

British inspiration that's simplicity itself

Dental Tribune talks to the inventor of the KwickScreen, Michael Korn



Kwick screen with floral print

As CQC regulations start shaping dental practices across the country and decontamination rooms and various spaces are required in a range of medical environments, an innovative product – titled the KwickScreen – has sent a buzz through medical sphere as it claims to fulfil these needs. Already it has generated a buzz of interest from dental suppliers, and with its colourful and unique design, the

KwickScreen looks set to stay. Michael Korn, the brains behind the idea, came up with the product whilst studying industrial design and engineering at the Royal College of Arts. During several visits to hospitals throughout his course, Michael noticed the lack of space that was available for isolating infected patients; there were also problems arising with single sex accommodation and a lack of side rooms to help curb the

spread of infection. But most of all there was a general need for dignity and privacy in the hospital environment. To help fix the problem that so many hospitals were experiencing, Michael set about inventing a portable, retractable room divider that was flexible, easy to clean and could divide a room efficiently and easily, eliminating the need for a side room.

“The idea was to divide

a room up effectively without using a wall or a divider because the need for space changes all the time; so the product needed to be flexible, portable and easy to use.

“I played around with various items, such as bending tape measures back and forth, and was eventually inspired by the movement of a frog’s tongue; flicking out and retracting. The design was based on this inspiration.

“So I went looking for a suitable material to use and I came across a British invention called RolaTube. The material, which is invented and manufactured by RolaTube Technology, is a portable, lightweight material that remains rigid over long distances. We knew it had to be good because it had been used in space on satellites! We then found a manufacturer based in Corby, and with them we’ve developed the current product.”

With the material and manufacturer located, the KwickScreen could start taking shape into a fully portable and retractable partition. The final product has screens that are two metres high and can be pulled out to anything up to 3.5m wide; in effect Michael has created a flexible yet physical barrier that can be stationed between patients whilst in hospitals, decreasing the rates of cross-touching between neighbouring bed-spaces which causes cross-infection.

“When it’s retracted back in on itself it’s just a tiny column that can be stored in a storeroom or can be put to the wall.” Michael added.

Although the KwickScreen was initially designed to increase each hospital’s capacity to treat infected patients and create areas of space for privacy, it was soon noted that there was another market in which the screen had a place.

“We started selling the KwickScreen to hospitals and then after a talk at the Royal Society of Medicine dentists started getting in touch. Most of them had space issues in the practice; they wanted to have private areas or they needed sterilisation rooms and from selling to hospitals we’ve now started selling to dentists. We’ve stumbled on a

brilliant market!”

Dentist Andrew Bain, whose enthusiasm is helping create interest from other dental professionals, spoke to *Dental Tribune* about the way in which he is seeing the KwickScreen being integrated in the dental practice.

“We’ve only just started using it in dentistry but already we’ve got a dentist down in Brighton who, after having issues with building compliance, is using the screen to create a separate decontamination area. He’s got a Grade I listed regency house that has very restrictive building regulations, so the KwickScreen is a nice compromise in creating a ‘separate’ decontamination room. It not only brightens up the room with its cherry blossom design, but it hides away all the autoclaves and disinfectors!”

“Although he’s not going to reach best standards with CQC (because he can’t get a separate room), he has received some very positive feedback. And even though he is still waiting for a full inspection, they understand the building restrictions with which he is faced. Fortunately, there is a paragraph in the HTM 01-05 document which states that, if people cannot meet this best standard, then it will be understood. From the conversations they’ve been having, it seems like a good way of moving towards best practice.

“Of course, not every practice is going to want one as it won’t be suitable in every practice, but there are quite a lot of practices out there that will find it very useful. Some people have brought it for one purpose and have ended up using it for something else, like they’ve had an unsightly repair that they wanted to screen off. However, I think the three main reasons for having one are:

- Practices that are struggling with CQC regulations
- For orthodontic practices
- Sedations practices for recovery areas.

“It’s very flexible – you can screen off areas at right angles, double back on themselves and you can split a

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Kwick screen bent

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room in two providing a space for recovery patients and normal patients. These are the main areas where I see it being used and – in the right practices – it will have a good use in dentistry.”

Apart from the contamination and space boxes that the KwickScreen ticks, the



Kwick screen in dentistry

innovative screen had another purpose, as Michael explained: “A screen can have pictures printed onto it, which is making them ever more popular. For example, the environment of the dentist’s treatment room is one where the look and feel of the place is important because there are patients that are fully awake and alert. Also how the waiting room looks like is important. With the KwickScreen you can have something printed on the screen that is calming and is easy to change so you don’t have to stick with the one design.

“We’re actually running a competition at the moment, which is based in the Royal College of Arts, where we’re asking people to design pictures to be printed on the screens. There’s also an external competition where people can submit their design and we print them. The competition should lead to some quite interesting ideas!”

As Michael explains, since its inception onto the medical market, the KwickScreen and its inventor have won several awards, both in the UK and internationally. To begin with, Michael was the UK winner of the UK Dyson award, and was also runner up for its international award.

“To be the UK winner is amazing, it’s prestigious. I’m really delighted, it was tough competition and as far as companies and people to be asso-



Kwick screen

ciated with and to be endorsed by, I don’t think I can get any better than James Dyson. He’s exactly what we’re about.”

If there are any dentists that are budding artists or photographers who wish to enter their pictures visit www.kwickscreen.com and click on the art tab.

KwickScreen has recently undergone trials in the University College Hospital and the National Hospital for Neurology and Neuroscience in London, and has received very favourable feedback on both a microbiological and user level. [\[1\]](#)

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