



## Connected Office **»»» DENTAL Success**

### **The Customer**

Thorn Ford Dental Laboratory started as a family-operated specialist denture laboratory with three people. Today Loren Ford owns/manages the day-to-day business operations and also sits on the Washington Dental Laboratory Association Board. The Laboratory was founded by his father, Thorn Ford back in 1977 and has now grown to over 20 employees, ranging from production technicians to drivers to office staff. Thorn Ford is a complete service operation performing all phases of prosthetics, including ceramics, implants, attachment work and some orthodontics. The business is headquartered in Northwestern Washington, specifically in Bothell (North East Seattle area) but regularly sends finished work as far away as Minnesota and Alaska.

Thorn Ford's reliance on information technology (IT) is growing as the traditional dental service industry is starting to modernize. From prescription/inventory tracking, to image scanning, to CAD/CAM design systems and to the digital movement of patient information, their laboratory is becoming more and more intertwined with their computer systems and networks for daily operations.

### **The Situation**

Quite often our customers have come to us when they either wanted to add, replace or supplement an existing 'IT guy' – whether internal or out-sourced. In the case of Thorn Ford Dental however, the Fords have always been pretty handy with technology themselves – even going as far as developing their own proprietary industry-specific software in-house, trademarking it and selling it to other dental labs in the 1990s. Being so forward-thinking, when Loren was approached by The Utility Company of Puget Sound, he realized this was his opportunity to remain “ahead of the curve”. He could continue to be the owner/'go-to guy' for all his company's technical issues – the person everyone runs to whenever they have a problem, or he could take a proactive stance on information technology usage and concentrate on running his business.

### **The Solution**

The Utility Company visited Thorn Ford and presented Loren with an option to manage all his company's IT needs for a fixed monthly fee. The Connected Office “managed” program wasn't necessarily something Loren had been searching for, but the concept of no longer having to deal with all his daily technology headaches personally was appealing, even if it meant a new fixed expense. Utility put the following package together for Thorn Ford:

- **1-866-My-Utility Live helpdesk** to support end users with secure remote access to their network and desktops for on-demand service and training.
- **Remote monitoring and management** of their network, desktops/laptops, security and data-back-up 24x7.
- **Security & protection** – ongoing anti-virus and patch management service.
- **Online backup and storage** – remote backup of servers, desktops and laptops
- **Asset & lifecycle management** – tracking of all hardware and software assets, including updates, usage and compliance.
- **Onsite Service** – emergency support, onsite maintenance, end-user training as required.

The combination of the 1-866-My-Utility helpdesk and the Utility Service Center's remote monitoring and management platform results in the majority of the lab's support incidents being detected and resolved remotely - no downtime or onsite service call. The use of the helpdesk, especially the ability to watch Utility technicians take remote control over an issue, has been of particular interest to the Fords who enjoy watching and learning for themselves whenever a case is opened.

### **The Result | Customer's Thoughts**

"Lots of labs our size still aren't computerized", stated lab owner Loren Ford, "however we've always been a little advanced when it comes to the use of technology to be more productive. I have a vision for growth for my company, and for where I want it to be. We've opened almost 300 cases in a little over 13 months since signing on with Utility. That's almost 300 problems I haven't had to solve personally. We've finished projects we never got to before like wiring up our security systems so I can have access to them remotely no matter where I am. We've implemented new computer systems and new networks to operate our Computer Aided Design (CAD) system. We've started to backup all our data automatically rather than sporadically (I used to bring a copy home on CD)."

"Thanks to Utility we've also fixed a lot of small annoying issues - like anti-virus software taking up vast amounts of CPU processing power or glitches with our wireless systems and printers. In fact, with our old wireless systems, I used to have to reboot them every day just to keep them working. Now in the past year they've actually only dropped connectivity twice and both times it was due to the cleaner accidentally knocking out the power cord! Even with the recent economic downturn, I still standby my decision to add a fixed monthly expense to have our IT managed for us."

"The dental industry is in flux with new regulations likely on their way dealing with the care and storage of electronic patient health records. We'd like to be on the forefront of that change. As dental offices move to digital x-rays and oral scanning (over traditional impressions) we will be able to move more quickly on our end. Digital prescriptions and secure communications will eventually enable us to stop spending over \$200 a month to securely store patient records and spend half the time we currently do on physical couriering. Overall we want to be ready as dentists modernize their patients' experience. Utility is acting as our virtual CIO, advising us as we prepare for change."

### **Utility's View**

"If you decide to lease a new car, you know it's under warranty for the duration of that lease" said Mark Scott, President of The Utility Company. "You expect the car to 'just work' and to know what your operating costs will be for that vehicle. Thorn Ford Dental liked the idea of 'having nothing to worry about' or of 'just knowing it's going to work'. Becoming a Connected Office Managed customer gives you that peace of mind - our customers have that reassuring feeling of knowing that everything will 'just work' for a flat fee every month."

### **About The Utility Company**

The Utility Company® is a leading provider of virtual IT service and support for small and medium-sized businesses, delivering the required hardware, software and service for a monthly fixed fee per user.

Our Connected Office® service program provides a single point of contact to deliver and manage technology, communications and vertical line of business applications - **95% Remote; 100% Proactive.**

Customers are supported by local Utility Service Providers delivering on-site service and business-technology consulting to reduce spending and increase utilization - our Beyond Managed Services® franchise opportunity is available by prospectus only.

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