

# Sundance Dental Laboratory

## Bringing Quality Products and Service Together

By Jo-an Holstein

Some dental labs provide great customer service but not-so-great products. Others provide great products but unsatisfactory customer service.

Scottsdale-based Sundance Dental Laboratory is distinguished by providing the best of both worlds — high-quality products and unmatched customer service — according to proprietor Steven Dearien.

The lab specializes in cosmetic and restorative work, including implants, crowns, full-mouth restorations and veneers. Although Sundance Dental Laboratory primarily serves dentists in the Valley of

the Sun and Southwest, it also has accounts in other areas, including Washington and Kansas.

### PRODUCTS DONE RIGHT AND ON TIME

Perhaps the dedication to quality at Sundance Dental Laboratory is best summed up by one of Dearien's favorite quotes. Attributed to Willa A. Foster, the quote reads in part: *"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high attention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution . . ."*



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Steven Dearien, CDT proprietor, launched Sundance Dental Laboratory in 1987. His company philosophy is: "Love what you do. Love who you do it with. Love who you do it for."



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Steven constantly oversees all work done in the lab. His daily hands-on approach has helped contribute to the success of the business.

Guided by this philosophy, Dearien points out that his lab works to make sure its products are precisely right — the right color, fit and shape — so that chair time is minimized.

If a crown, for example, is too bulky, the patient knows and feels it. So Sundance Dental Laboratory works to match the environment. For example, when a patient has aged teeth, the restoration is designed to look and feel the same.

Thanks to such attention to details, the lab’s products proudly grace the mouths of numerous celebrities, including sports stars and television personalities, and have been used for extreme makeovers.

Regardless of the end customer, the lab’s products are fabricated under close quality control. Dearien personally touches every case and will fine tune restorations as needed.

“If a doctor calls me and asks if I’ve seen a case, I have to honestly be able to say, ‘Yes, I did see it.’ That’s important to the integrity of the business, and being able to sleep at night,” Dearien says.

Not surprisingly, the hands-on lab owner has close working relationships with numerous dentists. Those relationships — or more accurately, partnerships — are something he enjoys tremendously. He knows nearly all of the dentists he serves by first name, and time after time, they contact him for help in planning more involved cases.

“They know we’re forward-thinking,” Dearien says. “They know I really watch over their case. They’re not just an account number.” He adds that the majority of Sundance Dental Laboratory’s new clients are dentists who have been using larger labs, but are now looking for better customer service.

Yes, Dearien readily admits, his lab’s products are slightly more expensive than others. And he doesn’t provide discounts, noting that most dentists wouldn’t want him to take shortcuts on the products fabricated for them. But he quickly points to another favorite saying: “You’ll remember the quality long after you forget the price.”

Additionally, Dearien points out that Sundance Dental Laboratory’s products are delivered on time. (Standard turnaround time is 10 days in the lab with one day for pickup and one day for delivery. Calls after 3 p.m. for pickup are picked up the next business day. Some cases can be handled on a rush basis.) He explains that dentists lose valuable chair time — and potentially patients — when they have to spend extra time, for example, setting an improperly fabricated crown.

“With us, there are minimal adjustments. We encourage doctors to think about what their time is worth if they have to spend it adjusting cases, and what that is costing them in chair time and their patient’s confidence,” Dearien says.

## IT’S THE PEOPLE

Dearien isn’t shy about sharing the secret behind his dental laboratory’s quality products. In fact, another saying posted directly behind his desk is a dead giveaway:

*Love what you do.*

*Love who you do it with.*

*Love who you do it for.*

That philosophy permeates throughout Sundance Dental Laboratory, where Dearien insists on creating a pleasant, family-oriented work envi-



**Above: Sundance uses the latest in digital photo technology to help determine case by case what each individual client's dental restorative needs are.**

**Right: Steven, as seen through the articulator, maintains a creative, fresh approach to any and all cases that their partners in dentistry send their way.**

ronment. To do so, he keeps employees well-informed, and is especially selective about who will join his hardworking team.

That team — which Dearien notes is larger than the typical three or four-person lab, yet much smaller than the handful of 300-person labs across the nation — includes two managers with more than 20 years of dental laboratory experience between them, as well as three full-time drivers. Some employees, such as a recently hired artist, have no experience, but a natural ability and love of creating things. Both that ability and love are characteristics that Dearien not only possesses, but also can spot in others.

Still, employees at Sundance Dental Laboratory have a strong say about which job candidates will be hired. “It’s a group decision, because they are the ones who will work side-by-side with the new employee,” Dearien explains.

With such an environment, it’s no wonder that workers from other labs frequently contact Sundance Dental Laboratory in hopes they may land a position. It’s also no surprise that Dearien’s employees are excited about the products they create. “I tell them, we’re in the business of making human body replacement parts. When we look at things, the question is always, ‘Would you put it in your mouth?’ If not, we make it right before it goes out the door,” he says.



ANDERSON IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY



ANDERSON IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY

A Sundance artist creates a smile rejuvenation.

## FROM TEENAGER TO TODAY'S VISIONARY

Dearien, 37, launched Sundance Dental Laboratory in 1987. But his experience goes back further — to his teenage years.

At the tender age of 14, Dearien had a neighbor who managed a dental laboratory and noticed the young boy was good with working with his hands. This led to working summers and after school in the lab. Dearien was in his third year of college when his boss at the lab moved out-of-state and took his accounts with him, but not without offering the then 20-year-old the opportunity to buy some of the equipment and start his own lab.

"I took the opportunity and haven't looked back since," says Dearien proudly.

Today, his lab boasts advanced technological equipment, including CAD CAM for computer-aided design and milling. A laser welder welds dental prosthetics and provides a stronger restoration for patients than the traditional torch and solder method. Custom shading equipment enables patients' teeth to be scanned, and the exact color matched.

Another key technological element at Sundance Dental Laboratory is Dearien's high-end digital camera and trusty computer. He frequently e-mails back and forth with dentists, sharing images of products and patients' teeth. Dearien, who even has been a speaker on the use of digital photography to connect with dentists and patients, points out that dental images can be put in files, used for insurance purposes and taken home by patients.

Impressively, Sundance Dental Laboratory also is making its mark on the educational front. Dearien, whose hands-on experience enabled him to become a certified dental technician with a 98 percent certification test score, is becoming increasingly involved in meeting the educational needs of dentists, technicians and his employees. He offers sessions that provide continuing education credits and has implant companies asking him to teach dentists about their products. Dearien also envisions creating a future learning center for expanded educational efforts.

"We're not necessarily the biggest, but we are establishing ourselves as a leader," Dearien says. "We're growing through quality, not quantity."

*Sundance Dental Laboratory is located at 8010 E. McDowell Road, Suite 223, Scottsdale, AZ 85257. Office hours are Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Friday, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Contact the lab by calling (480) 429-3543, or by e-mailing at [sundancedl@aol.com](mailto:sundancedl@aol.com). ■*

