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The added value provided to patients through Phase 1 orthodontic treatment with Invisalign® First Aligners and Invisalign™ Stickables

An interview with Dr. David Boschken and Nicole Pruitt

Align® Technology Inc. has recently introduced Invisalign Stickables – a fun accessory intended to decorate the outside of Invisalign aligners that patients can use to express their creativity for an even more personalized and exciting treatment experience, especially for the younger patients who frequently request for an ability to add color to their Invisalign aligners. Invisalign Stickables are available exclusively from Align Technology Inc. in a variety of unique themes.

Invisalign Stickables are made from a water-resistant multi-layer plastic material and biocompatibility tested. The product has been optimized to use only with Invisalign clear aligners that are made from Invisalign SmartTrack® material. Each sticker easily adheres to the outer flat surface of the Invisalign aligner due to its unique and proprietary design (patent pending).

Introduction

Align Technology, Inc. had the opportunity to interview Dr. David Boschken and Nicole Pruitt from Los Altos, CA (www.boschkenorthodontics.com) to gain insights into ways to maximize value of Phase 1 treatment with Invisalign First aligners while keeping the treatment fun and engaging for younger patients with new Invisalign Stickables. We are excited to share with you what they said.

What are your strategies to maximize Phase 1 treatment value to the patient with Invisalign First clear aligners?

In the traditional Phase 1 approach, it always felt like we were doing all the heavy lifting up front, without the patients fully appreciating just how much benefit we were providing by intercepting their problems early. For example, expanding the upper arch skeletally while the sutures are still open, or leveraging the mandibular growth phase – doing these things while the window of opportunity is still available makes a huge difference in terms of how complicated their Phase 2 treatment might be.

At the same time, with the traditional fee structure, Phase 1 treatment used to cost much less than Phase 2. As a result, a lot of our patients not only felt like we were charging them twice for the second phase, but they also felt like we were charging them a higher fee for the part that was less difficult. We were essentially under-valuing the benefits we were providing in Phase 1 based on how we were pricing the different phases of treatment. Add to this the fact that so many families in the Bay Area switch jobs and move away, we weren't always the office that ended up providing the Phase 2 treatment later, because that part of the treatment would be started near where they relocated to instead.

Dr. David R. Boschken

Dr. David Boschken owns two orthodontic offices (Los Altos, CA and San Jose, CA) and graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a double major in Biology and Anthropology. He received his DMD from the University of Pennsylvania Dental School. He completed a Guy's and St. Thomas Hospital Residency in England, and an Orthodontic certification from the University of Pennsylvania Dental School. Dr. Boschken is 98% Invisalign share of chair and has treated over 4,500 Invisalign cases to date. He is also a Propel Orthodontics and Light Force Orthodontics Advisory Board member and KOL.



Nicole Pruitt

Nicole Pruitt is the Director of Operations (COO) of Boschken Orthodontics and is responsible for managing both of Dr. Boschken's offices, team members, and production goals. She comes from a corporate background with over 14 years of experience, making sure that her clients are always well taken care of. She has overseen a 90% close rate on new patients each month and has been integral in creating and implementing Boschken Orthodontics' 100% digital vision set forth 4 years ago. Nicole is an Align Technology, Propel Orthodontics, and Light Force Orthodontics TC faculty.



Once we identified this gap between disproportionalities of fees and the added value of Phase 1 treatment, we shifted our strategy to communicate upfront the value of our Phase 1 plan and how our early treatment sets up the patient for success in Phase 2. At this point, we adjusted our fees based on the added value provided, so our Phase 1 fees are now actually higher than our Phase 2 fees. Additionally, with Invisalign® First aligners there are no injuries or emergency visits due to broken wires or brackets¹, aligners are removable for easy hygiene which makes it easier for younger patients to brush and floss¹, and these are designed for comfort to help prevent poking¹, so all of these benefits really start to add up. Additionally, we are able to get great results using the latest innovations and digital technologies. Looking back, it makes so much more sense to do this than the other way around.

What are some of your key communication strategies to the parents on the Phase 1 value with Invisalign First clear aligners?

You really have to be able to effectively communicate the added value of Phase 1 treatment to the parents, but when you do that well and they get it, they are totally on board. One of the keys to successful communication has been our use of the tools in the ClinCheck® software to communicate the specific measurements of our 3-D digital plans to our parents, and a lot of them (especially the analytical minds) appreciate knowing in detail what we are targeting, rather than just hearing estimates. By using Invisalign First aligners as part of the treatment, parents also know that their child's orthodontic experience can be comfortable from the beginning, which is important so the patient won't get burned out from starting orthodontic treatment early in life.

What are your thoughts on implementing Invisalign™ Stickables in your practice?

One of the things we were excited about introducing to our Phase 1 aligner patients is the Invisalign Stickables product, where kids can decorate their aligners. For us, it's an updated equivalent to being able to choose colored o-rings with bonded brackets. The availability of Invisalign Stickables to decorate their aligners gives the patient the ability to be creative and make their Phase 1 aligner treatment more fun, and we think their additional participation will also lead to better wear compliance and better outcomes. All of this builds value into our Phase 1 treatments, and is part of the key message that intercepting skeletal and dental problems early helps make our Phase 2 treatments less complicated to treat once the patients are older.

