



2026 Dentists

Salary Survey Report



Hiring. Wages. Turnover.

Snapshot of the 2025 Dentist

428 dentists contributed to the 2025 Dental Industry Salary Survey, painting the picture of a profession that's mature and established — sometimes to a fault.

For dentists, independence has always been the goal. In 2025, it's also the challenge, framed by the classic tension of every independence story: freedom vs. sustainability.

Most dentists in our survey still own their practices — a badge of professional pride — but that autonomy now comes with aging workforces, rising administrative burdens, and a deepening shortage of successors. While three-quarters of respondents continue to lead as owners or partners, only 3 in 10 are younger than 45, a signal of a shrinking pipeline that threatens practice continuity.

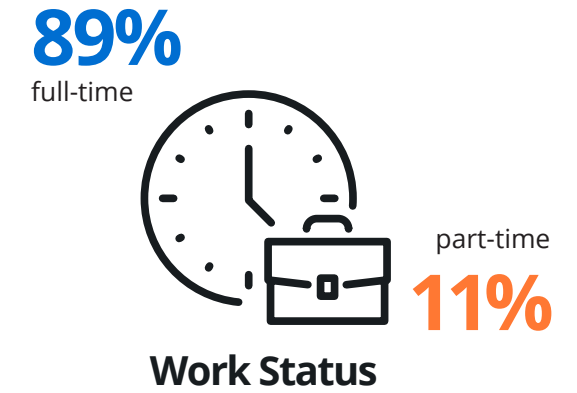
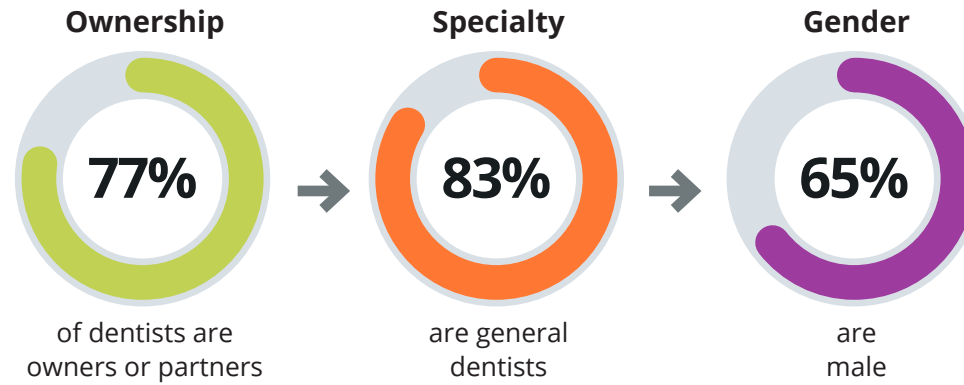
The 2025 survey captures an industry in transition and a profession feeling the weight of rising costs and shrinking teams. The dentists who endure will find strength in balance, support in benefits, and continuity through leadership.

“In our rural area, there has been an efflux of dentists retiring and no new providers, leaving the remaining providers with more and more of the workload, and very few specialists to refer to.”





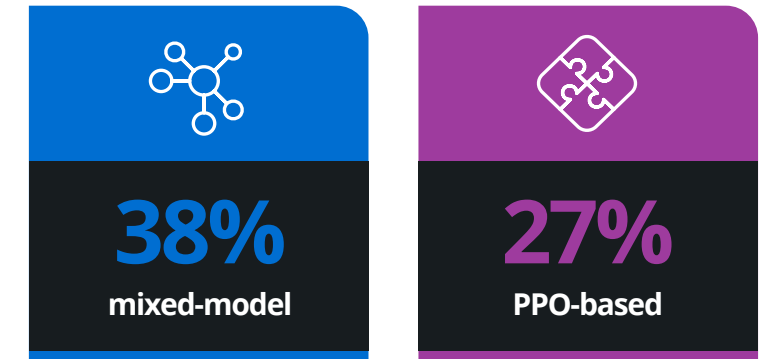
Owner, General Dentist



Practice Type



Organization Financial Structure



What lights dentists up?

