

The Economic Impact of the GentleWave[®] System:

RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) AND VALUE OF INVESTMENT (VOI)

AMARILLO ENDODONTICS:

Kirk A. Coury, DDS, MS, and James C. Douthitt, DDS, MS

Amarillo Endodontics was founded in 1990, and although the practice has grown and evolved over the years, our promise to our patients has remained consistent: “With your comfort in mind... always.” To us, that means more than simply providing a physically comfortable experience throughout the actual endodontic procedures; it also means ensuring that every patient receives efficacious treatment that fosters peace of mind before, during and after their time in the chair. Whenever we weigh the possible directions in which to take our practice, this motto has served as our guiding principle.



This dedication to every aspect of our patients’ comfort is what led us to integrate the GentleWave[®] System by Sonendo[®] into our practice. In doing so, our investment in the GentleWave System has produced impressive dividends. In this white paper, we will elaborate on the benefits, both tangible (ROI) and intangible (VOI), that have come about as a result of our adoption of the GentleWave System.

The Journey to the GentleWave[®] Procedure

As a forward-thinking practice serving a geographically large and diverse region, Amarillo Endodontics has always sought out the cutting edge of technology. And, while we pride ourselves on being early adopters, we also believe that new technology is only as valuable as its ability to deliver efficacy and efficiency for our patients and practice.

For one thing, integrating new technology into a practice can sometimes be an obstacle. Before implementing the GentleWave System, for example, Dr. Douthitt could rubber dam, clean, shape and fill a straightforward molar in 45 minutes. In addition, greater than 80% of treatments

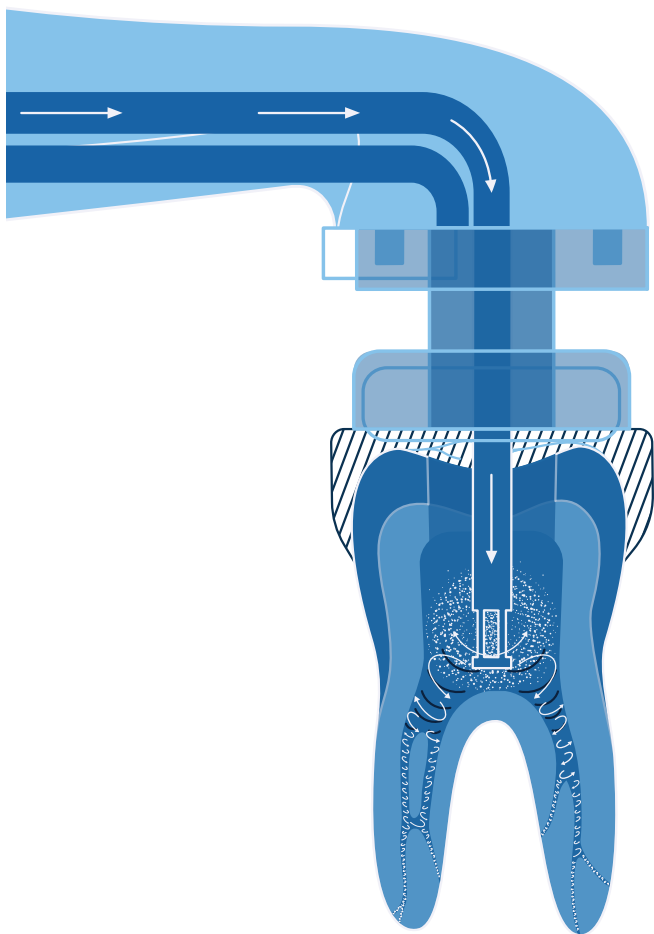
performed at the practice were already single-visit cases. Our multi-visit cases were primarily retreatments and large lesions that could also require post-procedure checks or recalls to address flare-ups, so our existing single-visit model and level of procedure efficiency seemed difficult to improve upon.

While we were initially skeptical about the impact the GentleWave System would have on our practice and endodontics, we continued to investigate the technology and saw considerable promise in its unique mechanism of action. In developing the GentleWave System, Sonendo employs a unique fluid delivery and control system that thoroughly debrides and disinfects the canals with minimal instrumentation.^{1,2}

The Mechanism of Action Behind the GentleWave System: SoundFlow™, SoundBAR™ and SoundResults™

Through SoundFlow™, procedure fluids are degassed, and concentrations are adjusted to optimal levels based on Sonendo's extensive research and development. As fluids interact with the SoundBAR™ inside the procedure instrument, useful cavitation and vortical flow are induced (Figure 1). **Hydroacoustic energy and the circulation of fluids throughout the root canal system translates into maximum tissue debridement and dissolution,^{1,2} promoting SoundResults™: minimal instrumentation, maximum cleaning and disinfection and fast healing.¹⁻³**

Figure 1: The GentleWave® System Mechanism of Action



In addition, there is a great deal of published clinical research to support the technology, demonstrating that the GentleWave Procedure is a safe and efficacious procedure that effectively removes bacteria, biofilm, smear layer and tissue from even the most complex anatomies.^{1,2} The breadth of research regarding root canal treatment efficacy is generally limited, but Sonendo is acting with due diligence to demonstrate the overall effectiveness of

this technology. The more we investigated the GentleWave System, the more we could see it fulfilling its promise of greater clinical efficacy and increased efficiency, which in turn would lead to significant benefits to our practice.

