

BUILDING A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP AND TRUST IS WHAT EVERY DENTIST SEEKS WITH THEIR PATIENTS.

INDIRECTLY, THE DENTAL SUPPLIER CONTRIBUTES TO AND IS A PART OF THAT RELATIONSHIP. SO WHEN

A DENTIST BUILDS A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH A DENTAL SUPPLIER WHO IS ADDING VALUE TO

HIS/HER SURGERY IT'S AN ASSOCIATION WORTH EXAMINING.

Case Study

Reliability and ageless design draws FIMET customer back



By Sharon Harrison

Dr Richard Slattery has run his dental clinic in the Perth suburb of Kinross for 10 years. He bought his first dental chair, a Fimet F1, in 1995 when he set up the practice and returned to the Finnish manufacturer in 1998 when a dental hygienist's services were added to the growing practice. Now, with a move 'up the road' to larger premises, Dr Slattery has added a third Fimet chair, highlighting his trust in the quality and reliability of the company's products.

"The original chair was so good," he says. "It still works so well and it looks just as good as it did 10 years ago."

Dr Slattery's satisfaction with his other Fimet dental chairs meant any new chair he considered was automatically compared with the previous purchases. "When I look at other manufacturers' chairs, I compare them with what I have already got, and the Fimet still measures up as the best value."

Fimet dental chairs, distributed locally by Fimet Australia for over 15 years, are available in eight models. They offer variations in base styles (side-lift or traditional floor base), foot controllers (cabled or cordless), delivery systems (whip-supported or hanging-hose), etc. to cater for the specific preferences and budget of each dentist.

According to Fimet Australia's managing director Jeff Clohessy, the technical features such as the mechanics, construction method, and internal features, are virtually the same on all models. Ninety percent of the chair components are manufactured by Fimet themselves, he adds.

"It is an ageless design. It hasn't changed in 20 years because Fimet got it right in the first place, and it still looks very fashionable."

The standard floor box/base is replaced in the 'L' series by a side lift (which also houses the connections, etc.) giving the chair a sleeker style and providing easier access to the floor for cleaning. The cordless electronic foot control on the 'E' model eliminates floor cables and, in a world-first, uses an inbuilt 'memory' enabling the same levers to control both chair movement and instrument operation without needing any manual adjustment from the dentist.

Dr Slattery's newest chair is a Fimet F1-E, featuring the cordless foot control and a whip-supported delivery system. He was particularly impressed with this latter feature, where a movable side arm supports the instrument tray and the hoses are held horizontally with the instruments resting on a pad (the more conventional system uses a separate cart with the instruments sitting up in holders with the hoses hanging down).

"I really like the whip arm," he says. "It works very nicely and is positioned so the patients can't see it. I was worried they'd be frightened by it but that's not a problem."

The whip arm design also relieves some of the physical strain the dentist can encounter while working.



Dr. Slattery with his 'ageless looking' compact 10 year old Fimet F1-E dental system. The whole instrument unit can be moved to one side allowing easy patient entry/exit at the chair totally unhampered by equipment. Instrument cleanup procedures can be carried out immediately without the assistant moving from her side of the surgery.



"The simple layout with clean, good-looking features appeals to me and I like the infection control. The cordless remote foot pedal controls a lot of the features and frees the hands to work on the patient, which I find useful, particularly when taking impressions... With the Fimet unit it is easy to work at the head of the patient and good positioning ensures less stress."

(Dr Joseph Da Cruz – Queanbeyan, NSW)



Far left: Fimet's 'E' models (F1-LE shown) use a 'world-first' intelligent cordless remote foot pedal to control both chair movement and instrument operation.

Left: Dr Slattery's surgery.

Below: Dr Slattery (at right) with some of his dental staff.



"The instruments need to be somewhere convenient so that you just move your hand to get them. This is the most ergonomic design and the least stressful for the dentist," Dr Slattery explains.

"If you have to change the focus of your eyes, [between looking at the patient's mouth and finding the instruments] it is very tiring, especially when you see so many patients each day. With the whip arm you know the instruments are always there laid out on the tray and are spring-loaded on the arm so you pull them towards you. It is easy to use and the instruments are light weight in the hand."

With the hoses held higher in the whip arm, weight is taken off the instrument (there is no pulling down at the wrist from the hanging hose) and, if dropped, it will not reach the floor. The counterbalance and positioning features of the whip arm system are unique to Fimet dental units.

The entire dentist's module can swing over the patient to the dental assistant's side and, if done before the patient's final rinse, means the assistant does not have to move from their side of the surgery to begin cleanup procedures. Patient exit and entry at the chair is also unhampered by equipment. The compact size of the Fimet units is ideally suited to small area surgeries. Low maintenance and ease-of-cleaning are further features of the Fimet chairs that

appeal to Dr Slattery. While some maintenance is required (e.g. putting silicone on the 'O' rings or emptying the traps for waste) he says the parts are easy to get at and simple to clean.

Another key element is the use of injection-moulded material. There is no metal to rust and it provides durable, non-staining surfaces that can withstand the potentially-corrosive cleaning solutions used in dental surgeries. The standard of seating (padded vinyl with a stitchless top) is also important in the cleaning regime, he adds.

"The chair is all plastic moulded so there are no joins or places for bits to accumulate. You just need to wipe it regularly."

According to Dr Slattery purchasing all three chairs from the same company also gives his dental staff a consistent cleaning routine to follow. "There is one protocol to learn throughout the practice, not a different one for each chair."

His staff have found the chairs easy to use and clean. Daily maintenance takes little time and cleaning pieces such as the sucker mechanism (which he says can be a particularly unpleasant task on some equipment) is easily done each night.

"You know maintenance is too hard when things get left out," he explains. "That is not a problem here." ◆

Some of the awards won by Fimet.

