



DREAM JOB

**5 STEP GUIDE TO
FINDING A JOB YOU LOVE**



A hand is holding a large, light pink heart-shaped balloon. The background is a textured, darker pink surface. The heart is positioned on the right side of the frame, with the hand visible at the bottom right corner holding the string.

FIND A JOB YOU LOVE

Job searching is hard work. DentalPost is here to guide you with best practices and tips to find not just *any* job - but the *right* job. This toolkit is packed with information and resources to help you search and apply, interview with confidence and negotiate your next job offer.

Life is short. Work somewhere awesome!

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1

PRE-SEARCH PREP





KNOW YOURSELF

1. Know when it's time to quit.

The most important thing you can do before you decide to leave your existing dental practice is to assess your situation, your options, and most importantly, yourself and what you bring to the situation. Sometimes, sticking around can do more damage to you and to the practice than if you parted ways sooner.

2. Do some soul searching.

Before you start looking for your next job, make sure you understand why your current one isn't working. Sometimes it's the workplace itself – the people or the leadership (or lack thereof). And sometimes there's no fault – it's just that you weren't in the right place or with the right people to begin with. But how do you know what you want and need? How do you determine what is important to you in a workplace? DentalPost has free assessments to help you answer these questions. (See Assessment Types on page 11).

3. Know your worth.

Know the industry standards for dental professionals where compensation is concerned. Do your salary research for your job role. In DentalPost's Annual Salary Survey conducted with *RDH Magazine*, over 10,000 dental professionals share their information on compensation, benefits, and work-life balance.



QUESTIONNAIRE: JOB SEARCH GOALS

Evaluate what you've accomplished in your career so far: your personal aspirations, where you want to be next, and what that looks like.

Questions to Ask Yourself Before You Start Searching

NOTES:

- Do you want to work full-time or part-time?
- Do you want to temp so you can check out different offices?
Different work environments? See what temping and working for yourself feels like?
- Do you want to work in one office only? Or multiple offices?
- Do you want to work with a DSO or Private Practice?
- What aspects of compensation are the most important?
 - **Do you prefer...**
 - ...benefits?
 - ...more money?
 - ...more time off? paid time off?
 - ...more schedule flexibility?
 - ...paid certifications?
 - ...paid time off for certifications and industry conferences?
- What would like to change in your current situation:
 - ...safety protocols?
 - ...better technology?
 - ...better equipment?
 - ...better office culture?
 - ...more time with patients?
 - ...more autonomy with how you practice hygiene?
 - ...more extensive input and collaboration with the dentist regarding patient care?

2

BUILD A WINNING RESUME PROFILE



BEFORE YOU START... REVIEW YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE.

Employers are increasingly going online to vet candidates. Searching your social media profile is now as common as running a background check.

Before you begin your job search:

1. **Audit your social media accounts.** Remove or hide any inappropriate photos or posts that you wouldn't want a potential employer seeing.
2. **Google your name.** Search yourself in incognito mode so you can see what a potential employer might see
3. **Set your social media pages to private.** Be selective about what you share publicly.



Present your best self.

Update your resume with any new information, including volunteer work, additional or updated industry certifications or mentions of how you contributed in a positive way or went above and beyond in your current or past positions.



Choose your profile picture wisely.

Just as you want your social media profiles to project a positive social image, your profile picture needs to reflect who you are professionally. Employers want to see that you are professional and polished.

If you don't have a professional picture, ask a friend to take one for you:

1. Against a solid color wall or backdrop
2. Face forward, smiling confidently
3. You should be the only thing in the frame - while your pet is cute, employers aren't looking to hire them.

Present your best self.

That means no selfies or photos showing you dressed for a day at the beach.

Examples of BAD profile photos:



❌ In the car, or making silly faces.



❌ With your pet.



