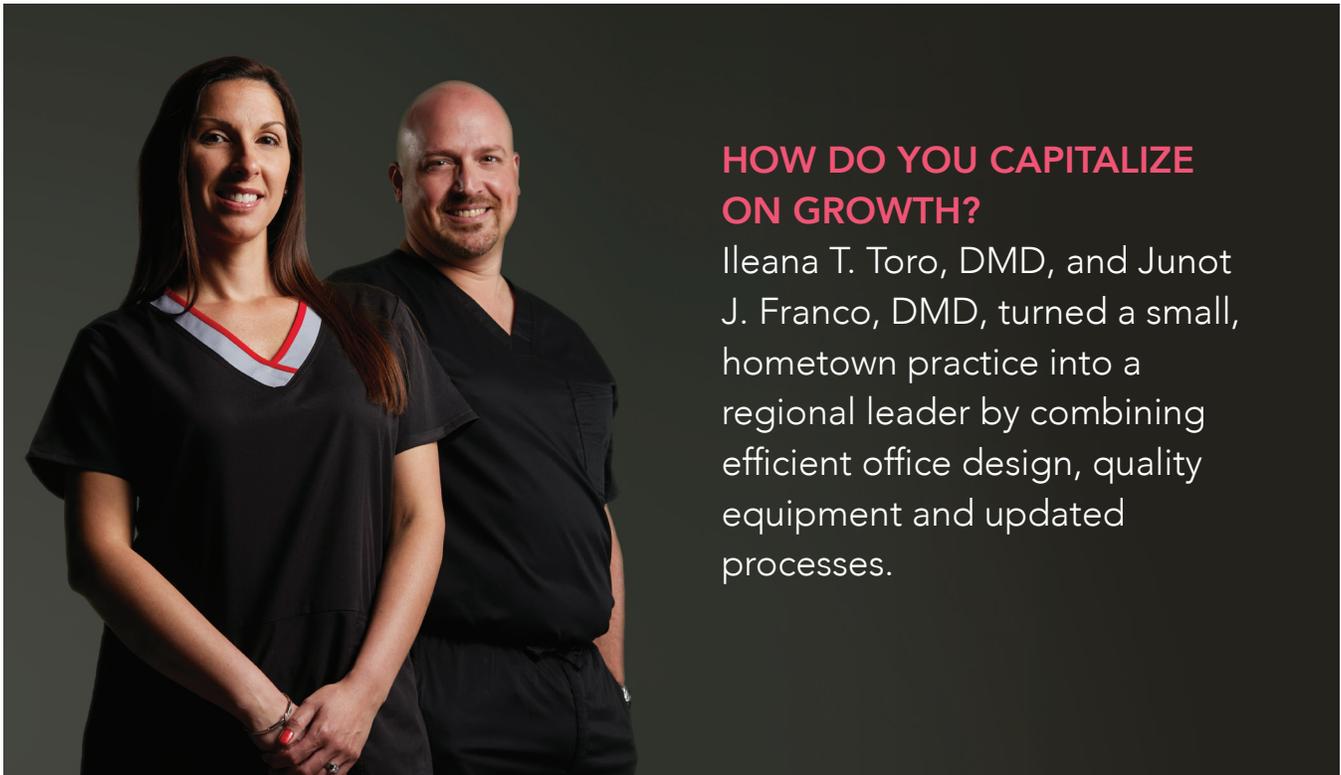


MIDMARK SUCCESS STORY: VILLAGE PARK ADVANCED COSMETIC AND FAMILY DENTAL



HOW DO YOU CAPITALIZE ON GROWTH?

Ileana T. Toro, DMD, and Junot J. Franco, DMD, turned a small, hometown practice into a regional leader by combining efficient office design, quality equipment and updated processes.

Instead of being overwhelmed with their unexpectedly rapid growth, doctors Franco and Toro increased their productivity by about 40% through a new, state-of-the-art facility. The meticulously designed space not only allows them to handle their current patient load, but fully equips them for even more.

SETTING DESIGN GOALS

In order to design the perfect space, doctors Franco and Toro first had to determine what that space needed to accomplish.

Patient comfort was their top priority. But the doctors realized that it takes more than comfortable chairs and high-end décor to give a patient true peace of mind. Patients must also be confident that every instrument and piece of equipment used is sanitary and safe. So, they carefully considered the impact of everything from upholstery and finishes to the placement of the sterilization room and the sterilizing process itself.

THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS, THEY WEIGHED EVERY DECISION AGAINST THREE KEY QUESTIONS:

- How do we want our patients to feel in the office?
- What do we want to be able to do in the office?
- What do we want the office to look like?

Starting with a goal of complete transparency, they decided that their design would raise the curtain on two parts of the dental office most patients had probably never seen before. Dr. Franco explains, "We needed a lab that makes people who see it say, 'Wow!' And we needed a sterilizing room that we could put a window in and be proud to show to patients. It was all delivered."

