Dear colleagues, we are pleased to present this first newsletter as a forum of information about our profession worldwide.

This newsletter will provide an opportunity for all Denturists to share the latest news concerning the profession. It will provide information of what is happening at the different political levels impacting Denturism.

This positive source of information needs the input of all members of IFD. I encourage you all to participate actively in providing our Editor with all the information you want to share with your colleagues; it will be a source of inspiration for all of us.

On behalf of all members of IFD, I would like to express my gratitude to Duffy Malherbe who has accepted the challenge to launch the initiative as inaugural Editor of this newsletter.

Tony Sarrapuchiello
IFD President.
Opening Address by Irish MP
– Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin T.D. to the AGM of the IFD,
9 October 2014 - Radisson Blu Hotel, Dublin Ireland.

My dear friends and visitors to Ireland. I am honoured to deliver this brief opening address to the Annual General Meeting of the International Federation of Denturists. I thank the chairperson and members of the Clinical Dental Technicians of Ireland for affording me this opportunity.

My first and most important task is to extend as we say in our native language, a céad mile fáilte, a hundred thousand welcomes, to the delegates from Canada, The United States, The Netherlands, Belgium, South Africa, Switzerland, Cyprus, Australia and Malta and other observers. You are all very welcome guests and it is all our hope that you will have both a very worthwhile AGM and a very enjoyable stay in our capital city and, if possible, beyond its boundaries and into the beauty and welcome of the Irish countryside.

My name is Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin. I am a member of the Irish Parliament, the Dáil, and I am a shadow spokesperson on Health. I am an active member of our Parliamentary Committee on Health and it is in that capacity that I have forged a working relationship and a friendship with your Irish counterparts.

Irish Denturists are not only a fully recognised and registered profession, they are an established and highly respected body of practitioners who have access to our parliamentary machinery as required. Only last week our Oireachtas or Parliamentary Committee met with representatives of the Clinical Dental Technicians of Ireland and that engagement and dialogue is continuing.

It is our shared objective to see full compliance with the requirements of the registration process and that no one who is unregistered, unqualified and non-compliant is masquerading as a CDT or Denturist. The Irish public have every right, as consumers, to expect only the highest standards of professional conduct and compliance and that is what we together intend to ensure.

That there are some providers who do not have the required clinical qualifications is a matter for the Dental Council and ultimately for those whose responsibility it is to uphold the laws of this state. I take this opportunity to commend to our visitors the process of registration first undertaken here in 2008.

The structure of the legislation and the registration process here has facilitated the transfer of a range of services to CDTs that had previously only been available from Dentists. The register of Clinical Dental Technicians ensures that these professionals keep abreast of all developments in the sector internationally, guarantees continual upskilling and assure the consumer, the public at large, that they are receiving the highest standard of professional service.

The general principle enshrined in the Code of Ethics for Clinical Dental Technicians reads;

‘The Clinical Dental Technician shall be motivated by the aims of maintaining the honour and integrity of the profession and of cooperating with the dentist in safeguarding the health, especially the oral health, of patients and promoting the welfare of the community.’

This principle should guide all here today in the further development of the Denturists’ roles globally over the years before us.

I wish all attending this AGM every success over today and tomorrow and in your professional lives. I further hope that Denturists who are seeking to have their qualifications recognised in their own country learn and take encouragement from the experiences of those who have already achieved this worthy step, and that we can all in our respective roles, further the cause of dental care around the world.

Thank you all most sincerely for your kind attention. Go raibh maith agaibh.

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Introducing the new Chief Executive of the IFD:

Camille Bourbonnais, CHRP
E-mail: ifddenturist@adq-qc.com
Phone: +001 (514) 705-2447

The International Federation of Denturists (IFD) is pleased to announce that Mrs. Camille Bourbonnais joined our organization on the 29th September 2014 as Chief Executive Manager.

Camille Bourbonnais is a human resources professional who studied at the University of Montreal. She will look after the implementation of projects concerning the needs of members of the Federation, developing of the new IFD Website, the elaboration of promotional campaigns, and to support and grow our relationships with our partners.

She accepted the challenge we presented her. Your exchanges with Camille will lead you to discover a dynamic and creative person, an open channel for communications and someone looking for solutions to your needs.

Contact her as soon as required for the progression of our projects. Please join me in welcoming Camille within our team. We are looking forward in anticipation of a harmonious and fruitful working relationship and wish her well for the duration of her tenure.

