

Creation and science: the secrets to success

What makes an Aesthetic Dentist or Technician of the Year? Carlotta Eden speaks to this year's winners **Federico Brunner** and **Petr Mysicka** about their successful working relationship and the future of digital smile design

When I first begin talking to Federico Brunner over emails, he mentions that he and technician Petr Mysicka are preparing an 'emotional video' of a patient.

I was a little oblivious at first, but Federico would continue to expand on their idea throughout his emails; they wanted to add a visual component to a patient's journey, giving the patient the luxury of seeing their new 'smile' unfold in front of them, using Christian Coachman and Florin Cofar's concept of 'emotional dentistry'.

'I would like to create a video that explores the changes in a person when they have improved on the aesthetic aspect of their dentistry and given themselves more confidence to smile,' Federico explains to me later. He hopes to present a 'true story' about a 'big change' in a person's life.

Two obvious traits stand out after you speak to Federico and Petr: energy and dedication. It's at the root of their work, the reason they've come so far and travelled so widely, and the heart of their successful professional relationship – which is impressive. It's not often you come across a dentist and dental technician who both praise each other so highly and who remain close friends outside of business. More often than not, you hear about the clashes, the egos and the misunderstandings. Developing a professional bond with another person requires something extra – chemistry, and maybe even tact.

I decided to find out the secrets behind their success.



Federico Brunner and Petr Mysicka celebrate their wins in March at the 2015 Aesthetic Dentistry Awards

Perfecting communication between clinic and lab

1. If you want to be respected, respect others
2. Have patience. English is Federico and Petr's second language, so they need patience to fully understand each other
3. Understand the importance of time. Federico says: 'I don't like to put unnecessary pressure on the people I work with. I prefer to give more time than usual for more complicated work. If someone is relaxed they will complete work to a higher standard'
4. Communication. Using different forms of media deepens understanding; Federico and Petr communicate using images, videos, emails and many other methods of communication
5. Enjoy your work. 'Before we start we like to make sure we are prepared for challenging cases,' says Petr. 'We make sure we enjoy the whole process by being fully prepared. No unnecessary stress is allowed!'

Starting out

Petr is originally from Zakupy, a small town 80km north of Prague, Czech Republic. When he was 15 he was told to make a decision on his career.

'I really didn't know what to do,' Petr says. 'There aren't any other dentists or technicians in my family but I was really interested in

medicine, so I decided to go in that direction.'

Petr chose a school for dental technicians and loved it. 'I will never regret my decision,' he adds. 'It's not always easy, but I love the challenge.'

Federico completed his studies in dentistry at Universidad Alfonso X el Sabio in Spain in 2001. The pair found themselves drawn to the



Dr Federico Brunner is an implant surgeon at Hailsham Dental Centre, Brighton. He is originally from Argentina and specialises in oral implantology.



Petr Mysicka is a dental technician at Brighton Implant Clinic, Brighton. Petr has an interest in ceramics – porcelain crowns (zirconia, IPS emax, dental implants, veneers).

UK after spending several years working and studying in their home countries and abroad.

After university, Federico worked for a non-profit organisation in Central America, helping treat those with no access to any kind of dental treatment.

'We travelled through the jungle to help people; our turbines were connected to a box and run with gasoline. We worked from regular chairs and lit up our patients with torches we held by hand. It was a truly great and fulfilling experience, and a stark contrast to working in a practice.'

On the other side of the world, Petr remained at the forefront of the laboratory scene, witnessing immense changes not only in Europe but in the digital landscape.

'The new digital era has definitely changed the lab as we know it today,' Petr maintains, and Federico agrees, adding: 'Digital dentistry is not the future; it is the present. Digital impressions, digital smile design (DSD), digital wax-up, skin concept, the way the lab works – is now digital.'

And yet there's more to it than that, thinks Petr. From a technician's perspective, going digital means changing the way you think, not just the way you work. It's like learning to write with your right hand instead of your left.

'When Federico introduced me to DSD I was a bit frustrated,' he says. 'I didn't understand why I needed a program to tell me how to do a wax-up and restorations. I am a dental technician and I should know it, which of course I did.'

Petr soon changed his mind though, seeing the 'huge potential' DSD had to offer. 'It's a really helpful tool,' Petr enthuses. 'It gives me lots of information about the patient, meaning that I can provide a better product. I am very proud to work with it now.'

