni in South Africa and they moved back to the north of England when I was seven. My whole family, including my grandmother, are doctors. My grandmother was a doctor in World War II in the Battle of Britain. She was very disappointed when I decided to study dentistry and for years lied to her friends that I was studying medicine.

I studied dentistry at Leeds University. Around the time that I graduated, they changed the NHS contract and lots of dentists started looking to leave the UK. I came to Australia in 2008 and started working for NIB in Glendale in Newcastle, NSW. I left NIB after chatting to a guy at a dental conference who offered me a job in Warilla, south of Wollongong.

I later worked for a dentist in Kiama, who opened a tiny practice in Gerringong, to help older patients who couldn't drive the bends. After I started working there it really took off. I bought the practice in



2010 and ran it four days a week (I always had Mondays off), with four wonderful local staff members, all casual. My husband and I really integrated into the community (it's so important to become part of the community in a small town). We both do triathlons, so we got involved in four clubs: running, cycling, swimming and triathlon.

I had to close the books and not accept new patients within a year of purchasing the practice and never advertised once. My patients came from everywhere, Kiama, Gerringong, Berry, etc.

I sold the practice in 2020.

You're still so young ... why did you sell?

While I love dentistry, I love life more.

We don't have kids and my husband (an ortho) and I worked out the numbers we needed to retire on ... and as soon as we reached what we needed, we stopped.

We made the decision to live every second of our lives as best we can.



Post-sale life

I have never been happier in my life!

There are two things in life that I think give people pleasure: to do something you enjoy and achievement. We have time to give back to the community. I am on three committees, organising stuff for three clubs. I have a friend who is ill, and I see her every day.

I signed up to compete in an Ultraman in May in Noosa, It's a double marathon, a 10 km swim, 420 km bike ride and 84.4 km run. I'm currently training 25 - 30 hours a week.

My dad is a cyclist, he's 72 and always wanted to cycle the Alps, so we are going with a group from the Kiama cycling club (13 of us) and we are doing dad's dream holiday of cycling some of the northern parts of the North Alps. I couldn't have imagined taking the time to do all this before I sold. As I said before, I have never been happier! ♦

