

dentaltown®

real dentistry for real dentists

April 2018

OFFICE VISIT:

Dr. John Nosti

The Townie Meeting speaker and Clinical Mastery educator discusses cosmetic dentistry, confidence, staying healthy and treating "destroyers"

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CORPORATE PROFILE: SCIENTIFIC METALS

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Weighing In on Trust



Scientific Metals' Dave Weinberg explains what to look for—and what to look out for—when selecting a precious metals refiner

When assessing the precious metals refining industry, Dave Weinberg is as passionate as he is blunt: It's not merely the weight and purity of precious metals that matters, he says—it's also about having complete trust in the person behind the desk.

"Trust and reputation are critical to success in this business," says Weinberg, the owner of West Bloomfield, Michigan-based Scientific Metals.

The value of dental scrap usually isn't known to customers until after it has been sent, melted and assayed. This can open the door to

dishonesty and error. "For the most part, dentists put full faith and trust in their chosen refiner," Weinberg says. "This is why they must look beyond the settlement report when selecting who to work with—like an iceberg, sometimes there's more unseen than seen."

Scientific Metals works with some of the dental industry's finest associations, including the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, the American College of Prosthodontists and the world-renowned Seattle Study Clubs. "These associations have entrusted us with their members' scrap for a

reason,” Weinberg says. “We’ve earned their trust time and time again.”

Seattle Study Club founder Dr. Michael Cohen noted: “Scientific Metals has proven itself to be a reputable and trustworthy company for our clubs and members. Our club directors and members have been very pleased with the integrity of the refining results and the quality of their customer service.”

Combine this trust with the two other cornerstones of Scientific Metal’s business model—no sales reps and no hidden costs—and you’ve got the tools Weinberg wields to help him achieve his company’s goal to change the way practices feel about dental scrap refiners, from opaqueness and skepticism to transparency and trust.

Comparing business models of refiners

The problem: No matter how well-intentioned a company is, it will not and cannot be competitive if its business model and structure aren’t efficient. Some firms will have more overhead and expenses than others, and therefore may be incentivized to charge more fees in one way or another.

How does one go about determining how efficient a refiner is? Some issues to consider:

- How many sales reps are involved in, and being compensated from, a transaction?

- What percentage of a scrap return goes to sales commissions?
- Recently, some dental supply companies have partnered with gold refining companies to offer scrap refining services. While this provides an element of convenience, clinicians must consider the implications of having an extra sales rep involved on their scrap return.

The solution: “Every day we focus on keeping our costs down, so dentists can keep more of what’s theirs,” Weinberg says. “While other refiners can have dozens of sales reps around the country who must be compensated, Scientific Metals does not have a single sales rep, nor do we have any partnerships with dental supply distributors whose reps may also be getting a piece of your scrap return.

“It’s only logical that with less people getting a cut of your scrap return, you get to keep more. It’s really that simple. Of course, we invest in the latest technologies for melting and assaying, but other expenses are cut to the bone so we can be the leanest and most efficient refiner in the industry.”

Fees and hidden fees

The problem: Relying solely on what refining fee a company promotes on its settlement sheet may be the biggest mistake a dentist can make.

“What matters most is what you get

High Praise from Appreciative Clinicians

“Finally, I found a completely honest and very pleasant refiner of dental metals. Recently, I have had some horrible experiences—even with refiners who were very well known. Dave, you guys are the best that I have done business with in my 53 years of practicing dentistry.”

— Dr. Richard Cohen, Collegeville, Pennsylvania

“Thank you, Scientific Metals, for being one of the seemingly last refining companies with honor and integrity. You have won my continued business, and I will be singing your praise to all my colleagues as well.”

— Dr. Arpad Sooky, Ambridge, Pennsylvania

(Continued on next page)

The Scientific Metals Process



During receiving and documentation, each lot receives an individual bar code.



Copper is added to ensure a homogenous melt.



The materials are melted in an induction furnace, which can reach temperatures of more than 3,000 degrees. These high temperatures are necessary to melt platinum and palladium, which have higher melting points than gold.

"In December 2016, we sent in about 10 ounces to a different refiner and received \$1,121. In December 2017, we sent in about 10 ounces to Scientific Metals and received \$4,454."

— Rolling Hills Dental,
Rolling Hills Estates, California

"By having no sales reps to pay, dentists get a higher settlement with Scientific Metals."

— Dr. Woody Oakes, founder,
The Profitable Dentist,
Floyds Knob, Indiana

"I sent my scrap to a refining company through its dental supply distributor partnership and was told I would be getting approximately \$3,700 for it. This seemed very low for the amount of scrap I was turning in. The processed bar was sent back to me, and I sent it to Scientific Metals, which I had read about in one of the journals, and the payout was \$5,712."

