



ALL IN ONE: WHY OMNICHANNEL MARKETING IS THE WAY FORWARD



Make sure you expand, rather than fragment, your digital presence.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

A strong online presence is the key to marketing success for your aesthetic practice, and you need more than a website to accomplish this task. Most modern practices use social media, blogs, e-newsletters, directory listings, and more.

But are you expanding or fragmenting your digital presence?

OMNICHANNEL VS MULTICHANNEL MARKETING

Several years ago, multichannel marketing was all the rage. That trend has quietly shifted to omnichannel marketing. Unfortunately, most people don't really know the difference.

Channel can have different meanings depending on the context. In this case, a channel refers to a platform or way of reaching your audience. For example, your website might be one channel, Facebook would be another, email newsletters would be another, and so on.

Multichannel means a strategy that uses multiple channels. Most modern

marketing is multichannel. However, the term is typically used when each channel is distinctly separate.

Omnichannel marketing is multichannel marketing, but it is synchronized and integrated to create a seamless user experience.

This distinction may seem minor, but it has a dramatic impact on the success of your marketing efforts. The patient experience does not begin when a person walks in your office, or even the first time someone contacts you. It begins when the person becomes aware of your practice and continues as he or she researches you, learns about your offerings, and decides to contact you. If these early steps are too difficult, you could lose a potential lead before you have the opportunity to convert that individual to a patient.

Embracing omnichannel marketing means consistency in your branding, message, and information, which builds trust. It eliminates confusion and bridges the gap between various

channels, smoothing out the wrinkles in the patient journey.

The result? Greater exposure, more engagement, better branding, and ultimately more leads.

GOING OMNI: HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE

There are two key aspects to omnichannel marketing: consistency and integration.

People should feel like they are virtually "visiting" the same practice,

DO THIS NOW

Ensure consistency of practice information across channels. If there is a change at your practice, such as new office hours, update your information everywhere. This means your website, social profiles, directory listings, and anywhere else the original information is posted.

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no matter what platform they use. To do this, use your logo on all marketing materials and be consistent with your core marketing message. Color schemes, writing style, tone, and even font choices can also be elements of your brand identity. The idea is to have a common thread, giving a feeling of familiarity to videos, web pages, emails, social posts, and other content types.

Will people get the same answer to a given question, no matter where they ask? Virtually every platform offers some method of communication. That means someone is speaking on behalf of your practice when responding to reviews, answering

emails, answering phones, replying to private messages, and responding to social media comments. If different people are in charge of various channels, make sure they are all notified of changes in policy, new services, special offers, and other details.

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CROSSLINK AND CONSOLIDATE

The fewer steps people must take, the more likely they are to complete a task. Internet users are notoriously

impatient. Whether sharing a video or scheduling an appointment, if it is too difficult some people won't bother. Crosslinking and integrating can simplify and expedite common tasks. A few examples include:

- Click to call (or text) buttons on social posts and emails
- Direct links to appointment request forms
- Link to Google Maps for driving directions
- Social sharing buttons on content
- Links to your social media accounts on directory listings and in emails
- Chatbots available from every page of your website
- Links to patient review websites in follow-up emails and text messages

Whether you outsource marketing or handle it in-house, make sure it is a consolidated, comprehensive strategy. ■

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- President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing
- 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.
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