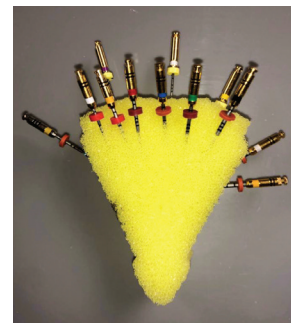
Navigating the GentleWave System's Return on Investment (ROI)

Since June 2018, when Amarillo Endodontics first began integrating the GentleWave System into our practice, we have completed over 1,500 GentleWave Procedure cases, and we have already seen noticeable financial benefits. By comparing a typical schedule from one year ago to a current schedule, we can see the change the GentleWave System has made for us.

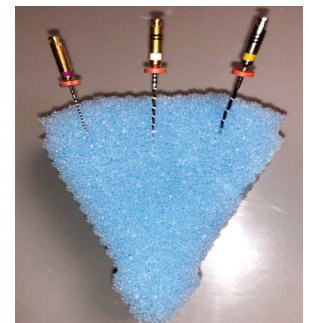
We have also seen considerable savings where file costs are concerned (see Figure 2). Prior to our adoption of the GentleWave System, a set of single-use files would typically cost Amarillo Endodontics about \$70 – 100 per case. In Q1 of 2018, we spent \$28,215 on files — or \$112,860 annualized. With the incorporation of the GentleWave System's high-tech irrigation and broad-spectrum acoustic energies, the instrumentation required in standard root canal treatments is rendered practically unnecessary. As a result, our Q1 2019 file costs dropped to \$5,250 — a savings of \$22,965 when compared to the previous year's quarter. Extrapolating that figure out, we can anticipate savings of as much as \$91,860 over the course of a year.

Figure 2: Number of Files Per Procedure

Courtesy of Amarillo Endodontics



Before implementing the GentleWave® Procedure

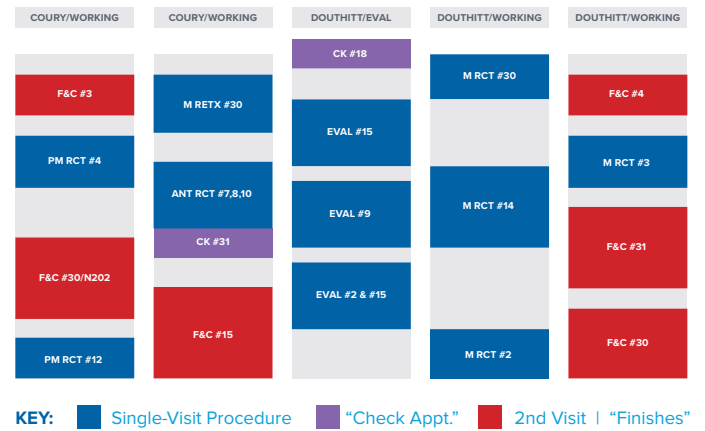


After implementing the GentleWave® Procedure

Not only are we seeing a reduction in file costs, but we are also seeing a reduction in instrumentation time. By saving so much in terms of instrumentation, as well as seeing the capacity for increased earnings due to virtual elimination of “finishes” and “checks,” it is easy to see how the GentleWave System offers tremendous potential for a quick return on our investment. In six months, we have more than paid for our two consoles.

In Figure 3, the two left-hand columns are Dr. Coury's schedule, and the two right-hand columns are Dr. Douthitt's. Entries in the middle column are cone beams, evaluations and other appointments. The red blocks signify second visits, also referred to as "finishes," which were part of our typical treatment plan for necrotic and retreatment cases. On this schedule, representative of a typical day prior to incorporating the GentleWave Procedure into our practice, there were six of these appointments. And, while each appointment was scheduled for 40 minutes, this does not take into account the time spent setting up, applying the rubber dam or administering anesthesia. When added up, these "second" appointments accounted for four hours out of the day. The two purple blocks indicate "check" appointments, which add an additional fifteen minutes each to time spent revisiting previous cases.

Figure 3: Pre-GentleWave System Implementation Schedule
An actual schedule, anonymized to protect patient health information and representative of a typical day at Amarillo Endodontics.



A typical day post-implementation of the GentleWave System has far fewer second visits (Figure 4), which in turn enables us to increase the number of new patients we can see overall. In addition, we are seeing fewer, if any, post-operative checks, and we are receiving far fewer, if any, post-operative calls or complaints. Where once we were an 80%+ single-visit practice, we are now at 90-95% single visit. Freeing up 4.5 hours on this particular day affords the practice the ability to add 2–4 additional working cases as well as new patient examinations. Considering this is representative of a typical day in our practice, this translates into an average of \$5,000 of additional daily production, understanding that each day brings unique opportunities.

