

2026 PREDICTIONS: WHY WAIT?



Why wait until end of the year to talk predictions? Let's get straight to it.

1. Spotlight on the Dental Service Organizations (DSOs)

You already know the “Big Two,” and there are at least 20 others who classify themselves as DSOs, with location counts ranging from about 75 down to 3.

Soon, I will be publishing a geographic breakdown showing the total number of dental offices across Canada, by province, along with how many belong to DSOs in each region.

But here's the real headline:

A major, public-facing new patient campaign is coming.

It's time for DSOs to come out of hiding and let the public know who they are. They need lots of new patients and a full blown, “You can trust us” PR campaign style.

But there's risk.

If they openly admit patients are part of a larger corporate “system,” the response could go either way. For patients who thought they were visiting a local, independent clinic, that kind of transparency may backfire. I predict many will walk, straight into the arms of an independent provider.

2. The Branding Dilemma

Branding hundreds of offices under one standardized look and logo isn't cheap. Who will pay for this? So far, most DSOs have kept the original dentist's name and branding, and for good reason: to retain patients.



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Most patients don't even realize they're going to a corporate owned office unless someone tells them.

That's why I'm predicting at least one of the Big Two will launch a splashy rebrand. Expect slogans like:

"We're here for you."

"Let us brighten your smile."

...designed, of course, by a high-end branding consultancy.

Think **Jaguar**, the re-brand, not the car.

3. A Power Move on the Horizon?

I am also predicting a bold move:

One of the big players will actively try to erode public and professional confidence in the other, setting the stage for a takeover at a steep discount.

I am not calling for outright arbitrage or corporate espionage but expect financial aggression. This will be strategic, calculated, and backed by serious money.

We're talking about **\$2 to \$5 Billion** in enterprise value, potentially I motion.

And yes, your practice's valuation is just a small slice of this much larger game.

Do I have a guess as to who will come out on top? Absolutely.

But I'm keeping that one close to the chest, at least until a few more cards hit the table. And make no mistake, cards will be played very soon.

Here's what I will say:

There will be an aggressive move made by one against the other. Backed by private equity, of course. Possibly even a public offering for one of them.

The mid-tier DSOs (75 locations to 3) are sitting in the wings and watching closely.

Most are basing their valuations on the assumption they'll be acquired in this wave of consolidation. Many are hoping to be swallowed up.

To them, I say: Good luck!

If you weren't already aware, KKR, one of the largest private equity firms in the U.S., holds:

- A significant position in Heartland Dental
- A stake in 123 Dentist
- A 12.5% share in Henry Schein (as of this writing)

I fully expect KKR will look to expand that position. The question is: in which direction?

Some of these moves will be public, especially when tied to listed entities. But for now, it's secret meetings in the boardroom only.

4. Staffing: The Pendulum Swings Back (For Some, Not All)

Independent dental practices will come back into favor among dental staff.



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Why? Because people still want to work for **people**. Not systems, spreadsheets, or faceless ownership. HR data consistently shows that dental staff prefer practices led by an on-site owner-operator, a visible, first-hand leader who is in the trenches with them every day.

As organizations grow, corporate “administrivia” tends to run rampant. It is hard for them not to get bogged down in it.

The truth?

Bureaucracy slowly suffocates the loyal staff working in the trenches every day.

Don't believe me? Call a staff meeting. Watch the enthusiasm pour in.

The absentee-owner model that many large dental group accumulators operate under simply isn't working, for staff or for culture. As a result, we're going to see more team members gravitate back toward independent, owner-operated practices. And that's great news for most of you reading this newsletter, and for the large majority of our clients, who are independent solo owner-operators, maybe with a few part-time associates.

That is the market I serve.

And it is good news for those hiring in 2026.

5. Interest Rates

By late 2025, we'll likely see one more drop to Canadian interest rates. The BoC lowered the key lending rate to 2.5% this week. That's a small stimulus, but nowhere near the scale needed to create the buying frenzy that we witnessed during the early pandemic years.

Still, less interest paid to the bank is a good thing. Take it.

Predictions Ahead

I am putting my predictions out there now rather than waiting for the New Year's article. If you have any suggestions for future topics, please feel free to text me @ 416-520-7420.

Thanks for reading.

PS – if you think AI wrote this... think again.

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