“The perks that come with owning a practice: Autonomy, set my own hours, able to set prices, and make my own business decisions.”

Age



Job Change & Satisfaction



Satisfaction

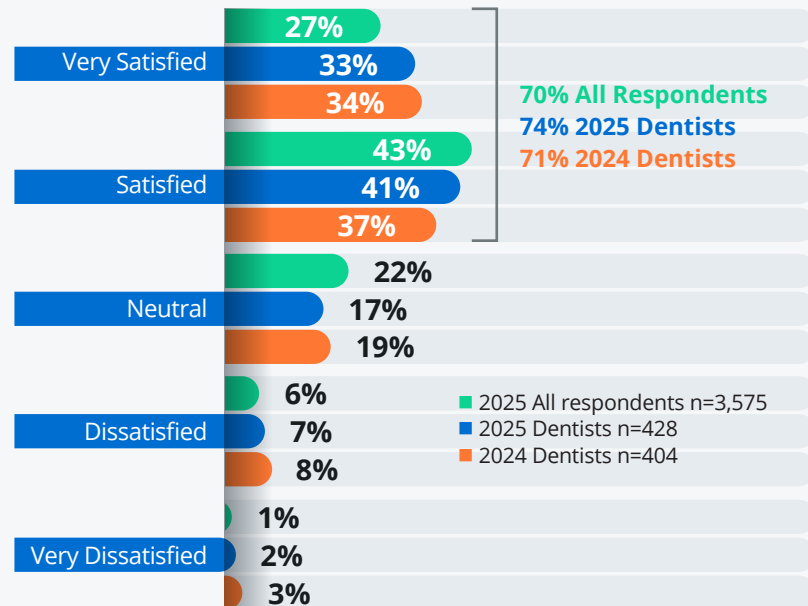
Despite growing pressures, **most dentists still find fulfillment in their work.** Three in four (74%) say they're satisfied in their current role, up three percentage points from 2024 and ahead of the 70% of all 2025 respondents who report at least some job satisfaction. But the definition of happiness is evolving.

Today's dentists are redefining success around flexibility, purpose, and culture — not just compensation.

Satisfaction With Current Job

Nearly three in four responding dentists in 2025 (**74%**) are **satisfied (Very Satisfied + Satisfied)** with their current job. Satisfaction among dentists is slightly higher than last year (71%).

Overall, how satisfied are you with your current job?



Behind the Smile: Top Happiness Indicators

Autonomy = Happiness

Compared to associate and corporate dentists, partners and owners report higher satisfaction and lower burnout.

Purpose is Paramount

Patient care, relationships, and independence remain the core sources of professional satisfaction.

Pressures Are Mounting

Insurance headaches, staffing strain, and burnout top the list of frustrations with new stressors in workload, marketing, and benefit.

Motivations Are Shifting

Of dentists who've changed jobs in the past year, pay mattered less than work environment and location.

Reasons For Changing Jobs

Those who changed jobs in the past year say a better work environment (46%) and a better location (39%) drove their decision.

In the 2024 study, work environment (49%) and higher pay (46%) were the top reasons dentists changed jobs.

Work-Life Balance is Make-or-Break

Traditional perks like medical and retirement coverage are slipping, while flexibility, education, and paid time off are gaining value

Benefits Received

In 2025, responding associate dentists are most likely to say they have retirement (47%), medical (46%), and dental (44%) benefits.

Meaningful differences compared to 2024 include retirement (down 9 pp), medical (down 11 pp), and paid continuing education (up 11 pp).

In addition, significantly more associate dentists say they have no employee benefits in 2025 compared to 2024 (up 14 pp, from 14% last year to 28% in 2025).

Missing Benefits Most Desired

Among associate dentists who have benefits, the most desired benefit that they currently don't have is paid vacation (37%), followed by paid holidays (35%).

Note that in 2024, this was a single-response question; however, paid vacation and paid holidays were the most frequent responses last year too.



What Lights Dentists Up

According to write-in survey responses, dentists are most driven by using their expertise to make a difference in their communities, fostering long-term — even multigenerational — relationships with their patients and teams, and exercising autonomy across core aspects of their practice.