How do you envision Invisalign Stickables would provide an added value for your Phase 1 patients treated with Invisalign First clear aligners?

We want our young patients to be excited about their orthodontic treatment and actively involved. One way to do this in the past was to offer our patients colored o-ring options for their brackets, but we have never routinely used colored elastic ties due to our exclusive use of self-ligating brackets. Kids still come in asking for "colors" with their braces – although less these days – so we do find ourselves needing to cater to this group from time to time during the initial consults, even with 98% Invisalign share of chair today.

Despite the "invisible" advantage of Invisalign treatment, many of our growing patients still want their friends to see them having something cool and different. As the Invisalign Stickables come in a variety of themes including

some limited editions, there are many more options for the kids to express themselves than just with colors. Having a fun but still a discreet way to display graphics and logos with different themes on their aligners increases the customization factor of their Invisalign First treatment and gives the kids something unique to talk about and share with their friends on social media.

How do you plan to leverage Invisalign Stickables to boost your Invisalign First treatment case starts?

Our office is known as a fun office with our patients, since we routinely celebrate whenever treatments start and end. Coupled with exciting contests year-round, the ability to add decorative stickers on Invisalign First aligners would offer yet another reason to select Invisalign treatment over traditional methods and get treated in our office. Our young patients are also very active on social media, so fun ideas such as an aligner sticker-of-the-month campaign to capture our patient enthusiasm and showcase their creativity might be effective at generating positive awareness for Phase 1 treatment at our offices.

What is the role of your team with regards to Phase 1 treatment with aligners?

In addition to the clinical care aspect, we want our team to make people happy! Smile, smile, smile. Not only are we in the business to straighten teeth, but also to deliver exceptional customer service. My team routinely wants to build excitement when delivering our orthodontic products to the patient, and we are effectively creating amazing memories through the digital office experience that we envisioned four years ago. In addition to the initial scans with iTero® scanner, we also provide additional progress scans where we are able to monitor patient's progress, discuss a plan to treatment completion and celebrate success. I still remember my orthodontic office, how I felt, the team experience, and that final day when my braces came off. If our team can do the same thing for all of our patients using the latest innovations, then success in our office as a business will naturally follow.

What would you say to patients or parents who want Phase 1 treatment with traditional braces instead of Invisalign First aligners?

Educating patients and parents is the best way to reduce any concerns. In most cases, parents are concerned that their child might lose an aligner or won't wear them long enough. Because we believe that Invisalign First treatment is usually the best Phase 1 option for the patient, we identify and remove these barriers. For example, we don't charge to replace lost aligners or just have the patient move to the next aligner. If a patient is having trouble remembering to wear them, we will have them come into the office more often so we can discuss what is working and not working. There is always a solution, so we just have to customize the experience. When it comes to aligner wear, what we have found is that our growing patients are actually the most compliant of any age group. This age group of digitally native kids wears their aligners as directed and enjoys the process of being entrusted with some responsibility. The Invisalign Stickables accessory will help patients feel like they have greater ownership of their treatment as well and will engage them even more. If there are any lingering concerns, we also offer a no-fault guarantee that if their child does not finish ideally with Invisalign, we will switch them into fixed braces at no additional charge.

¹ Data on file at Align Technology, Inc., as of April 2018.

Trust is the cornerstone to getting the patient onboard with our treatment plan. Getting our young growing patients onboard with Invisalign® First aligners builds value not just because of the final outcome, but also because of the story of their journey. That story includes things like digital experience with iTero® scanners that's preferred by the patients, time saving for the patient by minimizing the need for multiple appliances during Phase 1 treatment, children can eat whatever they want and maintain good oral hygiene, aligners are designed for comfort. Now by offering something simple like fun and creative stickers, our goal is to generate greater patient confidence and control over their treatment experience. These stories, when told by the patient through social media, help drive greater awareness in the community.

How would you summarize your main message about Phase 1 treatment with Invisalign First clear aligners to your peers in 3 points?

First, rethink the traditional mindset for Phase 1 and Phase 2 treatment, and don't underestimate the value you bring through Phase 1 treatment. So set your fees accordingly. Second, the added value you bring needs to be tangible to the patient and well-communicated to the parents. If they cannot identify or perceive the value you claim to bring, then they will not distinguish the benefit, and they might go elsewhere based only on price. Third, innovations and technologies like clear aligners, digital tools for orthodontics, and even a simple but fun features like Invisalign™ Stickables should all be leveraged as opportunities to tell a story that communicates the added value that you bring.

Thank you Dr. Boschken and Nicole for taking the time to share your experience and vision to implement Invisalign Stickables in your practice.

➤ **For more information, please visit your Invisalign Doctor webstore (store.invisalign.com) or contact your Invisalign sales representative.**

Dr. David Boschken is an independent consultant of Align Technology, Inc. The statements, views, and opinions expressed in this interview are those of the speaker. Align Technology, Inc. may not endorse such statements, views, or opinions. The author was paid an honorarium by Align Technology, Inc. in connection with the white paper.