

Through the keyhole



Dr. Ed Lin shares insights on practice building with technology and helping patients reach their orthodontic goals



Drs. Lin and Lee Bialkowski with the Green Bay office staff



Dr. Lin high fives Ryan Roberts, Executive VP Sales, OraMetric, after Orthodontic Specialists of Green Bay is announced the winner of the 2010 SureSmile Top Case Finishes at the SureSmile Conference in Orlando, FL

Ed Lin, DDS, MS, is one of three partners at Orthodontic Specialists of Green Bay (OSGB), a private group practice in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He is also one of two partners at Apple Creek Orthodontics of Appleton (ACOA). OSGB and ACOA are both completely digital practices and have been utilizing SureSmile® since 2004 at three practice locations, and cone beam computed tomography since 2006. Dr. Lin converted his practice to a 100% SureSmile® practice in 2007. He has helped to lead tests of cone-beam applications for integration with creating the SureSmile® wires for active therapeutic treatment of patients. Dr. Lin is an internationally recognized speaker, has published in a wide variety of dental journals, and has lectured at several orthodontic residency programs across the country. He is also a Faculty and Clinical Advisory Board Member for SureSmile® and is on the Editorial Boards of *Orthodontic Practice US* and *OrthoTown*.

What can you tell us about your background?

I am proud to say that I am a US citizen. However, my parents actually immigrated and brought me to the US in 1968 when I was 10 months old from Taipei, Taiwan. My father was a nephrologist, and my mother has her master's degree in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania. When we first moved to the US, our family moved around the country quite a bit as my father was completing his fellowship. Finally, when I was 7 years old, my parents decided to create a permanent home for our family in Green Bay, WI. My parents have always instilled in me and my three younger brothers the principles of treating people with respect, hard work, and an emphasis on having a strong education for which I have always been grateful. It is these three principles that led me to my career path as an orthodontist. I did my undergraduate dental studies at the University of Chicago. I then went on to Northwestern University Dental School where I received both my general dental degree (DDS, 1995) and my orthodontic specialty degree (MS, 1999).

When did you become a specialist and why?

As I entered into my fourth year in dental school, I was unsure if I wanted to specialize. As a result, after I graduated from dental school, I began to practice general dentistry in Chicago. In dental school, I did not receive much exposure to orthodontics. While in general dental practice, I took some CE courses in orthodontics and interdisciplinary care. It



was during this time that I decided that I wanted to pursue orthodontics as a career. I was truly impressed by the impact that we orthodontists can make in people's lives in creating beautiful smiles and sound functioning bites for both young and old. I also truly admired the fact that the orthodontist was the quarterback in challenging interdisciplinary cases. After 2 years in private general dental practice, I went back to Northwestern University to pursue my career in orthodontics and have truly been blessed to be considered a part of this great profession!

Is your practice limited to orthodontics?

My practice is primarily focused on orthodontics. However, temporary anchorage devices (TADs) have become a big part of my practice, and I place all of my own TADs. I also utilize a soft-tissue laser for uncovering impacted teeth and for removal of hyperplastic gingival tissue for our hygiene-noncompliant patients.

Do your patients come through referrals?

Absolutely! In our practice, we track our referrals by external and internal referrals. Our primary source of external referrals comes from general dentists and dental specialists in our community. Our practice is also very actively involved in the community and with several different charitable organizations. We also are Boosters for all of the schools in our area. Our internal referrals come from our existing patients and their families, as well as our employees.

How long have you been practicing orthodontics, and what systems do you use?

Surprisingly, I have been in private practice for almost 12 years now. The years certainly do fly by as you get older.

We currently use GAC's In-Ovation[®] R, In-Ovation[®] C, and In-Ovation[®] L^{MTM} brackets. My practice has been a 100% SureSmile[®] practice for the past 4 years. I do offer Invisalign[®] for my patients but prefer to use SureSmile[®] QT/Lingual for the more complicated cases. TADs have become incorporated into my mechanics for all Class II, Class III, and open-bite cases, and my TAD of choice is the Vector TAS[™] by Ormco. Our three practices utilize the Classic i-CAT[®], Next Generation i-CAT[®], and an Instrumentarium digital ceph/pan machine. We run our imaging applications through Dolphin Imaging and 3D. Our practice management system runs on Dolphin Management.

What training you have undertaken?

