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# The Gold Standard

Scientific Metals raises the bar when it comes to dental scrap refining

by Benjamin Lund, Editor, *Dentaltown Magazine*

In your years of practicing dentistry, have you ever received a check or cash for your scrap metal, scratched your head and wondered if the only way to know for sure you were getting a fair amount for your scrap would be to own your own refinery and melt it yourself? Yes, owning your own refinery might make all the doubt, uncertainty and skepticism vanish, but this is not practical.

Scientific Metals, a leader in dental scrap precious metals refining, featured in *Dentaltown Magazine* in 2010, looks to deliver the accurate and honest scrap returns you would get with your own refinery, but without your patients sharing an examining room with an induction furnace and smelting equipment.

*Dentaltown Magazine* spoke with Dave Weinberg, head of operations and son of founder Mark Weinberg, to catch up on how Scientific Metals continues redefining refining.

**Dave, we last sat down with your father three years ago to talk about Scientific Metals' cutting-edge business model in delivering superior scrap returns to dentists. For those who don't know much about Scientific Metals or who haven't read the corporate profile in July 2010, remind our readers what you are all about.**

**Weinberg:** We heard from dentists around the country who questioned the amount of money they were receiving for their scrap. They felt that with in-office cash payments, they were leaving money on the table by selling to a middleman for cash. And in the case of refining companies with sales reps, there was concern too many hands were in the scrap cookie jar – meaning too many people were getting a cut of the value – leaving the dentist with less than a stellar return. As a result, we made a strategic and philosophical decision many years ago to completely revamp our business model to address this. We felt if we could considerably lower our costs somehow, we could then begin to deliver a scrap return no one could match. We decided to

go with a direct refining approach without any commission or salary-based sales reps.

**And this model has a name, correct?**

**Weinberg:** Yes. We refer to this model as the Amazon.com of the refining industry. Why are books and TVs cheaper on Amazon than in the big box stores? Simple, Amazon has less overhead and can therefore offer better prices. The same applies to refining – less overhead equals better prices, which in the refining world means higher scrap returns. I think Townie Mark McClure, DDS, summed it up when he posted about us on the message boards of Dentaltown.com, “No layers of sales reps to pay, so the best return on your scrap. Period.”

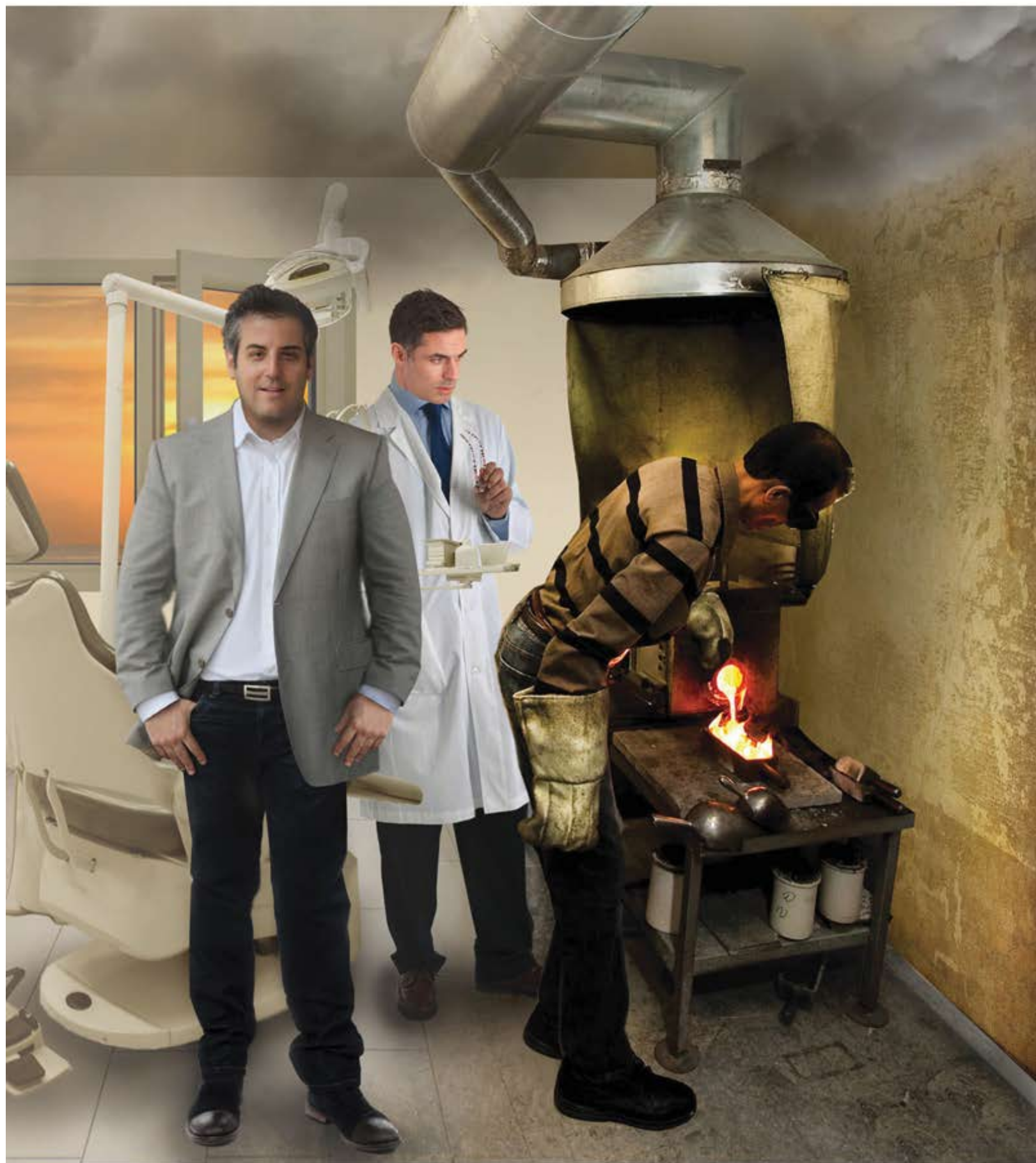
**How have you sharpened this philosophy over the last three years?**