Using Skills To Make A Difference

“I love **changing people’s lives** by improving their smiles, relieving pain, helping them eat their favorite foods.”

“The blend of science, interpersonal relationships and art. I personally love doing fillings. **I feel a great deal of satisfaction with a job well done** when completing these treatments.”

Cultivating Long-Term Relationships

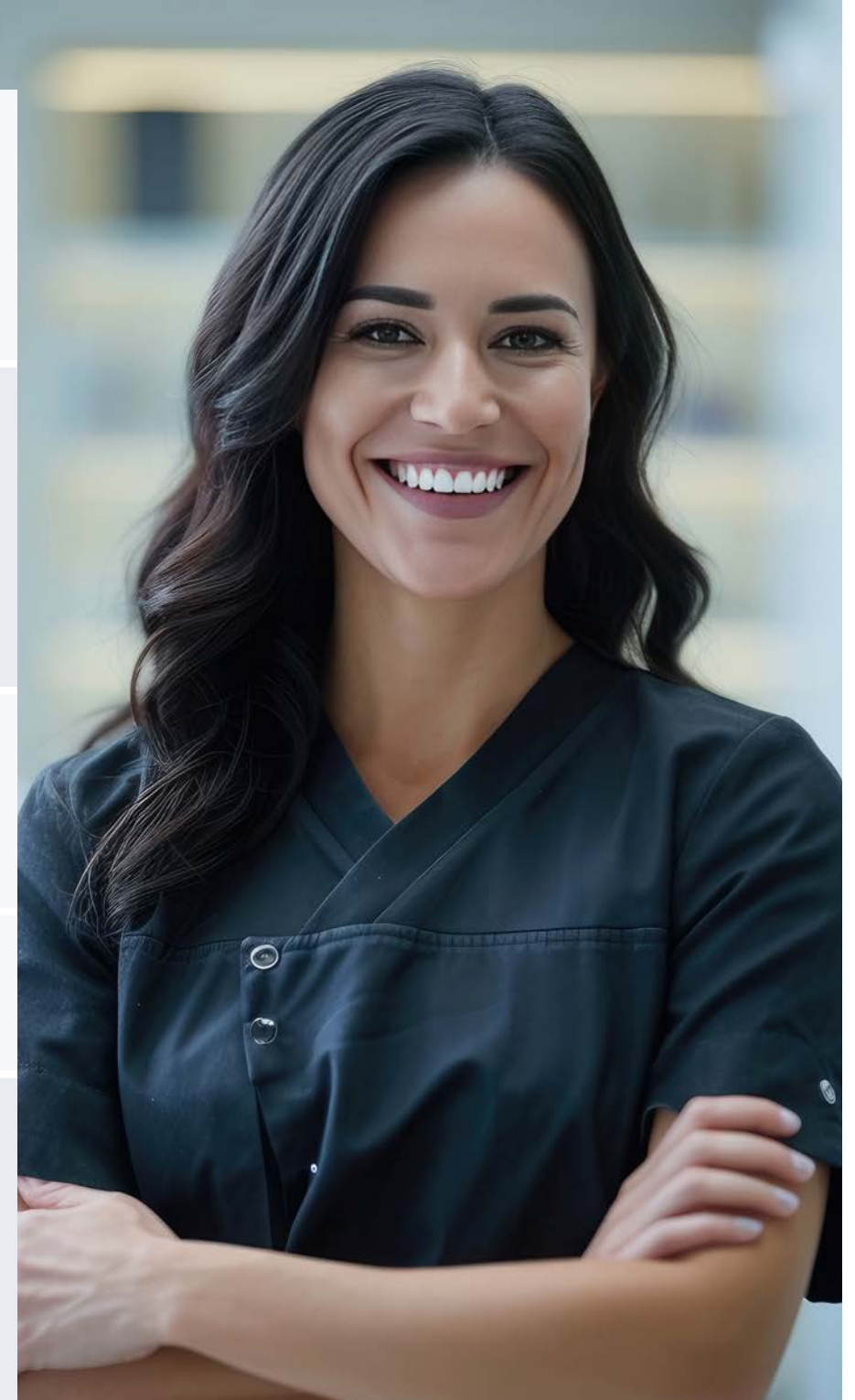
“**Surrounding myself with kind, supportive people** that I can spend my days with, doing what’s right for patients, growing my skill set in a way that’s fun and personally fulfilling.”

