

# Dentcubator board meets in New York

By Daniel Zimmermann,  
DTI Group Editor

■ Year after year, dental companies spend millions on the research and development (R&D) of new products. Nobel Biocare, which is one of the biggest spenders in the dental industry, uses about 4-5 percent of its annual turnover for R&D.

On the other hand, there are thousands of ideas developed by dentists that will never be implemented because their inventors lack the funds or expertise to market their ideas or are downsized by shrinking R&D budgets in difficult economic times.

For such ideas, there are usually incubators. Introduced in the late 1950s as physical buildings that housed many small businesses, these programs have become a significant tool in the business world for assisting early-stage companies. Their main goal is to accelerate the successful development of entrepreneurial companies through support resources and services, such as finding attorneys, funding prototypes and finding distribution channels.

Almost 90 percent of start-up companies stay in business for the long term with the help of incubating programs, a study by the University



• Dentcubator members meet at the Greater New York Dental Meeting.

of Michigan recently found.

Worldwide, there are an estimated

5,000 of these incubator networks, with 1,400 operating in the United States alone. In dentistry, there was no such network until Dentcubator was founded at the Greater New York Dental Meeting last year.

Originating in Massachusetts from a loose network of renowned dental specialists around the globe, the program has evaluated 48 submissions thus far and aims to support as many as 80 during the course of the next five years. Ten screening panels of experts, such as Steve Buchanan, Sonia Leziy, John McSpadden, Lorne Lavine, Jörg Strub, Ron Jackson, Ken Malament and Tom McGarry, evaluate new ideas on a regular basis.

Dentcubator is a virtual entity, which means its members meet by phone, e-mail or through Webinars. Once an idea is submitted through one of the committees, it undergoes a four-week screening process to evaluate its marketing potential. Special emphasis is placed on the ability to re-design a product for emerging markets such as Asia or Latin America.

“By testing each submission for its applicability to emerging market countries, we have the opportunity to offer the products and techniques associated with outstanding oral health care to a broader audience than the typical markets of Western Europe, Japan or the United States,” a Dentcubator representative told ‘today.’

The network provides its services with compensation taken in equity in the ownership of the idea once it has been approved for funding.

The process typically takes up to three months to be completed. Once Dentcubator becomes an equity partner and develops and protects the idea, discussions are initiated with the directors of acquisition or R&D departments of global dental companies.

Dentcubator sees itself as a complement to traditional R&D and as an alternative source for funding, development and access to market resources.

“We are under no circumstances in the business of replacing R&D budgets,” the representative said, “We are the nursery, which takes the small seed of an idea, grows it and then brings it to market.”

Ideas or proposals can be sent to [ideas@dentcubator.com](mailto:ideas@dentcubator.com).

AD

 **straumann**



Don't miss the Dental Tribune Study Club Lecture  
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