

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 Angela Schuurmans

Age I was 52 when I sold

Graduated Adelaide, 1994

Practice Owned Ingle Farm, SA

Brief Career Summary:

After graduating, I worked for my father in his practice in Adelaide. It was great working with him, and we worked really well together. He was always a good mentor, as he had worked in rural dentistry and had gained so much experience there.

After working in Adelaide for two years, I moved to the UK for 12 months, where I worked with an oral surgery team, gaining invaluable surgical experience. I then returned to Australia, working in several practices before returning to Ingle Farm Dental and joining my father as a partner.

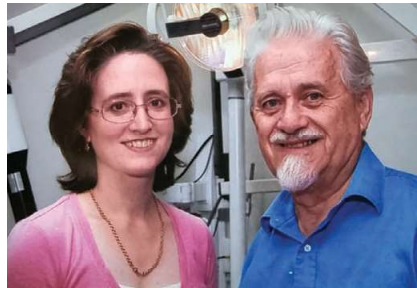
I bought into the practice with my father in 2007. It was the two of us in partnership, but we had a team of four dentists and two hygienists. I bought the remaining 50% of the practice in 2014 when he retired. He had been in dentistry for more than 50 years.

Why did you sell?

I'd been managing the practice for almost 20 years, so I felt it was time to hand over, time to see a renewed energy in the practice. I still loved the dentistry, and I wasn't ready to retire, but I was often doing 5-6 days a week in the practice, and I had some life events that made me think about my priorities. My focus needed to shift away from work and towards family.

It was so hard to make the decision to sell, but I knew I needed to do it. I probably put off the decision for a while because it had been my father's practice and my family's connection to it had gone on so long. I used to work there when I was in high school. It felt like so much more than a business sale, there was so much emotion tied to it.

My father was the first one I went to talk to about selling the practice, before



taking steps towards it, to be sure he was OK with the idea. He was really supportive; he encouraged me to step back and put my family first. He mentored me through it, as I had never been through a practice sale before.

When I bought the practice, it was very informal and essentially done on a handshake. That's where Practice Sale Search was really helpful, guiding me through the whole process. There was a lot of interest and offers in the practice, but it was important for me to choose the right person for my team and patients and to take over my family's legacy.

I was very fortunate when a close colleague showed interest in buying the practice. We had a continuity of philosophies and had the same approach to our clinical dentistry. I knew he would be the best person to take the practice forward.



Tell us about your Ice skating

I began skating when I was a child, thanks to my mother's interest in the sport, and I continued skating until university.

I returned to the sport in 2015, when The Australian Masters' Games included figure skating for the first time, and I started training on the ice before work, four days a week. I loved starting my day like that. It's great exercise, very creative, and it gave me a physical and mental boost.

The Masters Games is for adult skaters like me, in fact anyone aged 18 to 80 can take part. There is a large adult skating community in Australia who still train and compete both locally and internationally. I have been fortunate enough to win several national titles over the last few years, but one of the highlights was winning gold at the World Winter Masters Games in 2020 in Austria, and again in Italy earlier this year.

I started coaching figure skating in 2019 and I now spend more time coaching than training. I'm about to start studying for my next level of coaching accreditation and find it very rewarding.

What's next?

Life is more relaxed now. I'm certain that I made the right choice to sell. I still get to work two days a week with my patients and team, who are like family to me, some of whom I have worked with for over 15 years. My working days are a joy, and I have time for my skaters, my own training and, most importantly, my family. ♦