— Dr. Donovan Essen,
Palm City, Florida

back after accounting for *all* fees—and the focus should always be on the net bottom-line return, not on subtle differences in yields and rate fees a company promises," Weinberg says. "As I've mentioned, like an iceberg, with some refiners there may be more unseen than seen. The promoted 'refining fee' may just be the tip of the iceberg; looming under the water there may be other larger fees and charges that can wreak havoc on your scrap return.

"In a perfect world where transparency and honesty are not issues, one can afford to choose a refiner based solely on the promoted refining fees, but we don't live in that world. Trust can only develop with consistent experience over time."

The solution: Weinberg notes that hidden or extra fees and charges can be crushing to a practice's scrap return. In fact, extra fees on top of the refining fee can amount to an additional 30 percent deduction. That's why Scientific Metals has *none*; there are no extra fees, charges or deductions. Its policies and terms are open and straightforward, with no tricky math and no skepticism.

How much can extra charges and fees influence a scrap return?

One clinician who substantially benefitted from this no extra fees or charges philosophy is

Dr. Andrew Kulick of Sebring, Fla, who initially submitted his scrap collection to his dental supplies rep, whose company had partnered with a refinery. When Kulick received his settlement offer from the refinery—just under \$2,700—he believed it to be too low. After reviewing and studying his settlement closely, Kulick discovered charges and deductions in addition to the refining fees. He declined the offer and had the processed and analyzed material, now in the form of a melted bar, returned to him. Upon a colleague's recommendation of Scientific Metals, Kulick submitted that bar to the company and received a settlement of \$3,554—32 percent more than the previous assessment. Both companies' analysis showed almost identical amounts of precious metals in the bar; the 32 percent difference in return was totally attributable to the fees that were not easily seen in the initial submission.

With gold and palladium prices at high levels, it's time for dental practices to shift away from viewing their scrap money as a small afterthought and start approaching it with the same due diligence one would undertake with any other financial consideration. ■



A small pin sample is taken via capillary action through a narrow glass cylinder, called a vacuum pin tube.



The heated metal is poured from the heated crucible into a bar or ingot mold for cooling, then cleaned and prepped for an after-melt weighing.



Pin, drilling and dust sampling make their way through the laboratory to be assayed and analyzed using sophisticated techniques and instrumentation. Scientific Metals' analysis techniques include fire and chemical analysis; inductive coupled plasma spectrometry (ICAP); atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS); and X-ray fluorescence.

GOING STRAIGHT TO THE SOURCE: Scientific Metals

Dave Weinberg and his team focus every day on keeping costs down so dentists can keep more of what's theirs. The Scientific Metals team believed that if they could considerably lower costs, they could deliver a scrap return that no one could match. They decided to go with a direct refining approach without any sales reps— commission- or salary-based.



The "Amazon.com approach"

Scientific Metals refers to this model as the Amazon.com of the refining industry. Why are books and computers cheaper on Amazon than in big box stores? Simple: Amazon has less overhead and can therefore have better prices. The same applies to refining—less overhead equals better prices, which in the refining world means higher scrap returns. Dr. Mark McClure of St. Louis summed it up when he posted: "Simple, no layers of sales reps to pay, so the best return on your scrap. Period."

Case study

Dr. Donovan Essen initially gave his scrap to a refiner through a dental supply distributor partnership and was notified that after his scrap was melted and analyzed, his settlement would be about \$3,700. Essen, knowing weights and metal composition, declined what he considered to be an unacceptable offer and had the melted bar returned to him. Essen read about Scientific Metals in *Dentaltown* and decided to send the processed bar to the company for assay and payment. He received \$5,712 from Scientific Metals—approximately 50 percent more than his initial settlement offer. ■

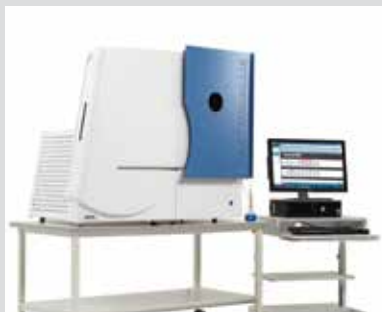


Call to discover how much more you could earn from scrap

To start earning more for your scrap, call 888-949-0008 or visit scientificmetals.com.



Fire assay is one of the most reliable techniques Scientific Metals uses to assay precious materials.



An ICAP is sensitive and accurate enough to be able to detect elements down to parts per million.



Detailed settlement report of gold, platinum, palladium and silver. Settlement options include: a check, wire or gold and silver bullion.