

Starting Up, All Over Again Right Decision for Industry Veteran

By Kim Molinaro, Managing Editor

When an acquisition went sour, Greg Sederlin jumped ship to form a start-up lab with his partner, growing it from two to 11 people in just one year.

After nearly 40 years in the industry—28 of them as a laboratory owner—Greg Sederlin, CDT, FICOI, MAAIP, never dreamed he'd be starting a new laboratory from scratch at age 60.

In 2013, he sold his laboratory, Cal Ceram—an 11-person, full service operation in Lake Balboa, CA—to a private equity group with a portfolio of labs. “Since my children weren’t interested in the business, I chose to sell and was excited to stay on at one of the labs to run the implant and removables division until I was ready to retire,” says Sederlin.

However, five years later, Sederlin wasn’t happy with the relationship and made the decision to leave—but with two college-age boys, retirement wasn’t yet an option.

Since his five-year non-compete contract had expired, Sederlin and fellow technician Boris Zukovski, MDT, decided to join forces and, in November 2018, they opened their own full service laboratory: Masters of Dental Aesthetics, or MODA, located in West Hills, CA.

The boutique lab caters to clients who are seeking a higher

level of service and the two make an ideal team: Sederlin’s passion is restoring full-mouth implant cases and working chairside on All-On-Four surgical conversions, while Zukovski specializes in high-end ceramic restorations. “We want to work with a more discriminating type of customer, so we offer concierge-type services, like meeting with the dental team to review cases and offering our proposed treatment plans at no cost, going chairside to help with implant impressions and bite registrations, and helping the doctor select implant parts and components,” says Sederlin.

Being industry veterans, they both had a lot of dentist-contacts to get them started and the lab’s workload has also benefitted from client referrals, clients posting photos of their work on social media, and *Dentistry Today* publishing a case study by Dr. Ross Nash that featured Zukovski’s minimal prep veneers.

The lab is heavily involved in dentist education, a strategy Sederlin used to grow Cal Ceram. For instance, Sederlin is an active participant of nearly 10 groups, including four Spear Study clubs and a Straumann mini residency that trains general practitioners to plan and sell implant cases. “By staying in front of the doctors and answering questions about lab work, staging, costs and materials, I become the technician expert in the room,” says Sederlin. “By helping them and sharing my knowledge, I’ve been able to turn some of them into full-time accounts.”

While the lab opened with just the two owners, in the past year MODA has grown to an 11-person operation with an arsenal

MODA Co-Owners Greg Sederlin (right) and Boris Zukovski work in a contemporary 1,300-square-foot boutique laboratory in West Hills, CA, just outside of Los Angeles (pictured below).



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of digital equipment including two scanners, a printer and two mills, including a Straumann M Series that has allowed the lab to expand its services to include milled Ti bases. Sederlin says sales have also exceeded expectations: “Our goal was to hit the mid-six figure bracket in our first year but we made it to over \$1 million.”

But most importantly, says Sederlin, he’s happy again. “My wife and I had to look long and

hard at the things that were important and adjust accordingly, like opting to downsize our house of 20 years so we could more easily open this new lab and put our kids through college,” he says. “But that’s life and I now look forward to coming to work again every day.”

And his new retirement strategy? He doesn’t have a plan yet, but all his clients keep saying the same thing: “You can’t retire before I do.” **LMT**