“My team is the best. **We all work together as a unit.** I also like the long-time patients that I have seen as kids, and I am now treating their kids.”

Exercising Autonomy And Independence

“The **perks that come with owning a practice:** Autonomy, set my own hours, able to set prices, and make my own business decisions.”

“Clinical autonomy, breadth of procedures. **4-day work week.**”





What Wears Dentists Down



Dentists are feeling the pinch when it comes to insurance and compensation. The rigorous physical, mental, and emotional demands of the job are also a drain, especially when coupled with poor leadership, inadequate staffing, or interpersonal conflict.

Insurance Issues

“Insurance paying pennies on the dollar for **difficult work.**”

“**Difficulty balancing team wage expectations** with little to no increase in insurance reimbursement rates and inflationary cost of doing business.”

Staffing, HR, And Leadership Headaches

“Our **office feels disorganized and chaotic** without defined roles and a lot of inefficiency, meaning I don’t think it can be turned around easily.”

“Seeking partnership; **would like to be more than associate.**”

Stress And Burnout

“Poor reimbursement from PPOs; **poor (revolving door) management and lack of support/direction** from dentist owner (previous corporate management); hard on me physically, back and neck pain as well.”

“**5-day-a-week schedule.** Push for continuous increased production without truly being incentivized or compensated for efforts.”

Compensation Pressure

“Lack of **transparency and equity** in compensation structure.”

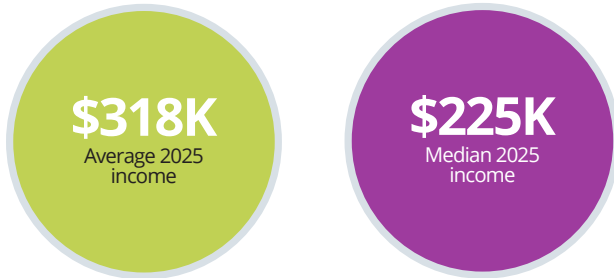
“Lack of complete control over decisions, **not earning what a private practice owner would earn.**”

Quotes have been lightly edited for length and clarity.

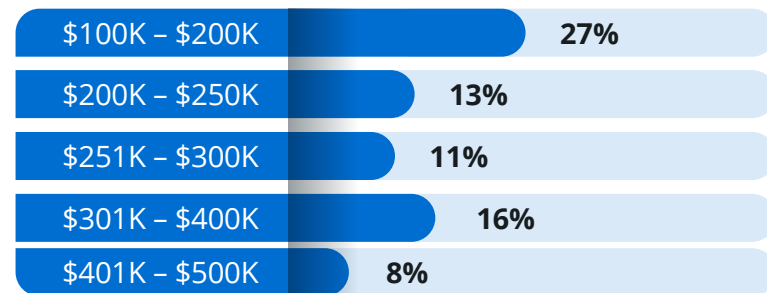
Compensation

Compensation trends are a mixed bag for dentists this year. Compared to 2024, **average income rose 10% to \$318K, while median income dropped 6% to \$225K.** The largest share of dentists (27%) is making \$100K–\$200K.

2025 Employment Income Estimate



Income Distribution



Last Pay Raise

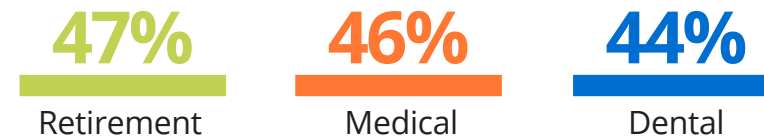
Nearly half of dentists (44%) saw a raise in the past two years. That’s an improvement from last year, up six percentage points, but it still trails the 69% of all respondents who saw salary growth in the same period. Perhaps more noteworthy, 32% of dentists have never received a raise, compared to just 10% of the overall respondent pool.