La Fédération Internationale des Denturologistes (FID) a le plaisir de vous annoncer que Madame Camille Bourbonnais s’est jointe à nous le 29 septembre 2014 en tant que directrice générale de la Fédération Internationale des Denturologistes.

Camille Bourbonnais est une conseillère en ressources humaines agréée qui a étudié à l’Université de Montréal. Elle verra à la mise en œuvre des projets relatifs aux besoins des membres de la Fédération, à l’élaboration du site Web, à l’élaboration des campagnes de promotion et au maintien des communications avec les partenaires.

Elle a accepté de relever le défi que nous lui avons présenté. Vos échanges avec Camille vous feront découvrir une personne dynamique, créative, facilitant les communications et à l’affût des solutions à vos besoins.

N’hésitez pas à communiquer avec elle dès que requis pour l’avancement de nos projets. Je me fais votre porte-parole pour souhaiter à Camille la bienvenue au sein de notre équipe.
EDITORIAL – Branding of the Denturism profession:

by Duffy Malherbe

A strategic initiative for presenting the image of the Denturist profession more efficiently, is one that has been on the minds of leaders within the profession for some time. A Strategic and Business Plan was tabled during the 2014 meeting in Montreal. An independent consultation company worked with IFD, by using Management Strategy Techniques and completed a Subjective Strategy Analysis to determine the priorities of the IFD and for the profession. Utilizing the software iMindMap, a strategy was adopted. At this year’s AGM in Dublin, a strong underlying message filtered through from various country reports; a warning for vigilance against complacency and a concerted need to market the profession strategically - Branding of the profession!

But, what is professional branding? And why is it so important? Some of the best known brands include Apple, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, McDonalds and BMW. They all have great products and services, widely recognised logos and advertising slogans, but what makes these brands successful? Branding is the process of creating a flowing image for yourself through a myriad of tactics, whether it be by blogging, utilizing social media, designing a theme or layout that is repeated on all your online and offline materials, the way you network, your messaging, etc. Branding relates to the way your product is perceived, the continuity of your advocacy and marketing. Branding relates to Educating stakeholders about the value of Denturism. At its core, to obtain a solid professional brand, Denturism have to produce a certain image that is unique to the profession.

This editorial article is part of a long-term, concerted effort to brand the Denturism profession, in meeting the need to be recognised as a globalised category of Oral Health Care professional. A good starting point may be to recognise the qualities that the public, the profession and society values most about the profession. Underlying to a branding ID is basic fundamental questions, such as:

- What differentiates Denturists from other OHC Professionals?
- What is the identity and nature of the profession?
- Why does organised Dentistry apply a different attitude towards legalised Denturism?
- What does the consumer, the public reflect about Denturists?
- How does that differ in countries where the profession is yet to be recognized in legislation?
- How does a different strategic initiative under such circumstances, impact the branding of the profession?

Determining a Brand

A brand doesn’t just happen; it is not created in a vacuum, it takes an understanding of what a brand must convey and it takes research to learn how to convey it. A brand and the messages that support it, must

- be true for all circumstances and applications,
- be clearly directed to the specific stakeholders, including the public, Government and other members of the OHT, and
- be used consistently.

Although the roots and history of Denturism is an important part of its identity, the aim of this process is to represent the Denturism brand in a new social and occupational context. First and foremost, the brand vision must be consistent with the profession’s vision and mission. The brand will be focussed on the greatest qualities of Denturists and what they bring to the Oral Health Care services, the quality of health and indeed, the quality of life of the communities they serve, the public sector and education.

Branding is different from advertising: It is broader in scope, more far-reaching and more encompassing in its goals and objectives. Therefore, the branding strategy will use several tools, including advertising, as well as publicity (media coverage, public relations, etc.) and professional advocacy with Oral Health Team stakeholders, Government and policymakers. But, in the end, it is stakeholders' experience with Denturists in their work or social life that will make the real value of the Denturism brand. More than anything, members are the Denturist brand; they have ownership of the profession, they represent it and they deliver its promise.