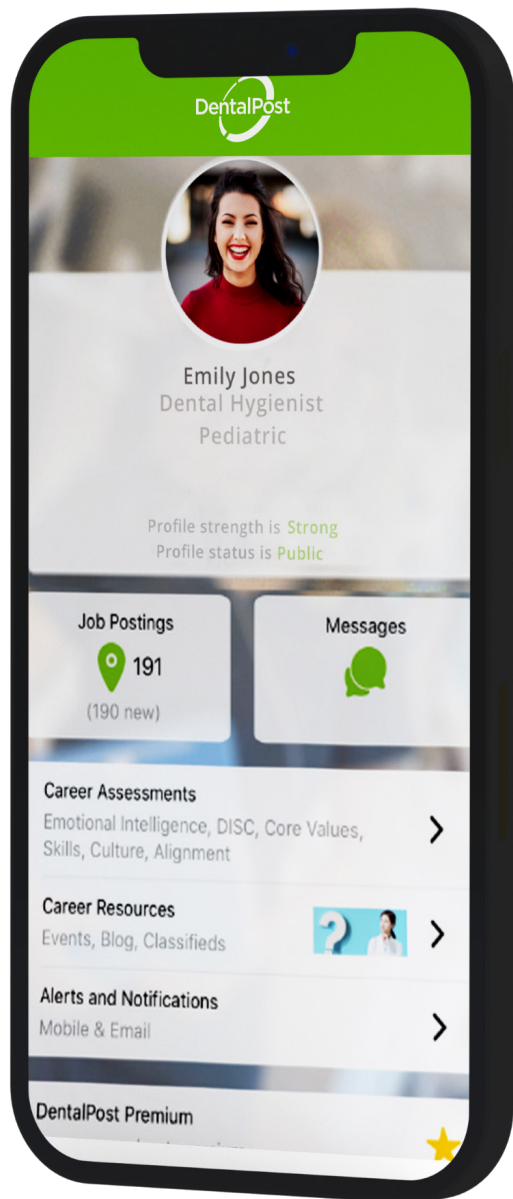
❌ In your bathroom, or underdressed.



❌ Posing with pigtails or props.

Complete your profile to 100%.

To apply for a job, applicants need to get their profile to a minimum 70% completion status, but completing the entire profile leads to better hiring outcomes for candidates.



Why you should complete your profile:

- **Employers are searching for candidates using keywords.** Completing the Skills Assessment assures your resume stays at the top of the search results.
- **Better profile, better job match.** When you complete the Skills, Core Values, DISC, Emotional Intelligence and Workplace Culture assessments, you go to the top of the list and find the right employer match. That could mean the difference between not only making the first round screening cut, but it could be what lands you not just any job, but a job you love. **All assessments at DentalPost are free to candidates. Use them!**
- **Show how you added value.** Include accomplishments, results, and solutions you contributed to. Outcomes and results are always more compelling than straight job responsibility lists.
- **Don't leave employers wondering.** An incomplete profiles sends a message that you couldn't be bothered to finish and you are not that enthusiastic or serious about your search. It may also convey that you don't have the skills or experience necessary to do the work.



ASSESSMENT TYPES

DentalPost gives job seekers access to FREE assessments to help you find the *right fit*, faster. Profiles with completed assessments rise to the top of an employer's candidate search.

Here's a breakdown of 5 key assessment types, and how they can help you understand your personality and work style:



DISC

The DISC assessment details your communication and work style. Understanding the four DISC personality types is key to boosting communication, productivity, and conflict management in the workplace. Employers use DISC assessments to hire the right mix on the team.



Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the new "smart." Everyone you work with has some level of EI, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each team member can have a great impact on the overall success of the team. People with high EI are invaluable in roles that involve frequent interpersonal relationships and leadership. Having high EI is especially important in healthcare and caregiving.



Core Values

Core Values Assessments offer a clear sense of what is most important to a person in life. It is important to know what you value most when considering dental practices to work with, and ensure the right culture fit within a practice.



Skills

Just like it sounds, Skills Assessments measure actual skills. From clinical skills to technological know-how and general communication abilities, both hard skills and soft skills can be measured and ranked by level of proficiency.



Workplace Culture

Workplace Culture Assessments help you understand what types of work environments you would enjoy most, as well as the types of environments that you work best in. Understanding your Workplace Culture preferences will help you find the right practice environment to fit your needs.

A smiling woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a white collared shirt, is holding a large white sheet of paper. She is in an office environment with a window in the background showing a cityscape. The image has a teal overlay. In the top left corner, there is a large teal circle containing the number 3 in white.

