

Feature

Guide to Content Marketing

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In today's competitive economy, a good marketing strategy can make the difference between a thriving dental practice, and one that is struggling to stay afloat. And content marketing is a pillar of any good strategy.

What is content marketing?

Content marketing is generally defined as creating and distributing content that is not explicitly promotional. In other words, it encompasses virtually every type of content except advertisements. At first, this might seem counterintuitive. After all, your goal is to promote your dental practice.

To better understand the purpose, ask yourself this: How often do you deliberately read or watch advertisements and give them your full attention? Now ask yourself the same thing about memes, blogs, videos, and podcasts? The difference is value. When content has educational or entertainment value, we happily give it our time and attention.

Why it is important to your practice

Creating valuable content involves investing in a talented team or spending a considerable amount of your own time and effort. How does this benefit your dental practice?

SEO – Search engine optimization has long evolved beyond simply adding some keywords to a promotional landing page. Google knows that searchers want information and seeks to deliver the highest quality links. If you want to rank well for dentistry related search terms, you need in-depth articles, high-value articles that are relevant to your target keywords.

Patient education – Today's patients take a consumer approach to choosing healthcare providers. They do not simply call the first dental office they find, except possibly in an emergency. