

# 6

## Essential Stages to Building Your Highly Profitable Practice

You've just made an important decision that can have a great impact on your life, your finances, and the health of the patients you serve.

But now that it's time to take the leap, you may find yourself at a loss for what to do first.

#### YOU LIKELY HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS:

- *Where do I start?*
- *How much is this going to cost?*
- *Where do I find the right designer?*
- *Where can I get help?*
- *How can I make this as hassle-free as possible?*

*Now let's take things one step at a time.*



- You've been dreaming of having your own clinic. In fact, it's been a goal of yours for quite some time
- You've put in countless hours planning and imagining what it would look like.
- You can see the reception area, the exam rooms, your new office, even your name on the door.
- You've done your homework.
- Maybe, you've even run the numbers.

# Congratulations!

We want this document to support your decision in opening your clinic. We are here to support you moving forward.

*Jennifer and the Decca Design team.*



Let's start by acknowledging that building out a new practice is not quick, nor easy. But it can be a great investment if handled correctly.

At Decca Design Inc. we've been designing and building medical clinics, dental practices, specialist offices, pharmacies, therapy clinics and medical office spaces for *more than 20 years*.

We've decided to share the information we've accumulated over these years to give you an idea of what's involved and support your journey. Not only that, we'll also show you how to save time and money while avoiding hassles. Following our advice, you'll end up with a patient experience so good that they won't mind going to the doctor, and are happy to refer their friends!

*Starting a practice is one of the most important investments you will make in your professional life, so let's give it the time and thought it deserves.*



We recommend you read through the checklist once all the way through. As you read, make notes and jot down questions, but keep reading.



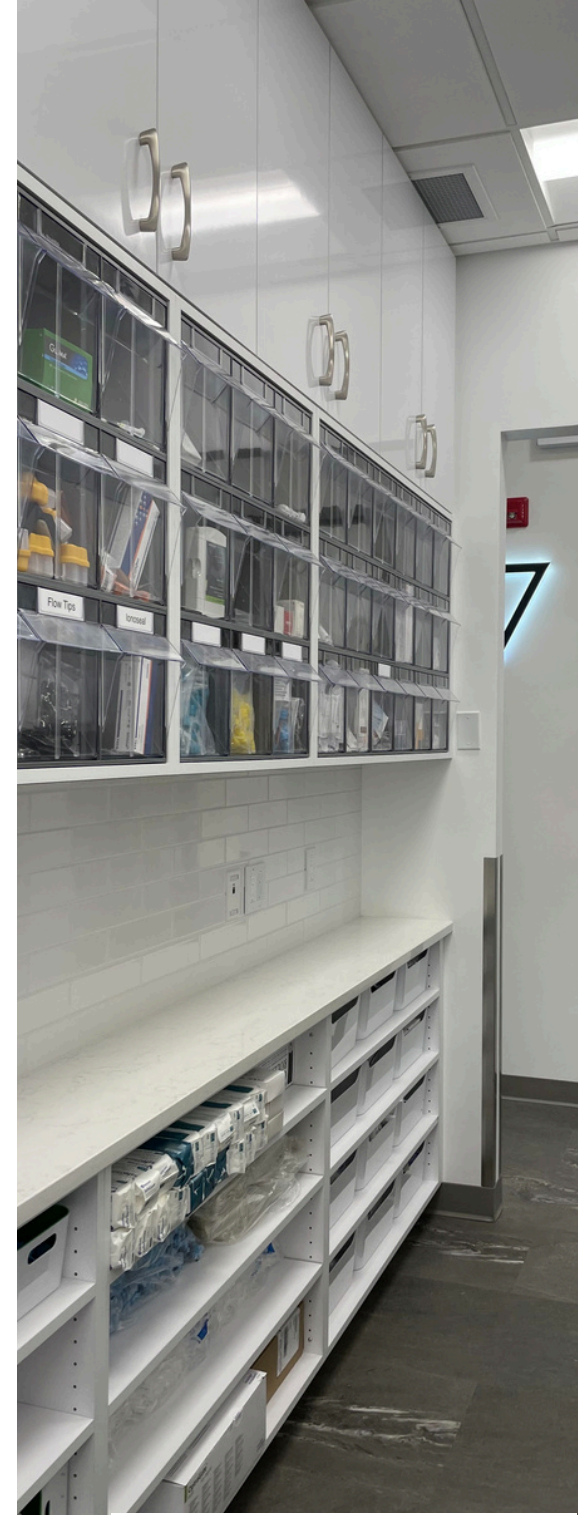
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Consider this a big picture view and road map to get you from where you are now, straight to the front door of your new practice.

