

Digital dentistry

It is all about improving patient care and efficiency



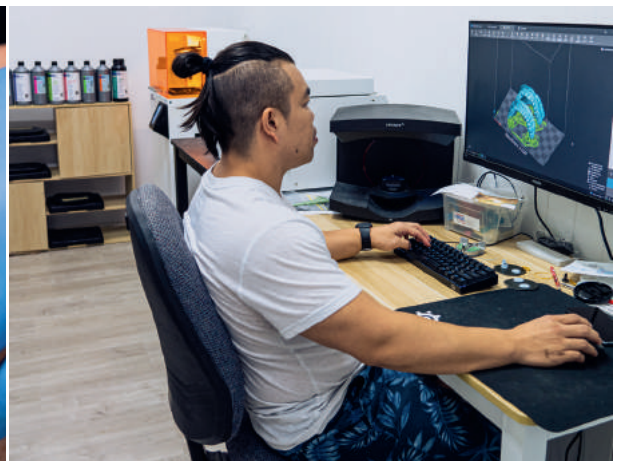
For Michael Nguyen and his brother Tony, dentistry was an important part of life already early on. Michael had the opportunity to work part-time at a laboratory while attending high school. After graduating, it was the logical choice to pursue a diploma of dental technology at what is now TAFE Queensland in Australia. In 2007, after completing his studies, Michael started to work full-time in the family business. In 2018, he gathered all his courage and savings and invested in his own laboratory, Everdent, supported by his wife and his mother. The first several years proved challenging but rewarding. Upon graduating in 2020 as a certified prosthetist, he expanded the laboratory with a clinical space. It became a true family business when Tony rejoined the team in early 2021.

Going digital had always been a long-term strategic goal for Michael, and his journey started in 2015. While looking for a digital dental workflow, he could not find a solution that made sense. The design software was complicated, scanners were very expensive, and the available 3D printers were either marketed as hobby

printers or very costly. However, as the years progressed, Michael noticed that the digital dental workflow had become more practical and affordable. In 2020, digital dentistry clearly had matured to the extent of feasible application in a professional setting.

Things progressed rapidly when Michael was introduced to CAD/CAM specialist Matthew Searle of Henry Schein Australia. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, general training at the Henry Schein training centre in Brisbane was not available, so Matthew travelled to Everdent for a personal demonstration instead. Impressed with how practical and proven the digital workflow had become, Michael moved forward in making the transition from an analogue to a digital workflow. For Everdent, Henry Schein proved to be a reliable partner, having the ability to deliver, install and provide on-site support for the complete workflow.

Initially, Michael was overwhelmed with the choice of 3D printers and materials, but for him as a prosthetist, 3D Systems' NextDent





5100 came out as a clear winner. The standardised workflow, the speed and accuracy, and most importantly the company's more than 80-year legacy of fabricating denture base materials made the decision relatively easy.

During this first step into digital dentistry with the 3Shape scanner and software, Michael did not see the need for a milling machine, and the laboratory focused mainly on removable work. The investment and overhead of a milling machine were thus avoided. In this regard, Michael said: "I predict that more and more resins will become available for 3D printing of definitive fixed restorations for patients."

The impact on Everdent going digital was huge. Traditional dentures require a great deal of hands-on work, and the patient has to visit the clinic up to six times. The transformation from an analogue to a complete digital workflow enabled reduction of patient visits to the clinic to three in total on average. This, in combination with faster and more efficient fabrication of dentures, doubled the number of cases per week within a year.

Patient feedback to Everdent has been very encouraging. Patients have been pleased with the design, fitting and most of all reduced chair time. To Michael's surprise, very few dentures have needed a reline or reprint. Thanks to this overwhelmingly positive feedback, Everdent has continued to receive increasingly more requests from clinics, and the nearby dental hospital has started to refer patients who need dentures urgently to the laboratory.

It is not about the money—it's about the time saved!

Going digital has worked wonders for Everdent. Michael is often asked how much he needed to invest and how much extra revenue he has made. He underlines that it is not about the money but about the time saved: "Yes, you must invest time and money to transform your workflow into a digital one, but when you have everything up and running, you will have so much more time to focus on your patients, the lab, the clinic, marketing. In short, going digital resulted in far more time to manage the lab and clinic. As a result, Everdent is growing in the number of patients, cases, staff and revenue."

<https://everdentclinic.com.au/>