As I mentioned above, I have always been a firm believer in education and have always made it a priority to take CE courses each and every year. I have been trained with Invisalign[®], Herbst, MARA (mandibular anterior repositioning appliance), Forsus[™] (3M Unitek), Distal Jet[™], and Pendulum appliances. In addition, I have taken several soft-tissue laser courses over the years. The courses that I have taken that have made the greatest impact in my clinical practice today have focused on three main topics: (1) TADs, (2) SureSmile[®], and (3) cone beam computed tomography and 3-D imaging.

Who has inspired you?

Without a doubt, my parents have made the greatest impact in my life. They have been incredible role models for me and have given me their unconditional love and support over the years. My own family—my wife, Siri, and two children, Olivia and Royce—inspire me each and every day to strive to be the best husband and father possible.

Practice profile



Apple Creek Orthodontics group with Dr. Tomassetti and our team

What is the most satisfying aspect of your practice?

I love making my patients smile and knowing that I have made a tremendous positive impact in their lives by creating a beautiful smile and sound, functioning bite! There is nothing that I enjoy more than debonding patients and seeing how happy they and their family are that day!

Professionally, what are you most proud of?

I am incredibly proud of the quality of practices that we have created here in Green Bay and Appleton, WI, with my two partners, Drs. Lee Bialkowski and Jim Tomassetti. The three of us are very fortunate to have the group of people that we have assembled as our team for our practices. We are also incredibly blessed with the support necessary from our spouses to allow us to accomplish our goals.

What do you think is unique about your practice?

Our practice is very unique in that we have the only SureSmile® practices in our demographic areas, and we are all 100% SureSmile®. As a result, my average treatment time for all full, fixed cases is ~14 months. This is obviously very appealing to our prospective patients. We also offer SureSmile® QT/Lingual as an esthetic option for treatment, and I see this continuing to grow in all of our practices. We are the only orthodontic practices that offer 3-D imaging with the Classic i-CAT® and Next Generation i-CAT®. TADs have also become a big adjunct in my practice, and I can now predictably treat complex cases whose only option for treatment in the old days was orthognathic surgery.

What has been your biggest challenge?

Without a doubt, the biggest challenge in our practices has been training, integration, and creation of systems with all the new technologies that we have implemented over the last 12 years.

What would you have been if you hadn't become a dentist?

Because I love to eat and cook, I would have to say a chef!

What is the future of orthodontics and dentistry?

I see our profession and specialty transitioning into the 3-D world of orthodontics because of all the new hardware and

software applications that are entering into our profession. This transition is already taking place, and we all know that technology is not going to go away. History has shown us that technologies will only get better, faster, and will definitely improve!

What are your top tips for maintaining a successful specialty practice?

Differentiation! With the current recession, our specialty of orthodontics has seen the marketplace become a much more competitive playing field. Some of the older orthodontists are staying in practice due to a decrease in their retirement funds. There are more general dentists who have gotten involved with orthodontics, especially with the marketing strategies of companies such as Invisalign® and ClearCorrect™. Adopt technologies that are proven to work, improve the quality of care, shorten treatment times, and offer esthetic options for treatment; clearly, these are the things that all patients want, and that makes sense to me.

What advice would you give to budding orthodontists?

Make sure to commit to taking CE courses every single year. Technological advances in our profession are changing the way we practice orthodontics at a very rapid pace. The way I currently practice orthodontics today is very different than the way I was trained in my orthodontic residency program at Northwestern University because none of the technologies that I utilize in my practice today were in existence 12 years ago.

What are your hobbies, and what do you do in your spare time?

Having grown up in Green Bay, WI, I am a diehard Packers fan. This year was especially fun and exciting because the Green Bay Packers are the 2010 Super Bowl champions. I have season tickets to their games, and this year also had the good fortune to watch them play in Chicago and Atlanta during the playoffs, as well as attend the Super Bowl in Dallas with my wife, Siri. I also enjoy golf, traveling around the world, cooking, fine food, and fine wine. 

Top Ten List:

1. SureSmile® (OraMetrix)
2. i-CAT® (Imaging Sciences International)
3. TADs
4. SureSmile® QT/Lingual
5. Dolphin 3D (Patterson Dental Supply)
6. Dolphin Management
7. Dolphin Arnett Surgical Module
8. Ivoclar/Vivadent soft tissue laser
9. Invisalign® (Align Technology)
10. Green Bay Packers 2010 Super Bowl Champions