Are you extraordinary?
Changing your way of thinking and challenging negative perceptions is the key to development, says Glenys Bridges

Dental care professionals who invest time and energy into their professional development will be aware that a culture change in respect of professional standards is sweeping through dentistry. This year is set to be a watershed year when those dental organisations that truly embrace this culture change will become clearly distinguishable from those that do not.

Irrespective of size, from the single clinician practice to huge dental organisations, the qualities that dental care professionals are required to develop and maintain are identical. Although in some cases, the similarities will end there. While some organisations cultivate team members’ enthusiasm to provide the best possible standards of care, others stifle that enthusiasm.

Changing your thoughts
When individuals first begin to plan and implement their professional development programme, they inevitably begin to challenge their old ways of thinking. If such challenges are perceived negatively by the organisations as ‘rocking the boat’, why in the modern world would anyone want to work for an organisation that thinks that way? Instead, having seen the possibility of new horizons for dental care professionals, the brightest and best will levitate toward the organisations that welcome challenges and support initiatives to transform their people from being ordinary to being extraordinary.

Moving on swiftly
Those of us working in stifling organisations will soon become dissatisfied and look to relocate to somewhere better able to meet our development needs. Unless you have previously worked in an innovative organisation, you might not know what to look for in your career move, to prevent yourself jumping from one problem scenario to another. Here are some pointers to enable you to assess how deeply seated the organisation’s culture is in respect of individual’s growth and development.

1. Successful organisations are all about relationships. A recent survey found that trust between colleagues is a powerful innovator; and that trust is built most effectively when colleagues have opportunities to build working relationships with as many people as possible in the organisation, rather than working in small exclusive circles, which tend to become internally competitive with other small circles. Look for a workplace in which broad workplace interactions are actively encouraged.

2. Build-up networks with other practices and organisations. As dental professionals increasingly mix with fellow professionals

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