3

SEARCH & APPLY



START YOUR SEARCH.

Pay attention to the job description.

When you read a job description, pay close attention to the keywords for insight into what kind of practice they are and if their core values match yours.

Apply early.

Timing is everything. Sign up for job alerts to help you stay ahead of the game. You'll be among the first to know about a job and one of the first to apply.

Apply often.

Job searching is like dating – the more you get out there and engage, the faster you will find your best match. Even if you aren't sure about the position, it's always good to give someone a try, stay connected in the industry and practice your interviewing skills.

What You Can Do While Job Searching

Already have a job?

Dedicate extra time to job searching outside of your regular work week, in which case, that may be all you have time for. Plan on it being your second job. It's a numbers game.

DentalPost, the nation's largest dental job board, increases your odds of finding the right fit.

Not currently working?

Consider temping. Temping is a great way to "test drive" a practice and see if you like the practice's production and protocols, as well as their overall vibe and culture. There are several advantages to temping as a full-time or part-time career including flexibility, control of your career, as well as the independence that comes with being self-employed.

Keep growing and learning.

It's important to stay on top of industry trends and standards by maintaining your certifications or getting new ones. Doing so is a sign you are a conscientious care provider and lifelong learner. These are very desirable traits in a potential team member.



DID YOU KNOW...

DentalPost provides a Continuing Education Tracker that sends you alerts and reminders so that you never lapse on your certifications.

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THE INTERVIEW





INTERVIEW WITH CONFIDENCE

Be prepared.

If you've taken all the steps we've shared so far, you've improved your marketability as a candidate and likely drawn interest from hiring managers for a meeting or interview.

Be sure to ask for the specifics of the interview.

Asking the right questions during an interview is a key step in the hiring process.



PRE-INTERVIEW CHECKLIST



Confirm the interview date and time.

Call the day before to make sure you have the correct meeting time. Missing an interview hurts you and hurts the practice who is already short-staffed, as it is valuable time away from patients and business.



Know where you are going.

Where should you park? If the practice is in an urban location, give yourself ample time to traverse parking decks and elevators. Always be early when possible.



Be courteous. Show up.

No ghosting. Candidate no-shows will come back to haunt you. If you have an emergency or something comes up, always be sure to communicate as far in advance as possible. The local dental community is a small world. Always leave a good impression.



Know the interview format and be ready.

Make sure you know if it will be a face-to-face meeting, initial phone call or virtual video meeting. For video interviews, be sure to install the appropriate video conference application before your scheduled interview time and test everything to make sure it's working properly.



Know who you are talking to.

Will you be talking to more than just the hiring manager? Will you be meeting other team members?



Know if it is a working interview.

Will it be a working interview taking place over the course of a day? If so, practice owners or hiring managers are required by law to pay you for any hours worked. See your local state laws and regulations for confirmation.



Be prepared.

Bring a clean copy of your resume and any licenses and certifications you hold.



QUESTIONS TO ASK IN THE INTERVIEW

Be ready to ask questions. While you are being interviewed, you are interviewing them, as well!

Here are some revealing questions you can ask to help you understand your prospective employer:

- What does a typical day look like? May I see the schedule for the past few days?
- Has this role/position changed in terms of duties and responsibilities post-Covid?
- What do you consider a successful or productive workday?
- What have been some key learnings from a business and leadership perspective since Covid-19?
- What's the one thing you're still challenged by or working to improve?
- What are your biggest challenges right now and what are you looking for in this position/role to help alleviate those challenges?
- What are some other qualities that have become even more vital in a new hire since this pandemic?
- I'm interested in joining a company where I'll be able to contribute and add value right away. What is your onboarding process?
- What are the practice's top priorities and plans for the next few months?
- What is the practice's approach to PPE?
- What do you do as a team to stay connected? How often do you communicate or do team meetings?
- Do you support continuing education?
- What does your timeline process look like for hiring/filling this position?



INTERVIEW TIPS: DSO vs. PRIVATE PRACTICE

Interviewing with a private practice

The number one job, besides being your charming self, is to show hiring managers and owners the value you bring to the practice and patients. Show that you understand the business and metrics of dental care while still focusing on total patient care.