Here, we lay out the process for designing and building a practice. We also break it into 6 essential stages to make it easier to digest.

Since we've done this hundreds of times, we know exactly what to do to make the process as easy and stress-free as possible.

*Let us help guide you every step of the way.*

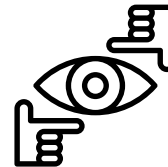


# Here's why this is so valuable:



## IT'S EASY

With more than 20 years of medical and dental design experience we understand there is no need to complicate the process. By using our proven steps we will ensure you have the right team, no details are missed and your practice performs.



## IT'S YOUR VISION

We understand you want to do things your way. You have been making notes, gathering pictures and visualizing your clinic. It's time to bring all these ideas together.



## YOU ARE IN CONTROL

After all, this is YOUR PRACTICE. You will be pouring yourself into this investment. You know the patient experience you want to deliver and you know what you want the end result to be.

# Now, let's get started!



# 6 Essential Stages to Building Your Highly Profitable Practice

## STAGE 1

Build the right team of experts to guide you

## STAGE 2

Develop a clear vision for your clinic

## STAGE 3

Get your business foundations in place

## STAGE 4

Design, Details and Drawings

## STAGE 5

Now it all comes together

## STAGE 6

Prepare for patients







*Stage 1*  
**BUILD THE RIGHT  
TEAM OF EXPERTS**

This is a large undertaking, and not something you can do on your own. To get the best results in the easiest way possible, you'll want to assemble a team of experts to support you.

Each of these professionals can add value to your project, as well as help reduce your stress.

But before you engage any team members you want to be sure you have:

- Asked about the depth and breadth of their experience in your niche.
- Checked references, by asking questions specifically related to starting a new clinic.
- Spoken with them more than once to be sure they are a good fit with your personality and work style.

Take your time at this stage.

*Choosing the right people can make a world of difference.*



These are the types of professionals you need on your “dream team” to make your project successful

## 1. MENTOR

Someone who has or had a successful practice and is willing to guide and support you. This could be a colleague or past instructor. Not everyone will have a mentor available to them, but if you do, be sure to take advantage of their experience and advice.

## 2. BUSINESS ADVISORS

*A financial advisor or planner* should be one of your first team members. Be sure to discuss your immediate and future goals so you can get the best advice.

*A trustworthy accountant* to advise on best practices and set up systems needed for the new practice.

To round off the foundational team you should add the following experts, preferably with experience in healthcare practices.

- banker/lender
- an insurance broker/agent
- legal representative
- leasing / real estate agent

## 3. DESIGN TEAM

You'll need designers to help create the look and feel of your clinic, and to handle the many details involved.

These groups can take many different forms. An optimal design team should include a project lead, who is often the lead designer. The group can also include mechanical, electrical, and structural engineers, and consultants. These consultants can include practice consultants, ergonomics, and medical experts. You will also want a design group with experience working on medical projects.

#### **4. CONSTRUCTION TEAM**

Of course, you'll need a construction team to build your clinic. These teams are usually led by a general contractor or a project manager. Again, having medical project experience is desirable and can help ensure cost and time efficiencies.

#### **5. EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS**

Whether you're purchasing all new equipment or relocating and adding to your existing inventory, you should connect with equipment suppliers who can provide and maintain the tools and equipment needed to run your practice. This should include medical, dental and specialized equipment, as well as IT hardware and software providers. A knowledgeable salesperson can help with sorting through your options.

#### **6. OPERATIONS TEAM**

If you don't already have these people in place, you'll need to start building your office team, starting with your clinic or operations manager. You'll also need assistance with human resources, finances, and marketing.

#### **7. CLINICAL STAFF**

After securing a clinic manager, you can add other clinical support staff as needed.

In every case, you want to select team members who:

- Understand your vision for your practice
- Match or compliment your personality and work style
- Align with your values and want to make your clinic successful.



## SO WHERE DO YOU FIND THESE TEAM MEMBERS?

Start by making a list of the people you know who can fill these roles. Then look to your colleagues, friends, and family for recommendations.

Don't forget to use social media as well; the word can spread very quickly, and you may increase your pool of prospects.

