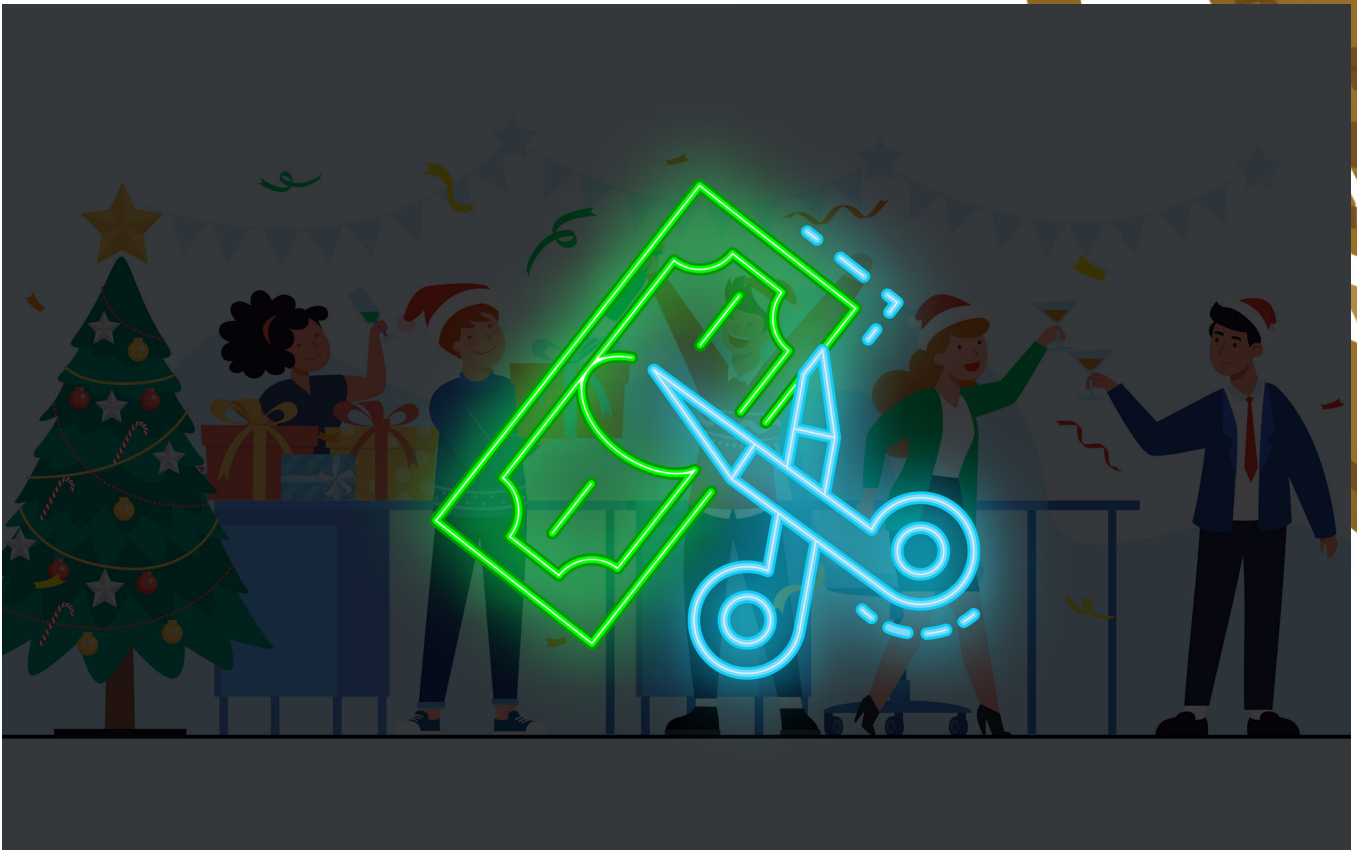


MERRY F#!*ING CHRISTMAS



Ah, corporate dental offices – the gift that keeps on giving. And since it’s the season, let me regale you with a holiday tale grounded in a bit of corporate reality.

Picture it: December 2023. The air is festive, and the mood? Desperate for a little holiday cheer. Inflation’s at a jolly 8%, mortgage rates a charming 7% or more, and every household is squinting at their budget, wondering if Santa will even fit down the chimney this year. In short, it was a Christmas Canada was determined to celebrate in grand style – even if that meant stretching every dollar like a stocking overstuffed with half-price goodies.

Now, while not every Canadian celebrates Christmas, most of the big companies certainly do.

It’s practically a rite of passage: out come the holiday decorations, the lights, and, of course, the much-anticipated annual Christmas dinner with the team. But alas, in 2023, some folks were left standing under a bare sprig of mistletoe with nothing but their disappointment for company.



Yes, I'm talking about those dentists who sold their practices to corporate consolidators – the ones who decided that this year, the Christmas party was a line item better left out of the budget.

Let's do a little math (don't worry, it'll be painless). The average dental office owner splurges about \$2,500 on a holiday lunch or dinner for their team, sometimes even inviting spouses or family. Now, if you're a corporate dental giant with, say, 50 practices, you'd be looking at \$125,000 on holiday cheer. Own 500 practices? That's a cool \$1.25 MILLION in Christmas parties.

But the numbers don't tell the whole story. For independent dental practices, these holiday gatherings are more than just a meal; they're a tradition. They're part of the quirky, heartfelt culture that owners have built with their teams. I have clients who love bringing homemade bread to the office or sharing fresh-baked cookies with patients. One even hires a massage therapist a few times a year, giving each team member a 30-minute escape from the dental grind. These small but meaningful gestures are the glue that binds a team and builds loyalty.

Yet, when a practice sells to a corporate chain, many of these cherished traditions vanish. "Cost control above culture," as one executive once told me, while adjusting his Gucci cufflinks, no doubt. After all, investors need their holiday cheer too!

The thing is, these perks may not be taxable, but they've become part of the job – a sign of respect and appreciation from the owner to the staff. And now, with the former owner still working under the new regime, you can almost see them cringe, knowing their once-close-knit team feels... well, a little less like family.

So, here's to the holidays, corporate style. May your Christmas be merry, and may your dental practice stay out of the hands of cost-cutting conglomerates.

Apologies to those in the ivory towers who try to keep the culture alive. But please be honest, for whom do you work?

Merry F#!*ING Christmas.

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