Figure 4: Post-GentleWave System Implementation Schedule
Representative of the opportunities created by implementing the GentleWave® System.



Value of Investment: The Intangible Benefits of the GentleWave System

While a new technology's quantitative impact on a practice's bottom line can be easily calculated, and its costs and benefits can be added up on a spreadsheet, the intangible benefits are often more difficult to fully assess. Through integrating the GentleWave System into our practice and receiving support through Sonendo's GentleWave Practice Success (GPS) Program along the way, we have consistently seen it bring a quick return on investment, as we have outlined. Moreover, we have discovered a distinct, qualitative value of investment (VOI), which in its own way can be every bit as beneficial to a practice.

Here are some examples of the VOI we have experienced from the GentleWave System implementation:

A boost in referral relationships: Every endodontic practice should recognize the need to build strong referral relationships with general practitioners throughout their region. The symbiotic relationships that exist between us and our patients and our referrers, as well as the patient and his or her general practitioner, have all been strengthened as we perform more procedures with the GentleWave System. Amarillo Endodontics has been quite successful in conveying the advantages of the GentleWave System to our network of general practitioners. Part of that success stems from the overall positive experience patients have had with the procedure.

Decreased post-op discomfort: Patients find the GentleWave Procedure to be comfortable, both during and after. Post-procedure discomfort has been virtually eliminated, as have after-hours calls, bite adjustments and the need for analgesics.

Patients and referrers directly seeking out Amarillo Endodontics: As more patients share their experiences with the GentleWave System with their general practitioners, more general practitioners are recognizing Amarillo Endodontics' use of the GentleWave System as a true differentiator from other endodontic practices. The result has been a noticeable uptick in the number of referrals we receive, bolstered relationships with general practitioners and an overall strengthening of the role of endodontics throughout our region.

The VOI:

- Decreased post-op discomfort translating into fewer, if any, post-op calls or complaints
- Virtually no opioid prescriptions
- A boost in our referral relationships
- Patients and referrers directly seeking out Amarillo Endodontics
- Increase doctor flexibility
- Less stress

Overcoming Skepticism & Integrating Disruptive Technology

Digital radiography, rotary instruments, CBCT and even microscopes—innovations that changed the way people think about the field of endodontics—were all once considered “disruptive.” These technologies were initially met with skepticism from the industry’s established leaders, yet today serve as integral components to a successful practice. In fact, there are very few practices operating without them. We believe the GentleWave Procedure is the next “must have” in the armamentarium of the contemporary endodontic practice.

While we initially shared some of that same skepticism, we have come to believe that Sonendo’s GentleWave System is on par with, or dare we say potentially even greater than, these disruptive innovations. Following a very brief learning curve, we were able to fully integrate the GentleWave System into every aspect of our practice rather than treat the procedure as an option or based on case selection or time constraints. We believe that, in doing so, we have done a great deal to both reinforce the role endodontics can play in this industry and establish Amarillo Endodontics as a leader in our region.

Ultimately, a practice must adhere to its guiding principles to truly succeed. Our motto, “With your comfort in mind... always,” applies now more than ever before — not only for our patients’ experience but also for us as practitioners. When evaluating new technology for your practice, be sure to assess how the GentleWave System can demonstrate both the tangible (ROI) and intangible (VOI) benefits for your patients, referrals and practice. For us, that translated into taking on more patients and growing our practice. For others, it may mean maintaining your revenue but seeing less patients. Begin your own journey as you benefit from improved efficacy and navigate profitable practice economics.

¹ Molina B et al. (2015) J Endod. 41:1701-5

² Vandrangi P et al. (2015) Oral Health 72-86

³ Sigurdsson A et al. (2016) J Endod. 42:1040-48

About the Authors

CLINICIAN: Kirk A. Coury, DDS, MS

Dr. Kirk A. Coury received his DDS from Baylor College of Dentistry in 1987. After practicing general dentistry for a year, he earned acceptance into the endodontic residency program at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, where he received his Certificate in Endodontics and a master's degree in dentistry in 1990. In December 1990, Dr. Coury opened his practice in Amarillo, Texas—the first endodontic practice in the Panhandle area. In 1996, he and his partner, Dr. James Douthitt, formed Amarillo Endodontics. Dr. Coury is active in the American Association of Endodontics, the Foundation for Endodontics and is a Diplomate of the American Board of Endodontics.



CLINICIAN: James C. Douthitt, DDS, MS

Dr. James C. Douthitt received his DDS as well as his Certificate in Endodontics from Baylor College of Dentistry and also received an MS in oral biology from Baylor University, Waco, Texas. In 1996 he joined Dr. Kirk Coury to found Amarillo Endodontics, which provides leading-edge treatment to their five-state region. Dr. Douthitt has served on the board of the Texas Dental Association SMILES Foundation, currently serves on the board of US Endodontics Partners and is a Fellow of the American College of Dentists.



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26061 Merit Circle, Suite 102 | Laguna Hills, CA 92653
sonendo.com | 844.SONENDO (766.3636) | info@sonendo.com