When you do get names, reach out to each of them sooner rather than later, as it may take time to interview and vet each team member.

*Next comes one of the most important steps in creating your ideal practice.*





# *Stage 2*

## **DEVELOP A CLEAR VISION FOR YOUR PRACTICE**



If you can articulate your vision, it will make it easier for everyone on your team to help make it a reality.



The only way to create a clinic ideally suited to you, is by being able to clearly define what you do and don't want in your practice.

While the patient experience is paramount, there are other important considerations. For example, you will need to develop every process and procedure in your clinic to manage time and resources, support your staff, and ultimately generate profit.

And you'll want to make these decisions with your ultimate goal in mind:

*A practice that works for you.*



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Start by asking yourself the following questions:

Why am I doing this? (Life balance, independence, time freedom, money)

If you could have anything you wanted in your clinic, what would some of those things be?

What are the demographics of your ideal patient? (Consider age, gender, income, location, family status)

What experience do you want to provide for your patients?



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What do you need to function in your new space? (Exam and procedure rooms, offices, washrooms, equipment)

What are my future plans for the practice? (More staff? More than one clinic? Add-on services?)

What sort of look and atmosphere do I want for the clinic?

Remember that it's **YOUR** clinic. **YOU** get to choose.

Taking time to think things through will help make subsequent decisions much easier.



*Stage 3*  
**GET YOUR BUSINESS  
FOUNDATIONS IN PLACE**



Without these foundational elements in place, you risk significant time delays and expensive setbacks.



A stable foundation is not complete without a number of critical business components. Skipping them can result in costly complications and delays.

One of the first elements you need is A business plan. This is important for obvious reason, as well as a requirement to secure funding.

A timeline is another key piece. It's important to create a realistic timeline that supports, rather than hinders, your project.

A stable foundation is not complete without a detailed budget to ensure you create accurate forecasts and avoid unexpected expenses.

*Let's look at each of these components in more detail.*



## 1. STRUCTURE OF THE COMPANY

What is your business model?

What is your company name?

The practice name?

## 2. PRODUCT/ SERVICE DETAILS

What will you be selling?

# Business Plan

THE FOLLOWING  
6 CRITICAL  
COMPONENTS  
SHOULD BE  
INCLUDED IN  
YOUR PLAN:



These topics are common in all business plans, so be prepared to add them to yours.



### 3. MARKETING

Who is your competition and how will you market yourself differently?

A large, empty, light gray rectangular box intended for the user to provide their answer to the marketing question.

### 4. S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of your practice and understand the external opportunities and threats.

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## 5. OPERATIONS

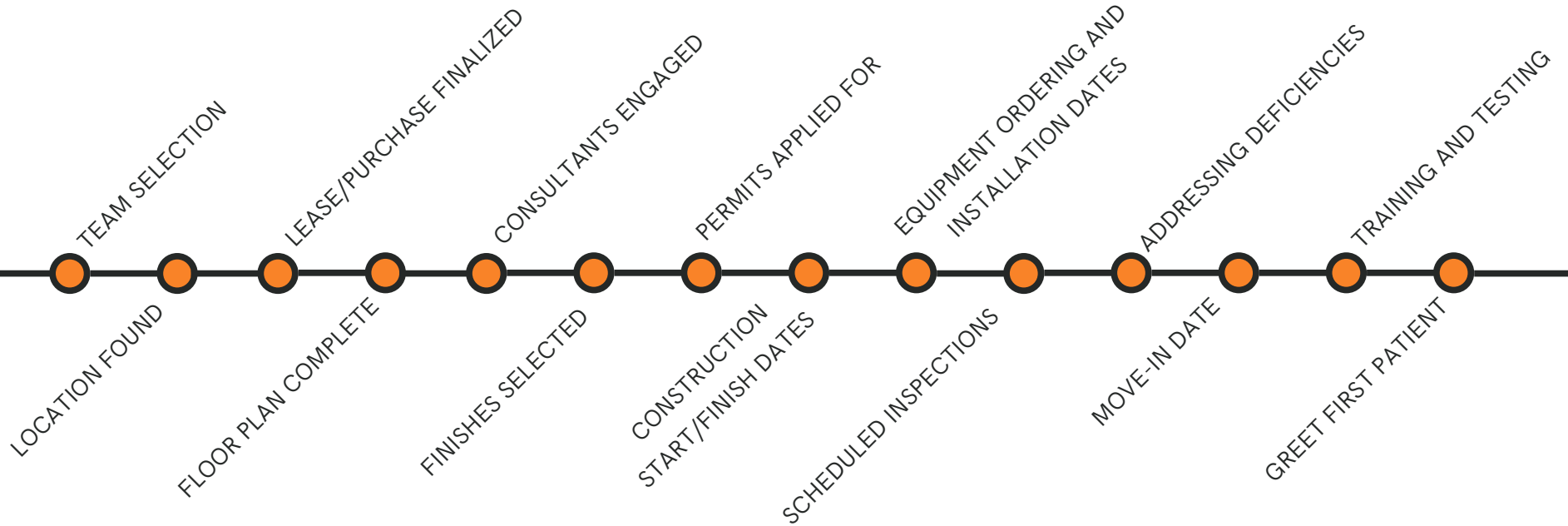
How will your practice function on a daily basis?