Efficient specialisation within the OHT

In most countries Dental Technicians wishing to specialise in this field, are retrained to specialise as direct clinical service providers and extensively upgraded, prior to being registered with the designation “Denturist” or applicable local terminology. In Canada aspiring Denturists may enrol directly, without having to qualify as a Dental Technician first. Case studies from Canada, Finland, Tasmania and Australia, where Denturists have been successfully integrated into community dental health care programs for several decades, recognize the efficiency of Denturists to best meet the needs of denture wearers safely, at an affordable level. As is the case with other allied health professionals, Denturists have moved beyond the point of arguing for a role in contributing to community health. Instead, with the support of our stakeholders (patients, consumers, professional associations, taxpayers, and politicians) Denturists are announcing with pride that we are taking our place beside other internationally recognized and respected professionals. Indeed, it is a refreshing experience to see the harmony within Group-practice, where colleagues within the Oral Health Team (OHT), including Dentists, Denturists, Dental Therapists, Oral Health Therapists, Oral/Dental Hygienists, and various other OH specialists, refer patients to one-another’s recognised expertise, to best serve the needs of the patient/consumer. Indeed, in Australia all clinician categories within the OHT are correctly referred to as Dental practitioners. Like the interlinked facets of a precious stone, every facet brings a unique service and intrinsic value to join together in serving the Oral Health and ultimately the General Health and quality of life of the patient. Is that glimpse of the precious stone true, or is there a flaw?

Relationship between Dentists and Denturists

As with other allied health professions, where the relationship between those with a historically defined role and those with an emerging role, collides over concerns about standards, patient care, and control; Dentists and Denturists have been subject to inter-professional rivalries and struggles for mutual respect and understanding.

Undisputed recognition-status has indeed been achieved throughout the vast regions of both Canada and Australia and arguably also a good number of other countries as well. However, is that enough to go into a lull of contentment and bask in a comfort zone that all is well and the battle for recognition is gradually being won? Is there guarantees that common sense will prevail, if Denturists are not vigilant against complacency and allow Dentists to use their financial power to manipulate decision makers unopposed?
It is a paradox that Dentists understand the need to provide affordable denture care to an aging population; they claim to, but no longer have the required education themselves, and few Dentists have the ability or intention to serve that market, yet they oppose qualified opposition to serve those unmet needs. Apparently Organised Dentistry will spend huge amounts of money to oppose any legislation that may in any way diminish their controlling position within the OHT and will do anything to regain control of all within that market as Managers of the Business of Dentistry. This observation should not be construed as a reflection on the sterling OH services that the profession of Dentists provide individually to communities worldwide and the recognition they deserve.

Worldwide, the only voice against the establishment of the appreciated service of Denturists is that of Organised Dentistry, whose aim is a monopoly for its members, Dentists, to control the denture-market as a go-between merchant. Denturists have to understand the nature of their opposition and be alert to the Rules of Engagement: Experience have taught Denturists to expect anything - Be alert for dirty tricks!

Efficient Advocacy

With more than 40 independent pieces of legislation that regulates the profession on 4 continents, and campaigns for recognition active on various continents, Denturists in many parts of the world may well feel a certain contentment that acceptance for this relatively young profession is getting established as a globalizing phenomenon. Indeed, the services rendered by Denturists are highly treasured by denture wearers and where the profession is not yet deployed, there is an outcry from especially the indigent and the elderly for better-affordable, more-efficient denture services. Denturist Journals globally often reflects on the compassion of Denturists to serve the needs of their patients efficiently, including complimentary reach-out work to the poor who cannot afford the costs through conventional channels and who do not qualify for state-subsidies.

In Canada the profession is well established with more than 2000 practitioners spread throughout all 10 provinces and 1 territory. With 60 years of legislated practice in the region, and 4 training facilities that equip students for Denturism practice, the Denturist Association of Canada (DAC) is well established as the authoritative voice of Denturism in Canada. The DAC pursues advancement of the profession through education, communication amongst members, and liaison with external agencies; and to encourage excellence in provision of denture services to all Canadians. Canada leads the profession internationally and continuous to raise the bar. Electronic Claims network through DACnet now carries 25 insurance carriers. It is most encouraging to see uniformity in support of the objectives of the DAC from virtually all practitioners, the cooperation and recognition by various external organizations, even the Prime Minister being outspoken about the undisputed value of Denturists in pursuing good Oral Health and the impact on General Health for all Canadians.

In Australia, where the profession has also been recognised for almost 60 years, the Dental Prosthetists Association (ADPA) reports on a similar level, with much activity related to consultation and interaction with various ongoing projects related to accreditation standards, and to advance the profile and standing of the profession. Advocacy work has been constant, with submissions being lodged related to a number of important matters. Professional competencies and attributes for Dental Prosthetists are being developed. There is a strategic plan for consolidation to standardize training in the 6 training courses and centralize representation by one national body, and a revised Scope of Practice by the ADPA for the 1200 Dental Prosthetists across 8 states and 2 territories.