This, in combination with a team player attitude, is what lands you the job.

Business owners want to decrease costs, but will make investments into profit centers.

Interviewing with a DSO

If you're considering working for a DSO, make sure to pay attention when you go in for an interview. Do the clinicians look happy? How about the patients? Does the office look well-maintained and the equipment in good working order?

Even better, if you get a chance, ask a clinical team member why they like working there. These questions will help you separate the good DSO's from the average ones.



Money Talk: When to discuss salary & benefits

Before or after the interview?

A best practice is to save the salary conversation until you have a job offer in-hand. At this point, you know they want you, and you have some leverage to negotiate.

Alternatively, if you want to ensure the job fits within your salary requirements *before* you spend time interviewing, ask the recruiter or hiring manager for a salary range during the informational interview.

Advantages of postponing salary negotiation:

- It may get you a better salary offer.
- It will prevent you from asking for too low a figure or end the negotiations by asking for too much.
- It will allow you to determine the starting point for the negotiation process.

Keep an open mind.

If the interviewer mentions salary as if it is set and not changeable, it's best to neither disagree nor agree. An open-ended reply of "This figure fits into my range" allows you to continue the interview with your salary options open. This will give you time to gather information about the job and sell your skills to the employer.



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Post-Interview Follow Up

Always follow up your interview with a “thank you” note. If you met multiple team members, send one to each individual. Sometimes these small gestures make a big impression. If you are likely to be this thoughtful and gracious with them, then they will believe you are likely to also be that way with patients. Sometimes this simple detail is the tiebreaker that has them choose you over another candidate.

Handling Rejection

Rejection by a potential employer is hard. And sometimes there is no communication or feedback on why you did not get the job. Don't be afraid to ask the hiring manager what about you wasn't a fit for them. They may share something with you that you can work to improve.

Maintain a Positive Attitude & Keep Going

Recruiting and job searching is a numbers and matching game. Don't take rejection personally. Maintaining a positive mindset and attitude through the interview and post-interview process will help you stand out to employers and help you find the *right* fit for you.

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THE OFFER





WEIGHING THE OFFER

Congratulations! You have made it through the interview process and gotten a job offer. Now what?

See the big picture

Money isn't everything when considering an offer. Sometimes a great work culture, short commute, or other compensation package perks such as benefits can have an even greater value than money alone. It's important to consider all aspects of an offer holistically.

Preparing for negotiation

Understanding what you need makes it easier to negotiate with confidence and shows employers you aren't throwing out arbitrary numbers.

Arm yourself with resources like the dental industry salary report so you know where you stand among your peers and can negotiate the best possible rate. A little knowledge will give you confidence discussing your dental salary.

Knowing how employers approach compensation will help you better navigate asking for what you want and landing a job that lasts.



JOB COMPARISON CHART

Use this chart to help you compare your current job with potential employers. Rate each area for each job with a 1-5, 5 being the best. Add them up to see how they compare. If you have a tie, recalculate using only your top 3 job criteria areas. The following page provides more insight into each category.

	Current Job (If applicable)	Potential Job 1	Potential Job 2
Money / Wages			
Office Culture / Leadership			
Role Support			
Production Expectations			
Career Potential			
Hours / Flexibility			
Paid Vacation			
Health Insurance or Benefits Provided			
Misc. (Commuting time, parking cost, daycare required?)			
Total Score			



JOB COMPARISON CHART

Money / Wages:

What is the salary, commission, or bonus structure? How often are raises administered?

Office Culture and Leadership:

Does the size of the organization matter? What about the leadership style? Do they have a mission, vision and overall integrity?

Role / Support: Do you have support in your role? If you are Front Office manager, will you be supported by a RDH in setting appointments? If you are a RDH or Dentist, do you have a Dental Assistant supporting you?

Production Expectations: What are the expectations for your production? How many patients a day? How much time do you have with each patient? In between patients? What PPE is provided by the practice?

Career Potential: Does the practice offer CE reimbursement? Opportunity to advance?

Hours and flexibility: Will you be required to be on call or work overtime? Can you set and determine your own work schedule? Are you paid to participate in mandatory meetings?