For leaders, such pay stagnation can be compounded by operational costs and economic pressures. One respondent described the difficulty of “balancing team wage expectations with little to no increase in insurance reimbursement rates and inflationary cost of doing business.”

Benefits Received

When it comes to benefits, retirement and medical remain the most common, but the share of dentists — especially associates — who receive them is greatly diminished.

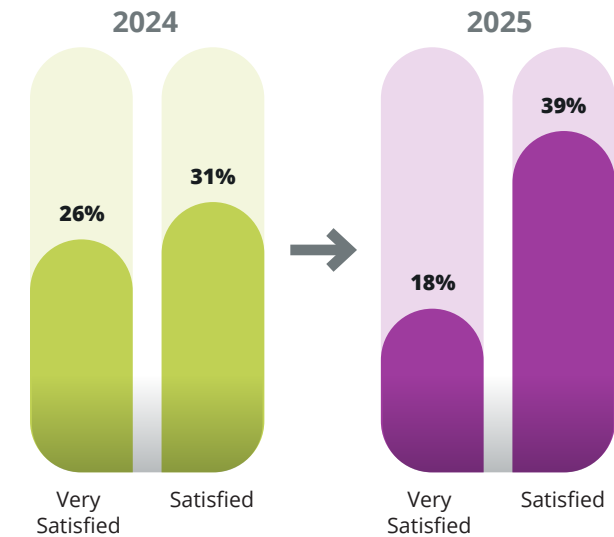


Meaningful differences compared to 2024 include retirement (down 9 pp), medical (down 11 pp), and paid continuing education (up 11 pp).

Satisfaction With Total Compensation

Like last year, 57% of dentists are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their total compensation. The most satisfied group however, has shrunk slightly (two percentage points), signaling evolving expectations and potential friction over uneven pay growth.

57% | Year over year, dentists are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their total compensation.



Despite some troubling slippage around benefits, the compensation outlook is still relatively sunny. As the definition of “reward” changes, so do the levers that leaders can pull to keep their teams happy. Paid time off, for example, now outranks higher pay as the most desired benefit among dentists who don’t have it. And culture — not comp — is the top reason a dentist job hopped in the past year.

There’s also been a noticeable uptick in practices offering paid continuing education, which is crucial to attracting and retaining young and star talent who will ultimately buoy the aging profession. As DentalPost reported in May, “Dental offices that are proactive in helping new hires feel welcome and capable stand a far better chance of long-term retention.”

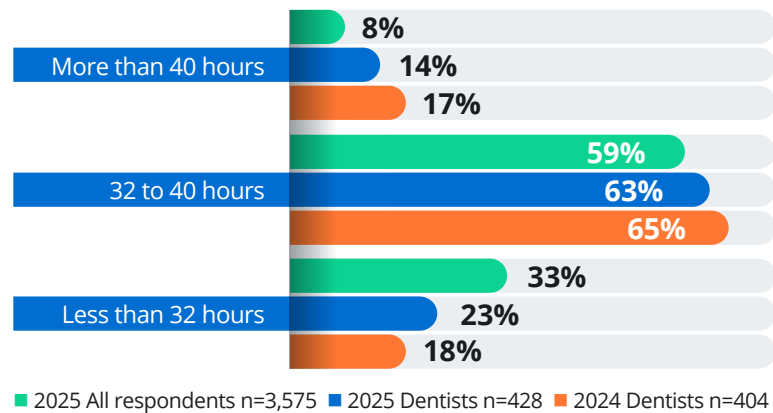
Emerging Trends

Though stability defines much of the dental field, subtle shifts are reshaping its future. The profession's next chapter hinges on how dentists respond to evolving expectations around workload, benefits, and succession planning.

The Four-Day Future

Nearly a quarter of dentists (23%) work fewer than 32 hours in the average week — five full percentage points more than last year. Additionally, the vast majority (71%) work fewer than five days a week (compared to 68% last year). The pursuit of flexibility marks a cultural pivot toward sustainability and well-being over sheer productivity.

