

LET'S BAKE A CAKE

Johnny Minford talks about the best options for those considering leaving National Health Service dental care

We have some flour..... how much? We have water, we have eggs, how many? Salt? Sugar? How much? We have an oven what temperature? For how long?

THE TIME TO CHANGE IS NOW

Forward looking practices have been starting to consider their direction over the last few months, as there have undoubtedly been major changes in how patients view going to the dentist. There are a lot more opportunities now, and if there ever was a time to restructure how dentistry is delivered in order to take advantage of those opportunities, this is it.

RESTRUCTURING

The restructuring is hard. One change affects another, and there are always unexpected and unintended consequences. Just as in 'The Great British Bake Off', the ingredients and mix dictate the success of the outcome.

Restructuring is in three main parts:

- What is delivered
- How it is delivered
- Who delivers it.

Each of these elements needs its own background thought. This starts of course with a serious look at what you already have in your 'cupboard', followed



by an honest synopsis of how easy it will be to make something different from what is currently and naturally produced. The mix of your team and patient base will have habitual operating systems which may be embedded deeply, and change of the 'mixture' to make a new 'cake' may have some built-in resistance.

Another angle from which to approach the restructuring exercise is from the point of view of the outcome. What are we trying to achieve – more profit?

More time for you? Different clinical directions? Increasing the capital value with a view to sale? Having a clarity on whether you want a chocolate cake or raspberry sponge will help you use the ingredients you have in your cupboard more wisely. It can also give you an indication of what is achievable, and what is not. No matter how many times you try, you cannot make chocolate cake with raspberry flavouring.

It is best to know these things before spending time and money.

This can shed a different light on the other really important issue in a restructuring: given a knowledge of the ingredients, what actions need to be taken to get from where you are to bringing the cake you want to bake out of the oven? Again, it is crucial to understand how rapid and realistic it will be to action what you want. Some things are instant, but some simply take time. One thing that bakers know is that there are certain things you can't hurry.

SUMMARY

Your practice, its location, its staff, its patient base and your clinicians' skill sets are the ingredients. Your abilities to mix your base materials and the timing of your actions will determine the outcome. The deliciousness of your cake depends on it. ●

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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