

# the Photo treatment

Professional Photographer Greg Harding explains how good photography is the key to successful marketing.

For many people, going to the dentist is viewed as a necessary evil – something to be endured when toothache or an abscess causes painful discomfort. But modern dentistry is a world away from its old image of sharp injections and noisy drills, and today's Practices pride themselves on providing a clean, safe and friendly service for all their patients.

The Dental Team in Stretford has been established since 1991 and last year decided that it needed to update its image – and who better to spread the word than the thousands of happy patients it has cared for over the years! Greg Harding Photography was commissioned to create a series of bespoke images of a number of patients; each one included comments from them commenting on the treatment they had received.

Greg explains:

"The Dental Team didn't want to use the usual pictures of models who already had perfect teeth! It has so much more marketing impact to use real people with real smiles. We invited patients to

have their photos taken and then comment on their treatment, and afterwards I embedded their comments within the images so that they could be used on the walls of the Practice as well as their



website and leaflets. It's been a really different and successful piece of advertising – new or prospective patients identify much more with real people than supermodels!"

In today's business market it's vital that healthcare providers take a much smarter approach to promoting their business. Traditional NHS organisations are now aware of the importance of marketing themselves to patients even if the service is free at the point of use.

"We all know that it doesn't cost anything for patients to visit their GP," says Greg. "However these days these doctors work together in much larger Health Centres and are providing a range of treatments and clinics for patients that traditionally may have been provided by hospitals. It's great for the patients because they receive care much closer to home – but it's really important that these group practices produce brochures or leaflets to explain to patients what's going on."

One of Greg's clients is the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility in Manchester, who have used him to create images for their brochure which highlight the studies their research clinics carry out. It aims to provide a feel for the services available at the centre and



sent to other healthcare providers such as GPs and Health Visitors but also used as part of a recruitment drive for new staff. However they knew that it wasn't just a few good pictures that were needed – these would be images of real patients and therefore there needed to be a great deal of sensitivity around how and when the photographs were taken. You can't just walk onto a ward and start clicking away!" he laughs. "I worked with a number of clinical teams to make sure that the privacy and dignity of all the patients was maintained – and that the staff who were photographed were also happy with how they were portrayed.

It took two long days of really hard work but the final result was incredible – and everyone was delighted with how their ward or department appeared. That's because photographing in a healthcare environment is so unique to anything else, so it's important that any organisation in this field makes sure that their photographer is aware of all these extra issues."

So whether you're a dental surgery or GP practice wanting to provide the latest information to your patients or a larger hospital who needs to establish a working relationship with stakeholder organisations, you need to make sure that the images used in your brochures and web pages are the highest quality – just like the treatment your patients receive!

**greharding**   
photography

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You can see examples of his work by visiting [www.greharding.co.uk](http://www.greharding.co.uk)

to market itself to health, academic and commercial organisations as well as potential partners and staff.

As a qualified Medical Illustration photographer, Greg is ideally placed to work for the biggest healthcare clients – large hospitals, both in the private and public sectors. These days patients have much more choice about where they receive their care, even on the NHS, and so hospitals realise that they need to promote themselves to their communities and the doctors in general practice that refer patients to specialist centres for investigations or treatment.

"One of my pieces of work in the last year was with the Division of Women and Children's Services at the United Bristol Healthcare Trust. They wanted to produce a brochure that could be

