Five Marketing Tips to Drive New Patients to Your Practice

By Antonio R. Marquez M.S.

You take time to plan your patient's treatment and carefully construct a meticulous roadmap for them to follow, but what about your practice's roadmap? Your "marketing roadmap," or marketing plan, is perhaps one the most important tools for practice success. Marketing is no longer an option for dentists, but a necessity. In today's competitive marketplace not having a plan is almost the equivalent of planning to fail.

Below are five key marketing strategies that will help you maximize your marketing success with minimal effort:

1. **Develop a marketing plan for your practice**. Every successful business has some sort of marketing plan and the dental office should be no different. Having a marketing plan will help ensure a better return on your marketing investments (ROI). It will keep your marketing efforts on track and will help drive quality patients to your practice in the most effective and efficient manner. This is not as difficult as it sounds, with a little effort and guidance you can develop a simple marketing plan for your practice. Some of the key components that every marketing plan should have include: A purpose, patient demographic data, a marketing calendar, a list of strategies or campaigns, and a budget.
2. **Use multiple marketing strategies at the same time**. The era of the "Yellow Pages" is over. You cannot rely only on the phone book to produce large amount quality patients for your practice anymore. There is no one single strategy that will deliver all the patients you want to your door. The best practice is to use a combination of internal and external marketing strategies to maximize the amount of new patients entering your practice. Internal marketing efforts include patient referral incentives and staff referral programs. External referral strategies include a well-established online presence that includes a webpage, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Google map listings, a practice Blog, press releases, Pay Per Click (PPC) campaigns, YouTube videos, and social media. Other external marketing strategies include a practice newsletter, patient surveys, articles, and ads.
3. **Make some social media a priority for your practice**. Make no mistake about it; social media is here to stay. Some of the most popular social media sites for the dental practice include Facebook, LinkedIn, Blogs, and YouTube. Many of the postings on social media sites are now being indexed by search engines and can increase your website rankings. You can also promote offers and inform patients and potential patients of updates in your practice. With most of these, all you need is about fifteen minutes a day of staff time to post updates and promote the practice. Other sites such as Twitter require more interaction and more staff time to maintain than the average dental practice has available to devote.
4. **Measure, measure, measure.** The only way to see the effectiveness of any marketing campaign is to measure the results. How many new patients did your practice get last month from your marketing? Where did they come from (Google, Facebook, other patients, etc…)?
5. **Put it all together**. Once you have all the above strategies in place you will have the capacity to make changes to your marketing based on the performance of each marketing campaign. This way you can shift marketing dollars to where they are more effective.

The ultimate result of a well-designed marketing plan is a steady stream of new quality patients consistently coming to your practice. This can have a significant impact on your bottom line.

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