Average Number of Hours Worked Weekly



Average Days Worked Weekly

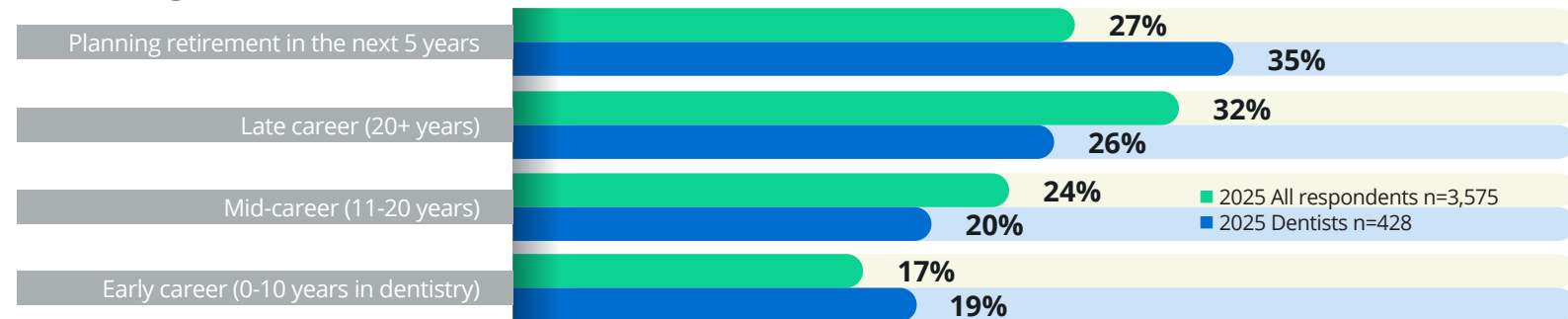
56%

More than half of responding dentists (56%) say they work an average of **4 days a week** in 2025, in line with 2024 (55%).

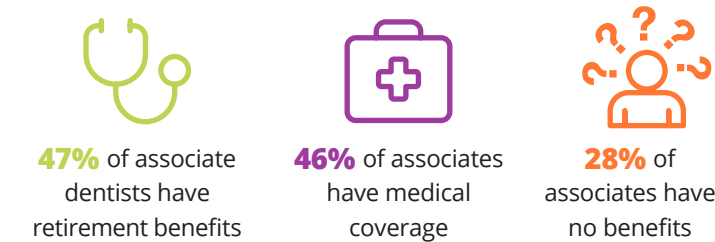
Problems Passing The Torch

Established dentists are nearing the end of their career faster than new dentists are joining the profession: More than a third of responding dentists (35%) say they plan to retire in the next five years; less than a fifth (19%) are in their first decade on the job. This disparity makes way for long-term continuity risks and succession-plan gaps.

Career Stage



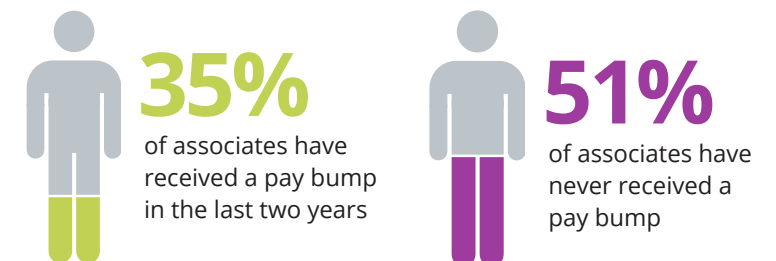
Associate Benefits in Doubt



Compensation packages are weakening for associates, putting the profession's next generation at greater risk for attrition and succession plans on ice. Fewer than half (47%) of associate dentists have retirement benefits (a 9 percentage-point decrease from 2024), and only 46% have medical coverage (an 11 percentage-point drop), while the share of associates who have no benefits has soared to 28% (from 14% last year).