Reigning champs

The two met in Brighton, when Petr joined the implant lab at a practice Federico had been working in. 'I heard from other dentists that Petr was talented with porcelain,' says Federico. 'And as soon as I completed my first crown with him, I noticed something special in the way he worked.'

Petr maintains that a good working dynamic is all about attitude and communication. 'It's not easy,' Petr says. 'What you give you will get back.' I ask how he and Federico manage to strike a good balance. 'Federico is a great and passionate dentist. When I met him I knew he had great potential as a dentist and I was delighted to work with him. I remember our first case; it was veneers and he was a bit nervous about that, but we made beautiful work together.'

'Some dentists and technicians sometimes think that they are the better party and they don't need the other but it's simply not true'

'The key is very simple: listen to each other. He must trust me and I must trust him. We must be partners; we both need each other. Some dentists and dental technicians sometimes think that they are the better party and they don't need the other but it's simply not true.'

Federico echoes this belief, adding: 'Compared to the technicians I have worked with in the past, working with Petr seems like a gift! Nowadays, technicians are almost more important than the dentist. As a dentist, you can do the best implant in the world but if your technician doesn't understand what they are doing you will never achieve perfection.'

'Our approach is very simple: a lot of planning before we start. We take photos, videos, and we spend a lot of time discussing the cases. We brainstorm together and we discuss different options. After this process we create a plan together and agree what we want to achieve – then we follow through with the plan!'

There must be times when the plan doesn't always work though?

'Complications do arise,' Federico explains. 'But we always have a plan B just in case.'

Luckily for both, the effort paid off at the 2015 Aesthetic Dentistry Awards. The pair came away with awards for Single Implant Case, Multiple Implant Case, Interdisciplinary Team Case – Restorative, and Aesthetic Dentist and Technician of the Year.

'I didn't think we would win, but I was over the moon when we did!' Petr says. The two spent a challenging year putting cases together, but organisation and commitment eventually pulled through, and their hard work was rewarded.

'I was honoured to receive these awards, especially Aesthetic Dentist of the Year,' enthuses Federico. 'We worked very hard and I am so grateful. I feel a profound sense of joy and responsibility now!'

Awards can be the pinnacle of a dental professional's career, and it while it certainly offers a substantial boost to your confidence, work and career, what of the future?

Surely, it can only go up from here.

The next step

Federico says his interest in dental implants was a 'natural progression' after becoming more involved with complex rehabilitation cases.

'In my first years I disliked any kind of surgery,' he says. 'However, when I started to study implants I fell in love with implantology, and the results possible from its application.'

'To place implants allows me to be more conservative with my patients, avoiding using bridges, avoiding to prepare and reshape healthy teeth, and of course, avoiding using dentures.'

Federico tells me he is venturing further and further into aesthetic dentistry, which again links to his and Petr's hopes of creating more 'emotional dentistry' and becoming strong advocates of good dental photography, of which he believes is his 'best tool'.

'It's helped me communicate with the lab, technicians and my mentors. It's helped me evolve as a dentist by allowing me to use self-criticism to improve my technique and practice. It's also the best way to level the expectations of patients who come to visit me for the first time, because I can show them a realistic view of the final result.'

In the same way, Petr says good dental photography is 'very important', adding his camera, Macbook and iPhone are significant tools in his daily work.

Similarly, and despite the expanding digital and technological horizon in dentistry, Petr believes there will be still be room for dental technicians' practical expertise, where 'our hands will be the winners' rather than the computers. In an interview with *Laboratory* in April, Petr again says how he wasn't worried about the 'creative' side of lab work being lost.

So, how do we get better than the technology?

'Technology is really great,' Petr says. 'CAD/CAM can do fantastic zirconia, metal, peek bridges that are amazing and accurate. However, there is still space for some things that a computer will never be able to do. Only my eyes and hands can produce really great central crowns, which will perfectly match with other teeth. Technology will never beat it.'

That may be so – either way, it will be a challenge, one that I'm pretty certain Federico and Petr can handle. Both hope to continue their venture into aesthetics, and are considering running their own courses in dental photography and ceramics.

'Federico and I will still work together,' says Petr. 'It's rewarding to work on a case for more than a year and then see the patient's final, happy smile. This is something that will always make both of us happy.'

Care to comment? @AesDenToday

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