

# Success requires structure



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THE PROPORTION of elective treatments carried out within the private sector is predicted to increase over the next four years to reach 54%, up from 11% in 2005-06.

Of most interest is that this growth will be primarily driven from the NHS and its increased procurement from the private sector. In 2010, it is anticipated that more than 80% of independent sector-delivered elective procedures will be purchased by the NHS.

This presents a clear opportunity. However, the danger is that consultants react and set themselves up to deliver this public sector 'contract' work and risk a dependency based on NHS procurement. This could be a high-risk strategy.

The best way forward is to establish business practices that enable consultants to maximise opportunities in the traditional private sector (which continues to grow at 5% a year) and give their busi-

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ness the capability and flexibility to bid for, win and deliver NHS contract work.

Capability refers to more than just the consultant's ability to perform his or her clinical role. It also includes the ability to carry out the necessary administration to ensure both traditional private and NHS patients receive the service they increasingly demand.

Flexibility is about being able to respond to the evolution of the marketplace and is more than putting in extra hours to cover busy periods.

This is where successful consultants will differentiate themselves by having a business structure with the flexibility to respond to changes in patient and purchaser demands.

There are a number of building blocks that need to be in place. If you want to seize the opportunity appearing in the market, ensure these are foundational. Too many consultants don't.