Next Gen Under Pay Pressure

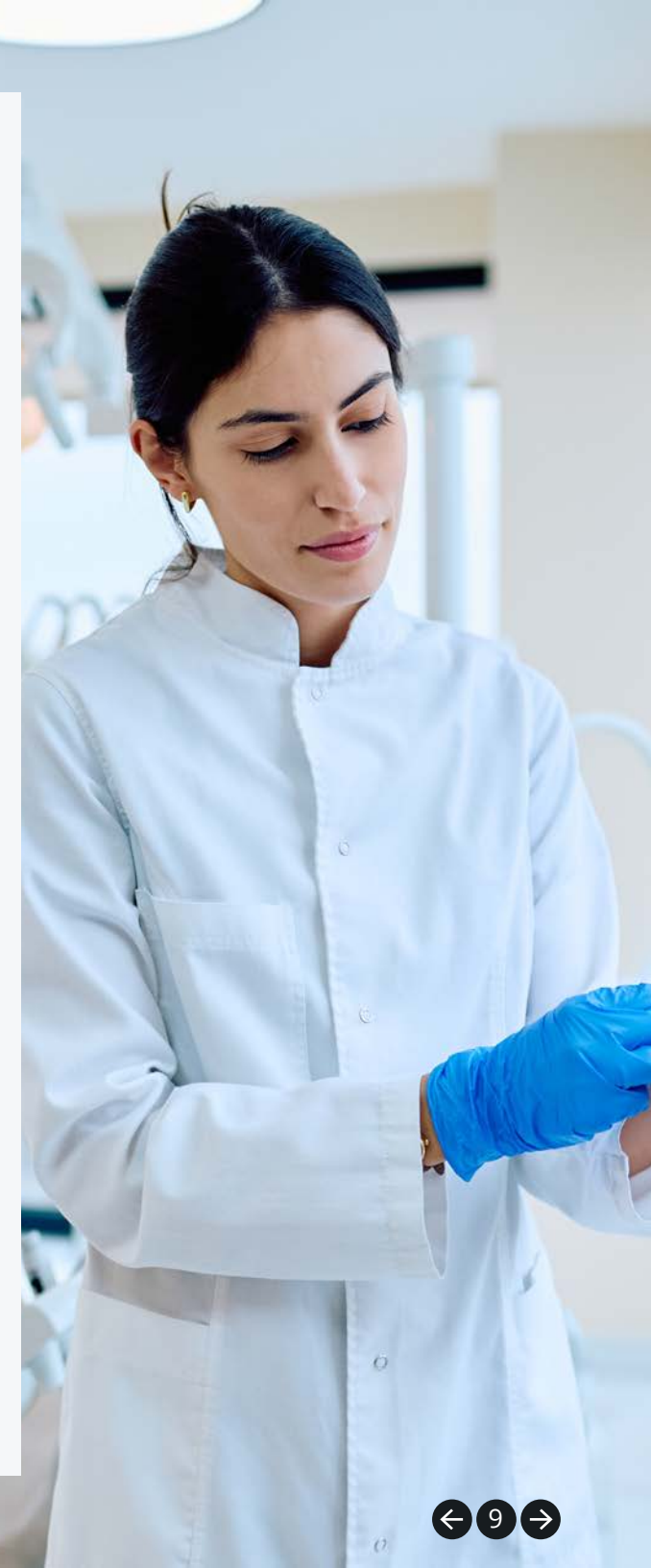
Associates are also far less likely than their leadership counterparts to have seen a raise recently — or ever — **and far likelier to report being unhappy with their overall compensation.** Just 35% of associates have received a pay bump in the past two years, compared to 47% of owners and partners; more than half (51%) of associates have never gotten a raise, compared to 27% of their counterparts.



Decoding The Data: Mapping Opportunities For Dentists

Each focus area highlights key data, the signal it sends, and the opportunity it presents for modern practices.