Recognizing the importance of furniture and décor for patient comfort, they also set very specific aesthetic goals. "When we built this office, we wanted to make it look and feel like a high-end home, not like a cookie-cutter boxy office," recounts Dr. Toro. "So, we made sure we picked out fancy trim and different types of countertops."

To make that process easier, they relied on their Midmark representative to walk them through the options and made an in-person visit to the Midmark design showroom. Having so many high-end options available and laid out in front of them was a big help. Dr. Toro remembers, "When we walked into the Midmark showroom, we just looked at each other and said, 'That's it! That's how we want it to look.'"

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Efficient workflow was another top priority. They considered how patients would move through the office and what the staff would need to work effectively. Their solution included designing custom cabinetry that would fit all their equipment.



"We were able to say, 'I want a big drawer here and a little drawer there; I want a notch here; I want one cabinet here with this many shelves,'" says Dr. Toro. "Midmark was able to design a lot of things to fit exactly what we wanted and how we wanted it to work for us so we wouldn't have to work around it."

PRIORITIZING SAFETY

The decision to design their entire office with safety quite literally at the center has been game changing. They put a window in their sterilizing room and placed it in a prominent, central area that every patient walks by on their way to be seated for a procedure.

The move prompted a lot of people to question why the doctors would want patients looking at their dirty tools and the equipment that's usually hidden away in back rooms or closets. Dr. Toro explains, "We want them to see how we're cleaning the instruments. We want them to know, when somebody hears about a Hepatitis C outbreak at a dentist's office, it's not going to happen here."

Patients can hear the machines opening and the autoclaves buzzing. They can see the whole sterilizing room, and it has opened a dialogue about how the practice creates a sterile environment. It shows patients that the practice has nothing to hide when it comes to safety.

"I think safety is a great marketing tool," says Dr. Toro. "When you explain to one patient what you are doing with the instruments and how you're cleaning them and what the machines are for, they may go back home and say to somebody else, 'You're not going to believe what I saw at the dentist's office!' The other person may say, 'My dentist doesn't do that. I'm going to your dentist!' There's no better marketing than word-of-mouth."

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IMPROVING WORKFLOW

Bottlenecks in the sterilization process played a large part in limiting potential growth at their original office. The room was too small, staff members were running into each other trying to run the equipment, and there simply wasn't enough space to handle the volume. It bogged everything down and prevented them from doing many procedures. Fixing the workflow around sterilization was one thing they knew they had to get right in the new office.

Using operating rooms as their example, they placed their sterilization room right in the middle of everything with one way in and one way out for constant flow. They filled the room with equipment that could accommodate the number of instruments they need to use every day.

"When we saw the steri-center at Midmark, we were very excited because it was exactly what we wanted," explains Dr. Franco. "We've got the M3, which can get things out quick, and M11s in there too. So, we're running two big machines that can handle a lot of equipment." They no longer have to wait on tools to complete procedures, opening the door for exponential growth.

It was important that the staff have a say in the design decisions that impacted the way they do their jobs every day. According to Dr. Toro, "When we went to Midmark, we took two of our staff members with us because, ultimately, they're the ones working in it, right? They're the ones who open the drawers, pull stuff out, organize everything; so, we took their input to make sure it was going to be good for everybody."

In order to achieve the best workflow and productivity, Dr. Franco cautions against something he calls a "Frankenstein" operatory approach. "Piecing together equipment from different sources just does not work the same as having everything designed by one company."

"What many dentists don't understand is that, although everything has standards in the industry as far as ergonomics go, every company has

everything works together. Everything has a purpose in the sense that it was all created by the same group of engineers. You know your chair reclines this way because your operator stool can move this way, or you can bring your instrument arm this way because it was designed to work around this chair. Even to the details of how the patient light comes down from the ceiling, it all works so much better."

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RESULTS

Village Park Advanced Cosmetic and Family Dental has seen an increase in productivity of about 40% during the 12–18 months after completing their project. The move to the new office gave them a space precisely designed to meet their needs, updated equipment that is much more efficient, and an overhaul of their sterilization process.

They no longer have to wait for instruments to be ready, so there is no interruption in services. Patients and staff can now be confident that

if a procedure is scheduled, even if it gets more complicated and extra time or procedures are necessary, the equipment will always be ready to complete the procedure that day.

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From the quality furnishings and custom cabinetry to the high capacity equipment, the new facility has positioned the practice for even more rapid growth. Dr. Franco's advice to anyone wondering if it's time to invest in new equipment is this, "It gets to a point where it is so much more expensive to repair a 40-year-old piece of equipment than actually bite the bullet and buy a new one that you know will work." He adds, "Go with quality. Don't try to skimp on quality just because you want to save a few bucks."

Through careful planning and a solid partnership with Midmark, Dr. Franco and Dr. Toro have created a state-of-the-art practice that breaks down barriers while feeling like home and supporting a positive relationship between doctor and patient.

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their own little thing that they do their way," he says. "So, for us, it was huge to be able to pick a whole room that was completely designed by the same company—and especially of the quality of Midmark—so we know that

