

14

LAB DAY Chicago
February 24-25

38

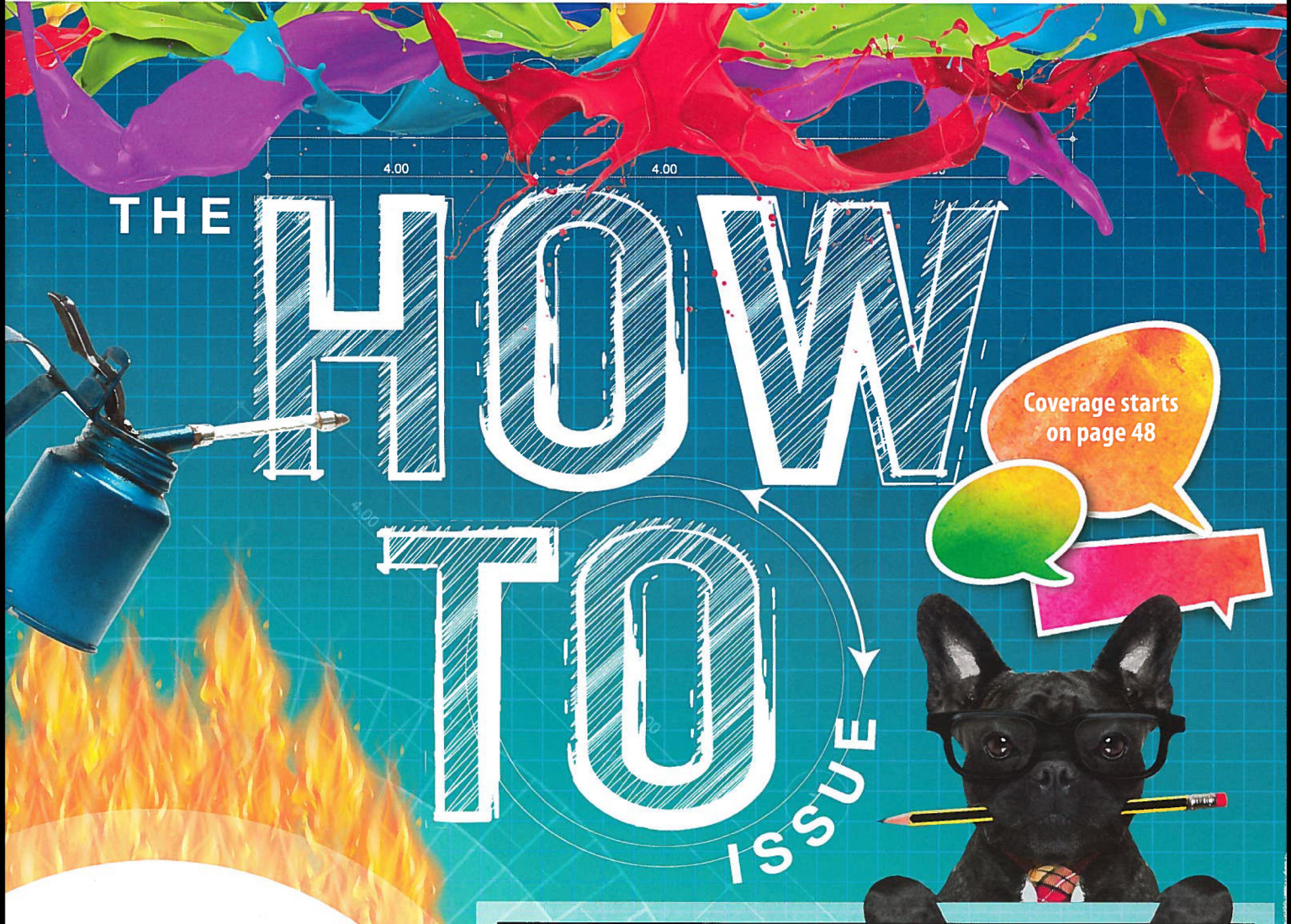
CAD/CAM Milling
Tools and Burs

LAB MANAGEMENT TODAY

FEBRUARY · 2017

LMT

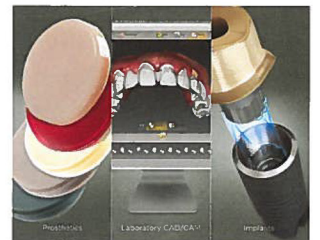
BUSINESS STRATEGIES FOR DENTAL LABORATORY DECISION MAKERS



Coverage starts
on page 48

The Dentsply Sirona Ultimate Dental Laboratory

Dentsply Sirona will debut the first-of-its-kind Ultimate Dental Laboratory at LMT LAB DAY Chicago. Located in Columbus Hall AB in the East Tower, Gold Level, this unprecedented, highly interactive experience showcases the latest advancements in laboratory technology and materials brought to you exclusively by Dentsply Sirona. Experience for yourself how the company's industry-leading laboratory offerings, both digital and traditional, are designed with your dental laboratory's success in mind. CDT CE credits are also available for this educational experience. For more information, see page 90, contact your Dentsply Sirona concierge at 855-INLAB4U (465-2248) or visit www.inLab.com/chicago.



