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JPD DIGITAL - VIDEO ARTICLE

Coachman Corner - Part 1: My smile designer journey: The difference between a great clinician and a great smile designer



Christian Coachman, DDS, CTD

Topics covered

- Why listen to your dental laboratory technician. Bigger sampling of situations in the lab allows smart technicians to identify trends, recurring issues, and possible solutions.
- The powerful combination of tradition and innovation in restorative dentistry. Respecting and analyzing the past to evolve into a better future.
- Becoming an artistic dentist or dental laboratory technician. The connection between design/art/architecture and esthetic dentistry.
- Your eyes, brain, and hands need to master 2D before going into 3D. From painting to sculpting. From drawing teeth to sculpting teeth.

- Rehabilitating smiles is a team sport.
- Becoming a better smile designer is also great for our dental practice business. Key differentiator.

SYNOPSIS

In restorative dentistry, technical/clinical excellence alone does not define greatness. There is an essential distinction between being a skilled dental clinician and becoming a true smile designer. Through artistic parallels, we uncover how the most impactful professionals bridge science, craftsmanship, and creativity (Figs. 1 and 2). Ideal smile designs depend on professional collaboration systems and deep communication between



Figure 1. Exercising orofacial esthetic parameters and artistic perception will elevate us beyond just great clinicians but also as great smile designers.

No conflict of interest.
Founder, Digital Design Smile, Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

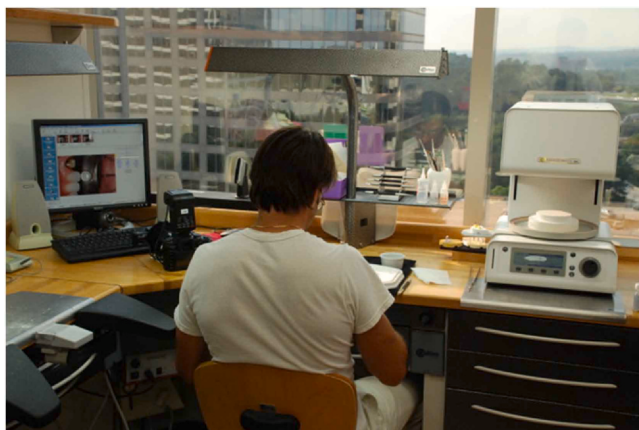


Figure 2. Great restorative outcomes depend immensely on dentist-dental laboratory technician professional relationship.

dentists and technicians, recognizing that laboratory experience provides a broader sampling of esthetic challenges and recurring patterns that can inform smarter clinical decisions. We also need to recognize the importance of balancing tradition and innovation: how understanding the principles and artistry of the past allows us to build a more advanced and esthetically driven future. The obvious links between artists and designers, training their eyes, brains, and hands to master 2-dimensional perception before moving into the complexity of 3-dimensional work. From sketching to sculpting, this creative evolution enhances both diagnostic and restorative skills. Ultimately, we emphasize that smile rehabilitation is a team sport. Great

results come from synergy, shared vision, and artistic sensitivity.

Developing one's abilities as a smile designer not only elevates clinical outcomes but also strengthens professional identity and differentiates a dental practice in today's competitive landscape.



APPENDIX A. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Supplemental data associated with this article can be found in the online version at [doi:10.1016/j.prosdent.2026.03.020](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.prosdent.2026.03.020).

Corresponding author:

Dr Christian Coachman
Digital Smile Design
R. Bento de Andrade
116 – Jardim Paulista
Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo
BRAZIL
Email: cc@digitalsmiledesign.com.

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