**Weinberg:** We've really cut costs to the bone in order to deliver scrap returns that others simply can't match. After all, the precious metal belongs to our customers, not to us. We are guided by one constant objective – to accurately determine the value of our customers' scrap in the most economically efficient manner to ensure our customers unlock the true value of their scrap.

**How many more dental practices have you worked with in the last three years? And what kind of feedback have you received from these new clients?**

**Weinberg:** We have worked with thousands of new dentists over the last three years, and the feedback has been phenomenal. We've received hundreds of e-mails and calls from new customers expressing their disbelief regarding how much higher their scrap returns have been with us. We try to instill the same level of confidence and trust in our results there would be if the dentist owned his own refinery in his examining room.





**Tell us about the best experience you've had working with a dental practice.**

**Weinberg:** Of all the experiences I have had over the last few years, I think the best experience was from a prosthodontist who also owned his own lab. The customer called and told us before shipping he would like to insure the package for \$10,000 and that he had "a good handle on his scrap value." After melting and processing his material (scrap crowns, extractions, metal grindings, vacuum scrap, etc.), I called to tell him the value came to more than \$60,000.

This is part of his response e-mail: *"I have never endorsed a company or product. That's simply been my motto and choice for more than a decade in my professional career lecturing and treating patients. I now make an exception to my rule recommending Scientific Metals. Being around the dental lab business and dentistry most of my life, I believed I understood the value of the scrap metal. How easy it would have been to be elusive, false or deceptive. I was amazed and grateful. It makes me wonder about all the other times I returned scrap elsewhere."*

**What do you do to ensure dental practices are getting the most money for their scrap?**

**Weinberg:** The precious metal belongs to the customer – not to us – and we take this motto very seriously. As Woody Oakes wrote: "The scrap has a finite and known value and it is your job to get a reimbursement that best captures this known value, especially in these tough economic times."

Everything we do is with this one goal in mind; to lower our costs to help capture that value. On top of being the most cost efficient with regard to labor, as mentioned earlier, we also don't have bloated expense items such as sending out scrap collection jars or exhibiting at all the trade shows.

**Many advertisements I see from refiners claim to have the "highest returns." Of course not everyone can have the highest returns. How can everyone claim this?**

**Weinberg:** That's a great question. It's sort of like when every search engine optimization company promises to get you on the first page of Google. How can everyone be on the first page of Google? Not everyone can deliver the highest scrap return. And most ads simply use it as a marketing slogan and don't offer any reasons why or how they would do it. To us, although we do invest in technology and state-of-the-art equipment, our ability to offer the high return we do comes down to honesty and business model. With that said, I think Scientific Metals

offers the most compelling reason why and how we can offer the highest returns.

**Since our 2010 interview, what have you done to continue to get the word out about Scientific Metals in the dental profession?**

**Weinberg:** We work with some of the most prestigious dental associations and their members including the American College of Prosthodontists (ACP), the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), and the Seattle Study Club, as well as several state dental associations. Most of our new customers come from word-of-mouth referrals and, of course, from our ads in *Dentaltown Magazine*. We try and stick to the basics of good fundamentals. Gimmicks might work in the short term, but the fundamentals of providing accurate and honest returns will always prevail in the long run.