Ongoing Advocacy:
Advocacy is defined as a combination of individual and social actions designed to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular health goal or programme. Advocacy can take many forms including the use of the mass media and multi-media, direct political lobbying, and community mobilisation through, for example, coalitions of interest around defined issues. The proposed Professional Advocacy Intervention Categories and Associated Competencies could be divided into 4 categories:

Category 1: Promote Professional Identity
Promote professional pride.
Promote a unified definition of Denturism and the variations of scope of practice including the models aspired to as best practice.
Promote credential/licensure/ethical standards for practitioners and educators.
Display professional credentials and a Code of Ethics in the workplace.
Support international, national, regional, state and local professional associations.
Educate trainees and professional Denturists about their professional identity.

Category 2: Increase the Public Image of Denturism
Increase public knowledge of the Denturist field.
Increase public knowledge of the positive impact of the Denturist profession.
Increase public access to Denturist services.
Research public perceptions of Denturism and denture services in individual countries and regions.
Create an electronic footprint for Denturism:
- Presentation of a profile of the profession via the new website of the IFD and also national websites globally
- Presentation of the profession through social media, blogging, online journalism.

Category 3: Develop Inter/Intra-professional Collaboration
Promote inter-professional and intra-professional alliances.
Promote communication among the Oral Health Care professions.
Promote professional accountability through outcome research.
Promote Denturist wellness.

Category 4: Promote Legislative/Policy Initiatives
Promote reciprocity of Denturist credentials across states and globally.
Promote and disseminate research on impact of Denturist credentialing.
Inform members of the profession about legislative activities. Identify barriers to practice, due to legislation and regulations.

The way forward:
The foregoing is merely an introduction to understand the phenomenon of branding and how it could benefit the Denturism profession. This editorial was aimed at identifying some of the core matters that need to be tabled and addressed when the matter of Branding gets taken to a next level. This article may be seen as a diagnosis and situational assessment in the process of development of a Brand Vision. Wide consultation is needed to assure that a branding strategy is developed that is in tune with the Denturist-market, member and other stakeholder perceptions and expectations, as well as with the unique business environment. This is a call to all leaders and members of the profession to participate in a process that could have far reaching effects to get the profile of the profession elevated to a more unified marketing-image in the future. The complete unfolding of a branding strategy could typically take several years of continuous effort from the profession and focussed management by leadership.
Reflection on the annual Board meeting of the IFD in Dublin, Ireland on 8-10 October 2014

When the clouds opened above Ireland for our plane to descend for landing, we saw glimpses of all the possibly conceived variations of green imaginable. Green is a symbol of growth and new beginnings, a symbol of hope for things to come and this meeting was indeed an opportunity for consolidation. This meeting was held from 8-10 October 2014 in Dublin and attended by 20 delegates, including country representatives and observers from various member countries and yet to become member countries.

Shortly before the meeting, IFD President, Tony Sarrapuchiello had a setback to his health when he suffered a heart attack. His presence was missed, but all were relieved about his good recovery. IFD are fortunate to have ample leadership in the ranks, and former President Paul Levasseur did a sterling job as stand-in. These unfortunate circumstances also presented an opportunity for retired former Chief Executive, Gerry Hanson to come forward and attend in assistance. Much appreciated all!

On the first evening a hospitality event was hosted by the Clinical Dental Technicians Association of Ireland, with welcoming drinks in true Irish tradition. We are indebted to especially Colum and Deirdre Sower, for organising the social program and for making us all feel at home. The reuniting of old friends and like-minded colleagues is always heart-warming to witness. As a first time attendee, this was a wonderful and long overdue opportunity to eventually meet many old friends and new acquaintances, some of whom I have been corresponding with for more than a decade. Some have been friendships linked via social media. Many of the senior stalwarts have since retired, but even the younger advocates amongst the delegates shares the same camaraderie and passion to globalise the profession. Personal interaction elevates relationships to a new level and the time invested in conversations augers well for the sharing of information we all may need, to take our initiatives to a next level, whether it is about raising the bar in an established professional capacity or as yet-to-be-regulated Denturists. When contemplating the impact and legacy of the IFD, it is a sobering thought that this dynamic organisation is entirely run by volunteers and made up from representatives of National Associations sharing the same vision and objectives to establish the profession, wherever there is a need.

The meeting was opened by an Irish Member of Parliament, welcoming all visitors to Dublin and reported on the value of Clinical Dental Technicians to the Irish people and the regulation process in Ireland. This was followed by 2 days of intensive discussions, also related to various administrative matters, including ratification of the appointment of the new Chief Executive and upcoming new website for the IFD. It was good to meet Camille Bourbonnais in person, experience her enthusiasm and we are all excited to work with her in future.