What are your staff requirements?

## 6. FINANCIALS

What are your revenue projections for the next 1, 3, 5 and 10 years?

# Timeline with Milestones



*While many of these steps are in order, you'll find that some occur simultaneously.*

You may be meeting with your accountant, choosing a light fixture, and interviewing potential staff all in the same week.

# Budget

As you can imagine, budgeting is crucial to the successful completion and operation of a practice. Throughout the project, it is very important to have someone on your team carefully watch the budget.

## HERE ARE THE MAJOR CATEGORIES YOU WANT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR BUDGET:

- Space Development (Design, permits, construction costs)
- Equipment (Medical, IT, telephones, office needs)
- Staffing
- Start-up costs (Initial supplies, tools, insurance & cash flow)
- Furniture and fixtures (Chairs, artwork & signage)
- Marketing (Social media, mailers, paid advertising)
- Contingency (Incidentals and cost overruns—typically 5% of total budget)

Again, keep an eagle-eye on your expenditures and your budget.

*Minor expenses have a way of adding up quickly.*





# Location

The location of a practice is critical to its success.

## WHEN SEEKING A LOCATION KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN MIND:

- Amount of space needed now and in the future
- Parking and accessibility
- Signage and visibility
- Foot traffic
- Local transit
- Nearby conveniences such as restaurants, banks, etc.



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**BEFORE YOU SIGN ON THE BOTTOM LINE, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ASSESSED AND DISCUSSED:**

- Available power (in amperage)
- Heating and cooling capacity
- Tenant improvement allowance
- Common area costs
- Competition clauses/restrictions
- Amenity access
- Maintenance and housekeeping issues

Note: If you are leasing a space for your practice, your landlord may have some say-so in how the construction process takes place. Be sure to find out if that is an issue to avoid any conflicts.

By putting each of these elements on paper, you will gain immense clarity into the entire clinic design and building process.

*You are now ready to take the next step  
in turning your dreams into reality.*





*Stage 4*  
**DESIGN, DETAILS AND  
DRAWINGS**

Clarity on the look, function and feel of your new clinic helps provide confidence and makes decisions easier.



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Thoughtful attention to details during the design process helps ensure that the environment you create supports the related activity.

Getting these design elements right will make a big difference in day-to-day operations, staff retention and of course, patient care and retention.

Designers do much more than make a space attractive. They address the function and flow, as well as the aesthetics of a space.





Great designers ensure a *return on your design investment*, what we refer to as **RODI**.



Yes, these professionals help turn the images in your head into workable designs. But they also do a host of other tasks behind the scenes to help you get a good return on your time and money.

**A big part of providing that **RODI** happens well before any designing starts.**



Your designer will ask you dozens of important questions about how you intend to use the space, many that may not have occurred to you.

How much space will we need to function properly?

What are our storage needs?

Do we need restrooms in the reception area and the patient area?  
A beverage station? An area for children to occupy themselves?

Do we need space to gather for team meetings?

*Then using that information, they will figure out how the space needs to function, how activities should move from area to area, room to room.*





Your designer will measure and record every inch of the space and maximize it in ways you may not have thought of. They will also consider ergonomics, safety, and of course patient comfort, then help you select finishes and furniture that is durable and appropriate for each space.

*And make it all come together beautifully while ensuring a return on your design investment.*

Interacting with *equipment suppliers* early on will ensure that proper equipment size and function will get properly incorporated in the final designs. This includes medical and office equipment, IT hardware, security and sound systems.