ADVERTISEMENT

How to acquire 17 new clients in four months

“Digital technology has leveled the playing field for many labs. As digital scanning, design and milling are becoming common in laboratories and dental offices, the traditional posterior crown is becoming a commodity,” says Martha Martin, CEO and Co-Owner of Triad Dental Studio, located in Greensboro, NC. “We have not lost clients but we have lost volume due to chairside scanning and milling. In an effort to be proactive to replace those lost sales, I’ve never been more focused on marketing than I am now.”

The 32-person operation beefed up its marketing efforts across the board and, as a result, gained 17 new clients in four months and saw increased business from some of its existing accounts. Here, Martin shares some of their most effective strategies:



Triad Dental Studio's Extra gum give-away was a hit when the lab exhibited at dental shows last year.



Trade shows. Triad exhibited at four dental trade shows in 2016 and came up

with a fun giveaway that has proven to be a good conversation starter. It paired a packet of Extra gum with a small card that read, “The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is our little extra” with the lab’s contact information on the back (see above).

Since they purchased the gum in bulk at Costco and printed the cards in house on the lab’s color printer, the promotion cost just \$.60 apiece and they averaged about 30-50 solid leads from each show.

To connect with dental students at a University of North Carolina Dental School’s Vendor Day, the lab raffled off one of the year’s hottest gadgets—the Alexa-enabled Amazon-Echo smart speaker—to grab the attention of the show’s young

tech-savvy attendees. “For a \$180 investment, we were able to gather the contact information of 122 students,” says Martin. “Our goal is to make a good first impression and then stay in touch so they’ll remember Triad’s name when they begin practicing.”



Email marketing. Last summer, the lab developed several targeted email

blasts that coincided with its current marketing campaign. Overall, they experienced a highly successful open rate of 30%; the average open rate for most businesses is closer to 20%.

The lab sends one or two emails each month on a variety of topics; recent blasts have included information on an upcoming seminar, ways for clients to send in digital files and the lab’s new trademarked Alluzion™ zirconia.

To create and send the promotions, the lab uses Constant Contact, a popular email marketing service provider; it pays \$40 a month for a subscription. Martin works with Marketing Coordinator Kristy Aguilar to come up with a concept and Aguilar designs it using the drag-and-drop functions in the software. Once it’s final, they select recipients from the lab’s list of 600 dentists who have opted in to receive the lab’s emails and Constant Contact sends the email and tracks the response.

To get the best results, Martin recommends writing an interesting subject line (that’s not so promotional it flags spam filters), including a call to action like “click here for more information” and avoiding sending emails on Mondays when offices are typically busy; Triad has found it gets the highest open rates on Tuesday mornings. (For more tips, see *How to optimize your email open rate* on page 86.)



Direct Mailers. Similar to its email promotions, the lab’s direct mailers

are completely handled in house. Aguilar designs the piece using programs like Photoshop and Illustrator*, then prints them on the lab’s color printer. Her tips for an effective piece: have a colorful, eye-catching design; keep it clean and not too wordy with one main marketing message; and always include your logo for brand consistency.

Triad sends direct mailers about twice a month and, to maximize its reach, it augmented its in-house list of potential clients by purchasing a list of 1,400 dentists within a

75-mile radius; it cost \$600 and the lab can use it an unlimited number of times.

Martin typically splits up the mailings by region, doing small targeted mailings of about 200-400 names. “We don’t send blanket mailings to our entire list at once. What we send depends on what that dentist has previously received and what we’re working to promote in that area,” says Martin. “For instance, we might send an initial mailer to introduce our lab, a second one about our new zirconia, and then follow up with a flyer on our implant expertise.”



Follow Up. “According to the National Sales Executive Association,

80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact, so it’s key to have a follow-up strategy in place for all of your marketing efforts,” says Martin.

For instance, the lab has a three-step process for after-trade show follow up:

1. Send a thank you email or letter.
2. Make an office visit for local clients or phone call for those farther away.
3. Add the prospective customer to the lab’s in-house list to receive promotional mailers and emails. ■

***Bonus tip:** Originally one of the lab’s customer service representatives, Aguilar learned various design programs by taking webinars from Lynda.com. The website offers online tutorials on a variety of topics—including design, photography and web development—and subscriptions are on a month-to-month basis starting at \$19.99.