**Aside from our last interview, how has Dentaltown impacted your business?**

**Weinberg:** Dentaltown has been great for us. Our position in the magazine ensures our message doesn't get lost and is seen by as many dentists as possible. Plus, comments about us on the message boards have been great as well. Townies talk and listen to one another and a good review by a Townie goes a long way.

**How much do you pay for dental scrap?**

**Weinberg:** I often get asked this question. This is like asking a dentist how much he charges for an hour of chairtime. Well, is it for a cleaning or a complex restoration? The same applies in our case. Do you have 20 grams of Type III gold or 20 grams of nickel crowns or 20 grams of PFM? The only way to determine



is to melt and assay the lot. We don't have a predetermined price per gram that we pay.

We melt the material and return 90 percent of the value to the dentist. In other words, we have a 10 percent refining charge. Usually, the precious metals buyer who pays per gram is not melting and assaying the scrap lot but is only estimating the value based on past experiences. Getting a predetermined amount per gram will usually result in the dentist leaving some money on the table.

### What can Scientific Metals guarantee when a dental practice sends you its scrap?

**Weinberg:** We can guarantee that when you send us your scrap there will be no hidden fees. We can guarantee that no sales rep is getting a commission on your scrap and none of your scrap proceeds are going to any third-party company for brokering the transaction or bringing in the scrap. You will receive 90 percent of the value of your scrap from Scientific Metals. The bottom line is that when you send in your scrap to Scientific Metals, you get the same results you would if you owned a refinery and watched over the melt right in your examining room, though without the smoke in your office.

### What is the biggest concern facing the metal refining industry?

**Weinberg:** I would say it is the trust factor. I have spoken with thousands of dentists over the years and the biggest concern I hear is, "How do I know the amount I get back is an honest count?" or "I get the same feeling when I send in scrap as I do when I bring my car to the mechanic." Every industry has a few bad apples and I'm sure the refining industry is no different. However, every satisfied customer we serve is a start in redefining the way dentists view their scrap transactions. As Dr. Noel Root, DDS, from Louisiana, put it in his e-mail to me, "Thanks Scientific Metals for restoring the faith." We try and remove any hint of doubt or skepticism from the process. Our goal is for the dentist to have confidence in our results.

### Are there any drawbacks from the company's point of view of not having any sales reps on the road?

**Weinberg:** Not constantly being in the dentist's or assistant's ear means we have to rely on other avenues to communicate our philosophy. This is especially true now that some of the large dental supply distributors have included picking up dental scrap as a service offered. But we're confident in our message and that dentists realize that having another hand in the cookie jar only



takes away more from their bottom line scrap return. It would be sort of like paying a broker to find you a real estate agent. As Woody Oakes wrote, "Why potentially forfeit a piece of your scrap return when you don't have to anymore?" And of course, not being physically present in areas means we are going to sacrifice quantity of customers. But we are more than happy to give up quantity and, in return, have every customer feeling he received an accurate and reliable scrap return.

### Before we close, I think it would be interesting for our readers to know more about the metal refining business. Briefly tell our readers about the changing landscape in the business.

**Weinberg:** When we saw the explosion in precious metal prices, we also saw many companies try and enter the dental scrap business. We have seen more independent brokers paying cash, more refining companies who traditionally only focused on labs, more companies not historically in the refining industry now include precious metals refining in their offered services, and even some of the largest dental distributors now offering precious metals refining services.

Every industry sees periods like this with new entrants into the market. But I have full faith in the market place. The market weeds out those that do not perform and rewards those that deliver. And I am very confident Scientific Metals will be in an even stronger position once dentists realize not all scrap returns are the same. As one of our ads in Dentaltown posed the question: "A scrap metal refiner is a scrap metal refiner, is a scrap metal refiner, right?" Not exactly. We do things differently and I think the market will figure that out.

To learn more, visit [www.scientificmetals.com](http://www.scientificmetals.com), e-mail [dave@scientificmetals.com](mailto:dave@scientificmetals.com) or call 888-949-0008. ■



Would you like to know more about metal refining? Post your question on this article at [Dentaltown.com/magazine.aspx](http://Dentaltown.com/magazine.aspx).

A scrap metal refiner  
is a scrap metal refiner,  
is a scrap metal refiner,  
right?

## Not Exactly.

When you take a closer look, you'll see that Scientific Metals is different. Why? Because we don't have any sales reps that "get a cut" of your scrap return - commission based, salary based or 3rd party dental supply company reps that broker the deal. When you refine with Scientific Metals you keep more of your scrap return and that could translate into a considerable amount.

It's just one of the ways Scientific Metals is different.



*"Why potentially forfeit a piece of your scrap return when you don't have to anymore? When it comes to dental scrap refining Scientific Metals strikes gold."*

**Dr. Woody Oakes**



**Scientific Metals**

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