

Attracting New Patients

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Brand Marketing is the Key

Attracting new patients is one of the biggest challenges for healthcare practices. Let's face it, the business of marketing a brand has undergone tremendous changes in the past few years. Factor in reforms to the healthcare system, the emergence of a highly competitive digital marketplace, and the changing face of consumerism and it becomes easy to understand why finding and attracting new patients has become a bigger challenge than ever.

Three big challenges in healthcare marketing:

- Increased competition faced by both hospital-owned and privately run medical practices.
- Changes in patient expectations and brand perceptions.
- Emergence of tech-savvy patients who are better informed and in control of the decision making process.



Only the Best Will Do

Today's marketplace is digital. And it is the consumers who dominate this space and are at the epicenter of marketing reforms and trends. They know what they want and where they can find it. From a serious health concern to a routine checkup, your patients only want the best. The digital market space has placed the power of extensive choice at their disposal and this is why an increasing number of healthcare practices are finding it harder to sustain and build their patient base. If potential patients are not convinced you are their best choice, they will not come to you.

Market your Brand Message – Showcase your Practice Value

Until a few years back, most doctors displayed a certain reluctance towards advertising and brand promotion. However, in today's competitive digital marketplace, prominent and compelling marketing messages are the key to attracting a potential patient base.

Brand marketing is one of the most effective ways of building trust. Strategic use of marketing messages can help define your practice brand, allow patients to understand what you can do for them, while also demonstrating clear and tangible practice value. In short, it can set you apart from your competitors and provide potential patients with compelling reasons to choose your practice.

How to Attract New Patients in the DIGITAL MARKETSPACE



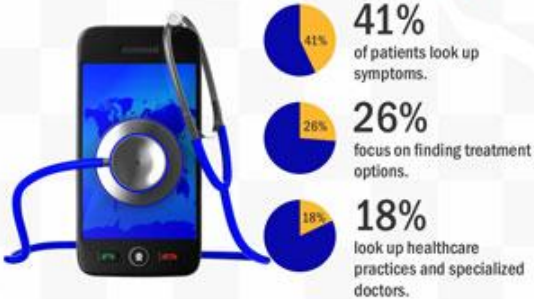
An increasing number of patients today are willing to use advanced healthcare technology as a means of improving their personal health. From palm-held healthcare technology to health apps, and wearable technology, today's digital patients are using it all.



So how do you connect with the digital patient?

Patients Discovery Cycle

When looking for information specific to a newly developed condition:



Patients today want to access information **24/7.**



And this is one of the reasons why we are seeing a surge in mobile device usage when it comes to managing health.



The Wired Patient



66% of Americans are willing to manage their health using mobile apps.



79% of Americans are willing to manage their health using wearable technology.



88% of Americans are willing to share information about their personal health as a means of improving treatment and healthcare options.



Close to **75%** of American adults use a fitness tracker.

Connecting with Digital Patients What Works

Simplify the Search Process



Search begins with symptoms and treatments options. However, it ends with a brand/reputation. Focus on building your practice brand and online reputation.



Make it easy for potential patients to research information about your practice online.



Populate your website, social pages, blog, and other digital real-estate with high-value and useful information.



Make it easy for potential patients to book appointments online.



Plan and work on building a PPC (paid-per-click) strategy.



Create content that targets the needs of different patient persona's (seniors, boomers, millennials etc.).

Focus on Social Engagement



Create a comprehensive social media marketing strategy for your practice.



Take part in social conversations as a majority of your patients are active on social sites.



Create educational content that is both useful and encourages a culture of sharing.



Switch to a responsive design.



Ensure your website is optimized for local search on mobile devices.



Prioritize and position the layout of information/content for viewing based on different screen sizes.



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Build Brand Value for Your Practice

The digital landscape is vibrant, expansive, and is dominated by a multitude of media channels. In addition to a website, healthcare practices can reach out and connect with a potential target base via social media, blogs and visual media, as well as over popular review sites. An all-encompassing and comprehensive digital marketing strategy can help you pull in your desired patient base.

Top 5 ways in which you can build brand value for your practice and attract new patients.

Content marketing – is one of the most effective ways of attracting leads and winning new patients. Create well-researched, in-depth content targeting popular health issues and concerns in your area of specialization. This is the kind of information that potential patients look for.

Social media platforms – such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ are powerful social domains. In addition to delivering fantastic brand exposure, leading social sites are conducive to building relationships with your target patient base.

Patient testimonials and doctor credentials – on your website can easily help boost patient flow to your practice. Patients want tangible value and testimonials as well as doctor credentials speak volumes about the kind of patient treatment and care your practice offers.

Collect positive reviews – as they are crucial to building and managing your online reputation. Leading review sites are one of the first places that potential patients will visit when looking for a doctor of their choice. While it is important that you encourage your patients to leave reviews, it is equally important that you regularly monitor your reviews. Take care of any negative feedback immediately and don't forget to thank patients who leave good reviews.

Optimize for the mobile – as an increasing number of potential patients today use their mobile devices to access information about healthcare issues, and to look up a doctor. Given the role that mobile plays in digital marketing, there is every chance that a substantial percentage of your traffic will come from a mobile device and this is why you need to optimize for different mobile devices.

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Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete Internet marketing company which focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education and the online reputations of Dentists and Physicians.

With a team of 130+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps doctors who know where they want to go, get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call Naren direct at 877-249-9666.