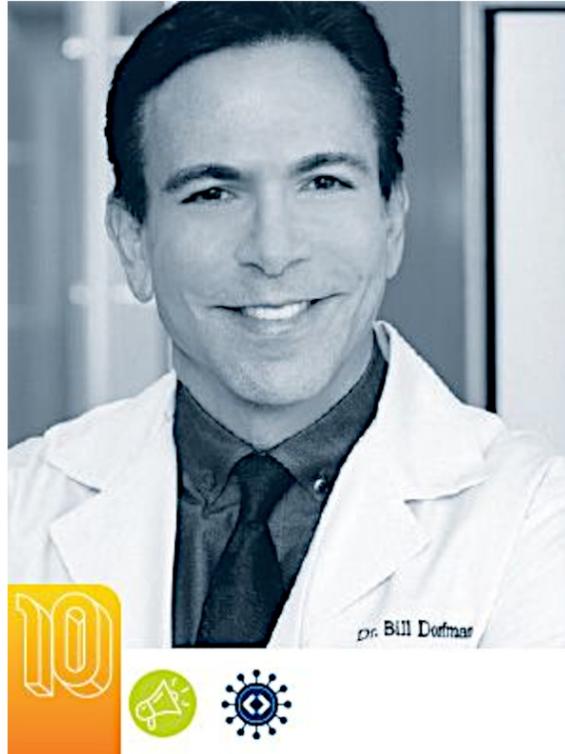


INCISAL
edge
STRATEGIES TO ACCELERATE SUCCESS



5th Annual – 32 Most Influential People in Dentistry

By Jerilyn Forsythe, McKenzie Kupchik, and Mellanie Perez | July 2021

Our profession has made it through what appears (we hope) to be the worst of the pandemic with aplomb. Incisal Edge’s fifth annual ranking of dentistry’s top players—scientists, practitioners, researchers and even a celebrity or two for good measure—aims to tell the tale of how far the industry has come in the last 18 months, and where it goes from here.

It was a year like no other. In the 2020 iteration of this annual list, published early last summer, we observed with dismay that “we still have no clear idea of how best to combat Covid-19.” That, thankfully, is no longer true—the miracle of widespread vaccine access is here, and the U.S. seems almost to be fizzing with pent-up economic and social demand spurred by more than a year in some form of quarantine, lockdown and a narrower scope of life more generally.

Dentistry, all things considered, weathered the pandemic in excellent shape. The American Dental Association’s emergency coronavirus task force, whose vital work we detailed in our Spring 2021 issue, helped set sanitation standards and provided some codified rigor for anxious dentists across the country. Practitioners themselves, certainly no strangers to the virtues of sterilization and good hygiene, rolled with the (plentiful) punches, establishing new safety protocols to ensure that their patients could get back in for appointments as soon as possible. It worked. As far back as last November, the ADA was reporting that capacity at dental offices nationwide was up to 76 percent of pre-pandemic levels—before a single vaccine had been injected in a single arm. Throughout the rest of 2021, as life returns, however fitfully, to normal, that figure will go higher still.

The Multimedia Multihyphenate

Bill Dorfman

Influencer, Television Personality

Los Angeles, California

Were we to list all of Dr. Bill Dorfman’s TV appearances, lifetime-achievement awards and encounters with the famous, we’d have no room left to talk about, well, veneers and recontouring. But that’s apropos for the man who’s known as the O.G. celebrity dentist. He was the first dentist to garner more than 1 million Instagram followers, and no less a luminary (and echt Angeleno celebrity) than the late impresario Larry King even dubbed him “the Michael Jordan of dentistry.”

Dr. Dorfman, 62, didn’t stumble into the spotlight unawares. After graduating from the UCLA (where he won the Outstanding Senior Award his final year), he received his dental degree from the University of the Pacific in San Francisco (where he was one of the youngest graduates ever to receive his doctorate degree). From there he set out to become the best cosmetic dentist he could be. Early on, he shadowed five of the most successful cosmetic dentists in the Los Angeles area, gleaning all he could—chair side manner, operatory procedures, payment and checkout particulars—and later implementing it at his own practice, Century City Aesthetic Dentistry, which he opened in 1985. Eight years later, he founded Discus Dental, a manufacturer of impression materials, restorative composites, fluorides and practice-management software. (It was sold to Philips Electronics in late 2010.)

Sometime in the 1990s—he can’t recall the exact date—a friend in public relations who was looking to get some cosmetic work done asked to barter dental services in exchange for a few write-ups in local media. A toe-dip in the Tinseltown publicity pool was all it took to convert Dr. Dorfman. “When I realized what PR could do for me, I didn’t just do it,” he says. “I did it with gusto.”

Dr. Dorfman found the limelight to his liking. He was asked to be the smile guy on *Extreme Makeover*, a reality television show that premiered on ABC in late 2003. “It

gave me the opportunity to eliminate a lot of people's fears around dentistry and to show all the possibilities [of] cosmetic dentistry," he says. "People realized that without a dental makeover, there was no makeover." The show ended in 2007, but Dr. Dorfman's public profile has only grown: In addition to appearances on the Today show, Oprah, The View and an ongoing residency on CBS's Emmy-winning talk show The Doctors, he's also the holder of two Guinness World Records. Ready? "Most Valuable Grill," for the \$1 million spangled choppers he created for Katy Perry's "Dark Horse" music video, and "Most Money Raised for a Charity Through Head Shaving by an Individual." He was shorn live on The Doctors, raising \$120,000 for the LEAP Foundation, a youth-leadership nonprofit he founded in 2008.

He's also the creator of Smiles for Life, a campaign that has raised more than \$45 million for children's charities. He now spends half his time at his practice and the other half on TV and philanthropy, especially LEAP, whose annual weeklong leadership program has attracted A-list speakers including Anthony Hopkins and Eva Longoria. "The program teaches [young people] not to wait for opportunities but to make them," the doctor says. "If I had sat back and waited for something to happen, I wouldn't be where I am today."

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