



## ENTREPRENEUR SHIFTS FROM OFFSHORING TO IN-HOUSE MILLING WITH SOUND INVESTMENT

Isaac Hakimi, Owner of Streamline Dental Lab in New York City.

Strong support helps maximize impact of new CAD/CAM equipment

**WITH A BACKGROUND IN BUSINESS**, Isaac Hakimi entered the dental industry as an outsider. After graduating from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, Hakimi worked for an investment company in Shanghai, China, for two years. While there, he and his wife, a first-year dental student from New York, came across some outsourcing laboratories servicing dental laboratories in the US. The business seemed intriguing, and after returning to New York in late 2006 he decided to give the outsourcing laboratory business a shot.

Realizing that he did not possess the expertise of a dental technician, Hakimi dedicated his efforts to the business side — selling and fulfillment. He built a state-of-the-art website with case tracking, online bill payment, and before-and-after

pictures of each case. With a goal to streamline communication between the laboratory and the dentists, he named the business Streamline Dental Lab.

Within seven years, Streamline Dental grew to service more than 120 practices and was generating \$2 million in annual revenue. It was growing and profitable.

But in 2014, Hakimi began to feel the winds of change starting to affect his business. Growth slowed, and sales of PFMs, his main product category, were flat. While he offered CAD/CAM restorations, sales were not growing for lithium disilicate or zirconia the way that other US laboratories seemed to suggest. Stuck in a long-term lease in Manhattan without adequate space for a laboratory, Hakimi was struggling to adapt his

business to changes in demand.

“Toward the end of 2014, we realized we were falling significantly behind our competitors by not offering in-house milled zirconia restorations,” Hakimi says.

In early 2015, Hakimi took the plunge. He bought himself out of his lease and moved into a new, larger space — with enough room for in-house manufacturing. A mutual contact introduced Hakimi to Jay Collins, owner of Cornerstone Dental Lab in Pennsylvania, who has become a close friend.

“Jay really opened up my eyes to what CAD/CAM can do to manufacturing,” Hakimi says. “Jay was making restorations for his doctors faster and at better costs than could be achieved overseas.”

Collins put Hakimi in touch with Zahn Dental.

Streamline purchased a Roland milling machine and a 3Shape scanner. A member of the Zahn technical support team spent three days with them, walking them through every part of the milling process.

“He was terrific, and that propelled us to succeed,” Hakimi says. “Over the course of 2015, we got better and better at milling zirconia, and then we started to really grow.”

After nine months, we had already achieved a return on our investment, so we purchased a second milling machine.”

They also purchased a second 3Shape scanner, and eventually bought Bego’s Varseo 3D printer

as well. Zahn put them in touch directly with Bego for the best possible support.

“Zahn is such a helpful resource,” Hakimi says. “They connect you with other people in the industry, and that became a critical benefit for us.”

“They are a huge company, but they are still flexible, which is a real virtue,” Hakimi says. “They really, really work with you to solve any problems you have.”

When new lines of zirconia came to market and inventory was hard to come by, Zahn did everything it could to help keep Streamline stocked but also provided other solutions where needed.

As the in-house milling grew, Streamline took

over another suite and expanded the CAD/CAM milling.

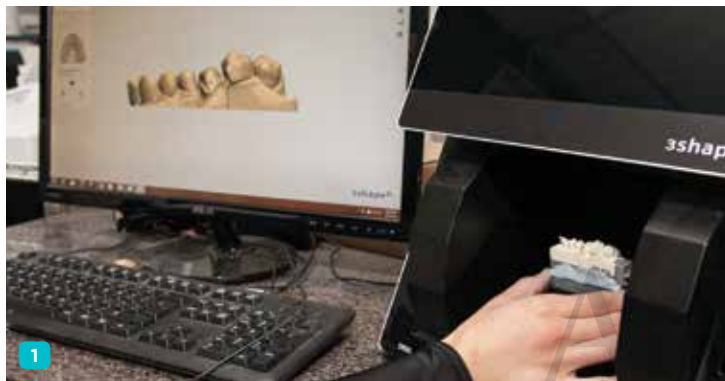
“We never would have been able to achieve what we achieved this quickly without Zahn as a resource,” Hakimi says. “They have a good group of people who are willing to go above and beyond to help laboratories of any size.”

Now, only two years after being a purely outsourcing operation, Streamline has increased from 12 employees to 22 – with more than half of those working as technicians. Today, domestic work accounts for almost 40% of the business, compared with just 5% in late 2014. The business is growing at a rate of over 20%.

“That is a wild change; all of our growth is domestic,” Hakimi says. “The business has totally shifted because now there is a greater demand for speed than for low prices.”

Hakimi himself now lectures on digital dentistry at conferences such as the Greater New York Dental Meeting – quite a change for someone who had no background in dentistry nine years ago.

“The investment in CAD/CAM equipment has paid off,” Hakimi says, “and I have never been as interested in this industry as I am today.”



**Fig 1.** Inserting a model into a 3Shape D850 scanner.



**Fig 2.** Staining full-contour zirconia crowns. **Fig 3.** A completed anterior restoration.



**Fig 4.** Removable technicians setting denture teeth.



## Zahn Dental North American Technical Support Team

From installation to upgrades, the Zahn Dental North American Technical Support Team was created to serve you better, as technology integration becomes an important focus in today’s laboratory industry. The Team is composed of experts in CAD/CAM technology and highly trained to help you achieve your professional goals.



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