



© iStockphoto.com

THE NEXT BIG THING



Will Nextdoor become the next big social network?

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

We already have social platforms focused on photos, videos, short content, Q&As, and professional networking. While it might seem like there are no new ideas left, the savvy practice manager is always on the lookout for new opportunities, even in the seemingly saturated market of social media. In 2022, that opportunity is Nextdoor.

WHAT IS NEXTDOOR?

Founded in 2010, Nextdoor is not technically a new network. However, it took several years to gain traction. This network didn't appear in Pew's Social Media Use poll until 2019. Since that time, Nextdoor has grown to 63 million Verified Neighbors, with 29 million weekly active users.

Although impressive, those numbers might not seem significant alongside statistics like Facebook's

nearly three billion monthly active users. However, we can expect that Nextdoor's rapid growth will only continue, making this the ideal time to become an early adopter.

What truly sets this network apart is its hyper-local model. Rather than a global, interconnected mass of users, Nextdoor is divided into thousands of community-specific neighborhood networks. Individual users are verified residents. This means that your audience is people near your practice who are engaged and eager to support local businesses.

According to internal data:

- Two-thirds of Nextdoor members share recommendations
- More than three-quarters have been influenced by a Nextdoor local recommendation
- Eighty-eight percent of Nextdoor members visit local businesses at least once weekly.

THREE STEPS TO GETTING STARTED WITH NEXTDOOR

Step 1. Add your business listing. Create a Nextdoor account for your practice. The process is similar to that for most social networks. However, there is one unique requirement: you will need to verify your location by phone or postcard.

Step 2. Complete and optimize your business profile. Select appropriate categories and add all your business details. You will not find an "about us" section, but Nextdoor offers space for "our story," which serves the same purpose. The content here should be descriptive, engaging, and friendly, including important keywords. Be sure to use high-quality images for your logo, cover, and other photos.

Step 3. Make your practice searchable. You need to get three recommendations before your business is eligible to appear in search results. The best

“NEXTDOOR IS A NETWORK BUILT AROUND EVERYTHING LOCAL, AND THE VIBE IS DECIDEDLY NEIGHBORLY. IT IS NOT THE PLACE FOR VIRAL MEMES OR GENERIC CONTENT. IT IS A PLACE TO CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY AND ENHANCE YOUR LOCAL REPUTATION.”

way to accomplish that is by sharing your profile with friends, patients, and followers on other networks, as well as in email or text updates.

NOW WHAT?

Engage. As with any social media network, the key to success is engagement. Nextdoor has a simple feature for creating polls, which can garner attention and help you learn about your audience. Quizzes, open questions, and discussions about local events are also great for getting people talking. These conversations go both ways. Answer questions, respond to comments, and be part of the community.

Post. Unlike many social networks, Nextdoor does not allow businesses

to flood the newsfeed with posts. Currently, a business is limited to two posts per month and no more than one in a single day.

Nextdoor is a network built around everything local, and the vibe is decidedly neighborly. It is not the place for viral memes or generic content. It is a place to connect with your community and enhance your local reputation. Keep the content relevant and the tone friendly. Do not use posts as advertisements (they are likely to be flagged as too promotional if you try).

Advertise. If you are willing to pay to gain traction on this network, Nextdoor offers a couple of options.

- Local deals. This is designed for

special offers such as discounts or free consultations. It is highly customizable, allowing you to set the terms and budget. Most importantly, you can target specific neighborhoods so that you can narrow your audience to those within traveling distance of your practice.

- Neighborhood sponsorships. This is a bit like boosted posts on other networks. Your business is allowed two monthly posts for each sponsored zip code in a “tip” or “conversation starter” format.

As an increasingly popular local network, Nextdoor is positioned to become the next essential marketing component. The time to establish your presence is now. ■

NAREN ARULRAJAH

■ President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy doctors, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren. You may also schedule a session at your convenience with the Senior Director of Marketing - Lila, by clicking <https://www.ekwa.com/msm/> or simply send a text to 313-777-8494.