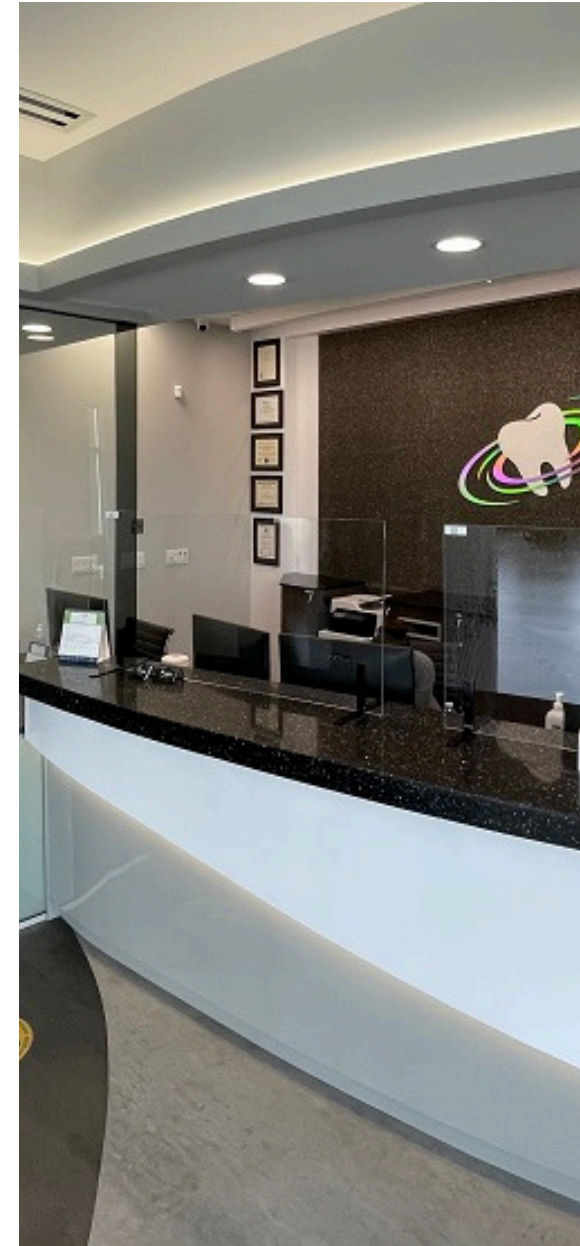
The design team will engage with the *engineers and consultants* to integrate your design and address issues like code compliance, ergonomics, and health standards.



A complete package that includes floor plans, elevations, millwork, construction details, electrical requirements, mechanical distribution and finish requirements is assembled to obtain pricing and later to be used in construction.

Your choices for flooring, walls coverings, hardware, and countertops (referred to as finish requirements) will also be listed by your design team and included in this package.

*Now it's time to move to the building stage.*







*Stage 5*  
**NOW IT ALL COMES  
TOGETHER**



Building a clinic is a team sport. When you partner with the right professionals, they will keep your project on schedule and on budget.



You'll need to choose which type of professional you want to manage the build of your clinic.

Choosing the right leader is important and should be based on several factors: budget, reputation, timeline and your level of tolerance and confidence in their abilities.

### Option 1: A General Contractor

Perhaps you have worked with a general contractor in the past or know one with a good reputation. The general contractor will manage all the construction details, work with your design group, and do everything required to complete the clinic build out.

The general contractor will use the complete package and its design documents and engineering drawings to price the work and provide you with a lump sum, fixed quote. Changes above and beyond that initial price will result in additional charges.





## Option 2: A Project Manager

A project manager serves the same role in the process, managing construction and serving as your representative on-site.

Ordinarily, project managers do not work on a fixed-fee basis. They charge a fee for their services based on the overall construction cost for the project. They also obtain multiple bids for each part of construction and share them with you, so you can be part of the decision-making process.

Both professionals can get your clinic completed. The difference is in the manner of billing and the transparency offered during the process.

*Once that decision is made, it's time to mobilize for construction.*



Track dates and check-in frequently with your crew and suppliers so you aren't caught by any unpleasant surprises.