| Focus area | Key findings | Signal | Opportunity |
|---|--|--|--|
| Ownership & practice structure | <p>77% of dentists are owners or partners</p> <p>23% are associates</p> <p>83% are in private practice</p> <p>10% in corporate practice</p> <p>83% are general dentists</p> | <p>Ownership remains high, but business management and administrative duties are concentrated among a small pool of owner-operators. The private practice model is strong but inflexible.</p> | <p>Build scalable operations and shared administrative systems to alleviate owner strain and support sustainable growth without compromising autonomy.</p> |
| Employment patterns | <p>89% of dentists work full-time</p> <p>11% work part-time, up 3pp from 2024</p> <p>11% changed jobs in the past 12 months</p> <p>83% are not seeking new roles</p> | <p>Professional stability is high, but the small rise in part-time work and steady job satisfaction suggests at least some dentists are seeking more balance.</p> | <p>Expand flexibility and workload management through practice support, staffing adjustments, and integrated scheduling systems that prevent burnout while maintaining productivity.</p> |
| Marketing & growth among owners and partners | <p>Marketing spend is 2.7% of annual revenue (up from 2.1% in 2024)</p> <p>60% of dentists spend less than 2%</p> <p>27% use both internal and external marketing teams</p> <p>21% have a dedicated marketing manager</p> <p>46% are satisfied with new patient acquisition</p> <p>40% believe they could do more marketing</p> <p>Collections are up, but growth satisfaction dropped 11pp YOY</p> | <p>Marketing confidence is improving, and revenue performance is rising, but dentists aren't feeling satisfied with their growth. Most private practices acknowledge opportunity but lack the structure, data, and leadership to capitalize on it.</p> | <p>Clarify growth metrics so financials and emotional confidence align. Invest in formal marketing leadership, digital strategy, and analytics-driven systems that translate awareness into measurable patient growth.</p> |



| Focus area | Key findings | Signal | Opportunity |
|---|--|--|---|
| Benefits & compensation | <p>Common benefits include paid holidays, insurance, vacation, retirement plans, and CE allowances</p> <p>Only 25% of dentists report having all the benefits they want</p> <p>Compared to their workplace counterparts, associate dentists are more likely to cite PTO and paid continuing education as missing benefits</p> | <p>Benefits are uneven for associates. While they remain largely content with compensation, that satisfaction doesn't offset limited benefit range or growth incentives.</p> | <p>Expand benefit offerings with flexible and competitive models, including CE stipends, profit-sharing, and retirement matching to attract and retain high-quality associates.</p> |
| Work environment & culture | <p>11% of dentists changed jobs in the last 12 months</p> <p>80% said the change helped achieve their goals</p> <p>46% switched for better work environment</p> <p>39% for better location</p> <p>28% for higher pay</p> <p>83% are not seeking new employment</p> | <p>Dentists report high overall satisfaction, and when it comes to retention, culture and team dynamics are more influential than compensation.</p> | <p>Strengthen leadership development, team communication, and recognition programs to reinforce a positive culture and maintain engagement across practice teams.</p> |
| Succession & future planning | <p>Mentions of retirement, practice sale, and ownership transition are increasing among respondents</p> <p>Few report formal transition or mentorship plans</p> <p>35% say they plan to retire in the next five years</p> <p>19% describe their career stage as early (0-10 years in dentistry)</p> | <p>Aging owners and informal transition processes pose long-term continuity risks for private practices.</p> | <p>Implement structured succession planning, including mentorship, valuation support, and associate leadership pathways to ensure practice longevity.</p> |





Key Takeaways For Dentists



Owners Are Stuck In A Growth Paradox

Marketing confidence and revenue performance are improving but still not where they need to be for many private practice leaders, who see opportunity but lack structure, data, and leadership to capitalize on it.



Benefits Lose Their Luster

Fewer than half of associate dentists report receiving retirement (47%) or medical benefits (46%), both down from 2024 rates. The share with no benefits has soared to 28% (from 14% last year), widening the support gap within the profession.

Success Hinges On Sustainability More Than Scale

Overall satisfaction increased to 74% (+3pp) but emerging trends point to a profession balancing productivity with well-being, flexibility, and long-term sustainability.



Flexibility Emerges As The New Currency

Full-time work remains dominant (89%), but part-time participation rose to 11%, a 3 pp increase year over year. Paid time off now ranks above higher pay as the most desired missing benefit.



Culture — Not Comp — Is The Biggest Retention Boon

Among dentists who changed jobs in the past year, 46% cited workplace environment as the primary factor, outpacing both location (39%) and compensation (28%).

Private Practice Is Bugged Down By Admin And Ops

Ownership remains steady at 77%, but administrative, staffing, and insurance burdens continue to rise, intensifying pressure on the owner-operator model.



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