Other matters on the Agenda included amendments to IFD By-laws, Regional issues and Country Reports, continuous and new business. The format of reporting provides for the discussion of support required and how the structures of IFD can assist member countries to progress.

Along with the uncustomary absence of delegates from the UK, Finland and others, mixed reports was received from the EU, where the momentum to advance Denturism appears to have stagnated. The economic climate is a principal aspect/cause. There is an underlying threat from Organized Dentistry to regain control as “Manager” of all thing related to Oral Health. The IFD also took note of a split in the British Association rendering their representation in a state of uncertainty. During the meeting the Belgium representative, Matthias Luxpaert, received good news when the results of their national elections filtered through, with a narrow victory for the opposition political Party. The shadow-Minister of Health in the opposition has a long working relationship with the Belgium Denturism Association (UBDD) and this promises to elevate the potential for an imminent breakthrough for the cause. The European Committee was regrouped and a new strategy was forged in order to address the mounting challenges they are facing within the EU.

Progress was reported from South Africa, where a breakthrough seems eminent for the creation of a Register for Denturists in the process of envisioned legislative review for Dental Technology. The IFD has 3 regional committees to focus localized matters, in Northern America, Europe and a new format of AustralAsiaAfrica to accommodate the inclusion of the African continent for the first time. During the meeting, an inaugural editor for the anticipated Newsletter for the IFD was nominated, following from previous tentative discussions by Paul Levasseur with the writer.
A bid from South Africa to host a World Symposium in Cape Town to showcase both Denturism and Dental Technology during 2017 was received with enthusiasm, but the decision to accept or decline the bid, was postponed in view of the historic low pattern of attendance from other continents and a host of complicating factors affecting the economic viability of hosting the event so far away from where Denturists are generally located. The South African bid committee will address the challenges to see if solutions can be found. The physical presence of IFD meeting in South Africa, will be invaluable for marketing the cause to the media and could create an opportunity for political exposure.

Although the program in Dublin was full, with an extensive Agenda, there were also time in the evenings and the Saturday to experience something of the Irish culture and scenery. This also presented ample opportunity to have in-depth one-to-one conversations with individuals and also casual socialising. Central Dublin presents a wealth of historic landmarks, from ancient cathedrals to gracious Georgian buildings that pay testimony to days gone by, goals, castles, museums and the birthplace of famous poets and writers. Dublin is also famous for its vibrant nightlife and the bustling Temple Bar area did not disappoint. We joined the festive atmosphere with thousands of friendly youngsters on their evening out, gaining access on foot over cobblestone streets to seemingly unending numbers of Pubs, Cafes and Restaurant to choose from. Numerous bands were out on the buzzing pavements, performing open air to the appreciative crowds. One evening we were treated to a show of traditional Irish Pub music and traditional dances. The food and drink lived up to its reputation, our Irish hosts were most hospitable and made all feel welcome.

Our stay in Dublin coincided with excellent weather, which suited our sightseeing tour to the Wicklow Mountains, where hills and glens, forests and waterfalls enchanted visitors. Ireland hosts numerous film shoots and we were fortunate to see the site were a current TV series, “Vikings” are filmed on the shore of the Lake Guinness and a short distance from there the scenery made famous by films such as “Braveheart” and “P.S. I Love You”. We visited the ruins of the Glendalough Monastery which was often raided by the Vikings. We also had a brief tour of the oldest Weaving Mill of Ireland and drove through a number of small scenic towns in the beautiful lush green Irish countryside.

The 9th Denturist World Symposium will be hosted in Alexandra, Victoria, USA from 16-19 September 2015. Other future Board meetings are scheduled for Switzerland during 2016 and possibly Cape Town, South Africa in 2017. The visit to Dublin was brief, but we anticipate to see the results of the friendships, relationships and networking via the IFD, bearing fruit and consolidating the needs of the profession with a renewed focus on taking the various initiatives forward. Delegates are seeing forward to regroup in the USA next year.

Call for feedback:

Tell us what you want to read in the Newsletter! Please forward your information to the Editor for inclusion in future editions. Feel free to submit Letters to the Editor or Articles or even draft concepts that is not ready for publication yet. We are willing to assist by doing refinement of your text for you. - Editor

Looking forward to Future editions:

- “Historically speaking” – lets honour our roots and heritage as part of our identity.
- European Committee and the way forward – Eric Engelbrecht.
- Northern America Committee and the way forward – Paul Levasseur.
- AustalAsiaAfrica Committee and the way forward – John Rogan.