



# The Election Process

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Periodically the peoples of free societies participate in an important democratic exercise that involves the selection of new leaders to preside over their nation's affairs. In the United States, the national election process conducted every 4 years provides the opportunity to screen potential candidates for office, then choose by ballot the individual preferred by the voting majority to lead the country for the ensuing term.

The nomination of candidates for elected office is generally based on criteria that have evolved from constituency-related interests, needs, and performance standards. Desirable personality characteristics include integrity, credibility, and moral and ethical behavior. In addition, knowledge, interpersonal skills, leadership ability, and charisma are important. Those who have previously held offices are judged by past performance and accumulated experience, which can enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.

On occasion, the unacceptable performance of elected individuals clearly demonstrates their unworthiness to be re-elected or to even complete a term in office. The square peg in a round hole dilemma best applies to candidates elected for the wrong reasons or those deemed unfit to accomplish the tasks of office or provide the leadership necessary to warrant unified support for action programs and projects. Their reliability, predictability, and constituent compatibility are inadequate to meet the accepted standards for office holder, and thus their potential becomes limited and usually results in an unsuccessful re-election effort.

An implant/election candidate analogy is not far fetched. Whether one speaks of the implant treatment concept or an individual implant type, a case can be made for comparison. The selection of implant versus conventional therapy is based on appropriate "candidate" selection and the potential for situational improvement leading to a successful outcome. A poorly designed implant or ill-conceived implant-supported restoration will likely result in compromised function, and its survival "in office" will be short.

In selecting an implant candidate, attention should be given to its structure and composition. The candidate material or fabric must have sufficient strength to meet the functional demands placed upon it, and it must be compatible with the constituent site into which it is placed. A carefully prepared and cultivated recipient site will significantly improve the prognosis for success. Despite favorable design and strength, a type I candidate placed into a type IV situation may be no more

successful than a candidate of poor composition placed into an ideal environment. In either case, long-lasting integration will likely not be the result. What was initially projected to be an effective, long-term, cost-saving, elective procedure can easily become an expensive counterproductive selection misfortune.

Experience acquired through ongoing utilization provides a measure of predictability and reliability. An implant candidate whose past performance includes these attributes will appeal to users and create confidence that encourages further applications. Furthermore, a candidate exhibiting versatility will more likely be the selected option because a potential broader base of application will minimize the adjunctive support needed to function optimally. However, the constituent must not be overexpectant in thinking that the prospective candidate can be all and do all. No perfect candidate has been identified as yet, and this is not likely to happen in the near future.

As the election time becomes imminent, the pros and cons of individual candidate background, past performance, and potential for success will generally have been elucidated. Be it a human being running for elected office or an endosseous alloplastic implant with potential to support a dental restoration, each will have credentials on which to base election or selection. As the recipient of services rendered by the “candidate” in question, your success will be dependent on your recognition and application of a superior product in a manner that will provide every opportunity for it to succeed.