### Construction starts

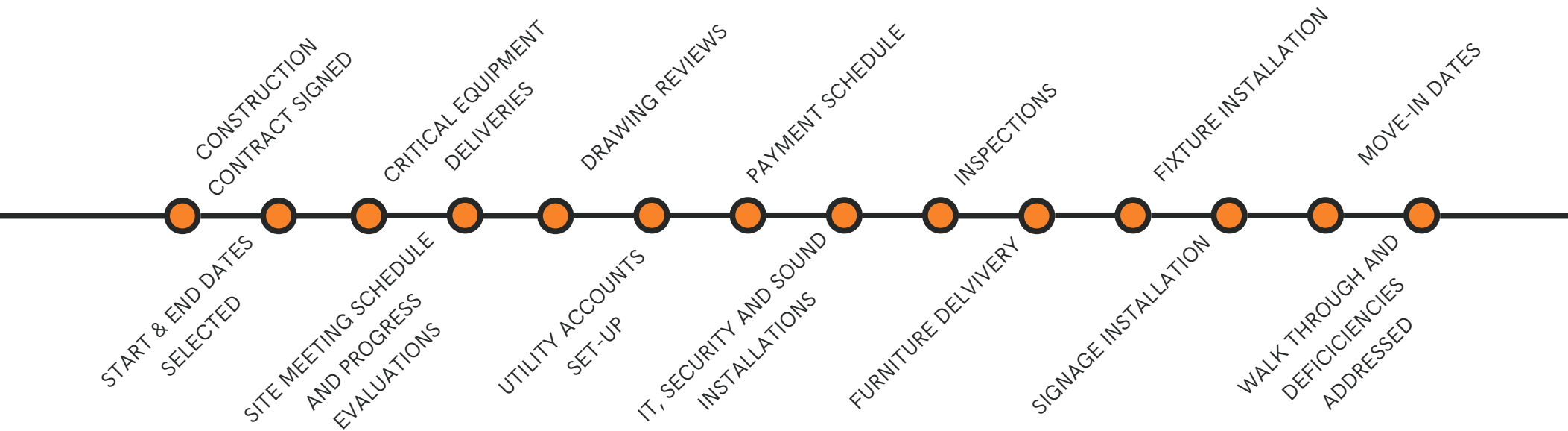
At this stage you've really got to keep your eye on the ball. There are hundreds of details that need to be managed to make sure your clinic is completed on time and on budget. With so many moving parts, it is easy for something to be forgotten. Another reason why a project management is imperative.

*This is also where having and following your timeline is key.*

In fact, the construction stage has its own mini timeline.




# Construction Milestones



Make sure your includes these milestones.  
Add your key data, and help keep your project on track





At the same time, you can begin filling out your *clinic and operations staff*.

If you employ members before your designs are finalized, you could ask them to comment on the design and to confirm it supports, rather than hinders patient care and their workflow.

It would also be a good time to put a marketing plan in place so your staff can start putting things into motion like advertising and perhaps a ribbon-cutting or opening day celebration.

*Let's move on to the final step.*





*Stage 6*  
**PREPARE FOR PATIENTS**

Welcoming your patients to your practice is the first step in creating long-term relationships with them.



You're on the home stretch with just a few more things to address before you can see your first patient. You're ready to start setting up your practice.

Make sure you have planned for the following:

- If relocating, donate or dispose of unneeded equipment and furnishings
- Coordinate moving day help
- Train staff on your equipment and processes
- Conduct a dry run to ensure everything runs smoothly

It's a good idea to schedule a light first day and have equipment and software assistance on-hand.

*Now all that's left to do is to serve and **wow** your patients.*





# Conclusion

As you can see there are many important considerations in building your own clinic.

There are many items that if handled poorly, can result in gaffes, missteps, and oversights that could cause a cascade of problems that can wreak havoc on your schedule and your budget.

To create a space that welcomes patients, makes them feel comfortable and cared for, one that works for you and your staff, as well as remains profitable requires an immense amount of planning and careful execution.

While we hope to have answered many of your questions, it's likely that you've thought of others you'd like to ask, and we would be happy to answer them.



Schedule your  
**FREE 30 minute**  
Design  
Consultation with  
the QR code





For more than *25 years* **Decca Design Inc.** has helped doctors, dentists and health professionals create amazing clinics that deliver an exceptional patient experience while positively impacting the bottom line.

If you want to eliminate the typical overwhelm of the design/construction process and ensure your space attracts patients and keeps them coming back, please contact us today.

*We can make it easy!*

**LET'S START PLANNING  
MY PRACTICE**



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# Let's Connect



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