Paid Vacation: How much is paid vs. unpaid? Are you responsible for finding your replacement while you are out?

Health Insurance / Benefits Provided:

Are you eligible for full medical coverage? What portion does the practice pay? Is it a quality insurance program? Do you have the option of life/disability insurance? Retirement plans?

Misc / Other: Don't forget to think about your quality of life in terms of commute, how that affects any needs such as daycare, transportation costs, etc.



Negotiating your dental salary

Negotiating with a Small Dental Practice

Most dental practices want to offer reasonable pay to attract top talent. At the same time, they are committed to fixed operational costs. Understanding an employer's concerns can give you an opening in your negotiations.

Remember, the dental office is a business. You are a great clinician and take excellent care of the patients, but how do you bring value to keep the books full? When you have down time, do you try to fill your schedule? Are you committed as a team player and jumping in when team members need support? These are the points you want to sell to support your salary request.

Practice Negotiation

Practice your negotiation skills with family and friends before your interview. Go into your interview with your research done and your negotiation skills polished.

Remember that dental salary negotiation is not about win-lose. It is a two-way process where you and the employer are each trying to get what you need at the best price. When that occurs, it is a win-win for both parties.

Negotiate Face-to-Face

In-person or by video conference, negotiating face-to-face offers some key advantages compared with a phone negotiation:

1. It's easier to bond and make a connection in-person than by phone.
2. Non-verbal cues from facial expressions and body language can convey details as valuable as the discussion itself.

When possible, wait until you have a firm job offer and then arrange for an in-person interview or virtual interview to discuss salary.

Accepting the Job

Congratulations on landing a job offer! Now finish strong and do the following:

- Make sure to receive the offer in writing and sign all the paperwork on or before your first day.
- If you haven't received an official job description outlining your roles and responsibilities, be sure to ask your hiring manager for one. Having this document will provide accountability for both you and the practice, so that the relationship stays fair and balanced. If you aren't provided with one, write one up yourself to assure that you are on the same page about what is expected of you. Keep in mind that sometimes in our roles, special circumstances require us being willing to go a bit above and beyond our usual duties, in which case we should be team players and pitch in when we can. The key is balancing this and assuring the relationship always feels like a win-win.
- Confirm your start date and all expectations for day one on the job.
- Confirm PPE being provided. If it's not provided, get what you need to do your best work in advance of your first day.
- Discuss with your manager how they will introduce you to patients and what you can do to make the transition smooth for the team and patients. Here's where you can start adding value day one!



RECOMMENDED READING

Step 1

[Time to Move On? 6 Signs it's Time to Quit... and How to Exit Your Job Gracefully](#)

[Seven Habits of Highly Effective Job Seekers](#)

Step 2

[The Power of Assessments](#)

[What is DISC \(And Why Yours Matters\)?](#)

[How High Is Your Emotional Intelligence?](#)

[20 Dental Resume Words and Phrases to Wow The Hiring Manager](#)

[Positive Resume Action Words](#) - Doug Perry, GetHiredRDH.com

[Positive Personality Adjectives](#) - Doug Perry, GetHiredRDH.com

[Passive vs. Active Writing](#) - Doug Perry, GetHiredRDH.com

[Resume Content Employers Want](#) - Doug Perry, GetHiredRDH.com

Step 3

[Tips for Turning a Temp Gig Into a Permanent Opportunity](#)

[How to Improve Your Professional Etiquette Game in 7 Steps](#)

Step 4

[7 Questions and Answers You Should Know for your Dental Assistant Interview](#)

[Negotiating Your Dental Salary](#)

THE NATIONS #1 DENTAL JOB BOARD & COMMUNITY

DentalPost is the dental industry's premier and largest online and mobile job board, connecting and educating more than 850,000 job seekers in the U.S. and Canada to build better places to work through teams that excel.

Founded by Tonya Lanthier, a Registered Dental Hygienist, DentalPost leads the industry in metric-based career matching including personality tests as well as values, skills and work culture assessments to assist in selecting the best match for each position.

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DENTALPOST.NET

www.dentalpost.net/jobseeker-toolkit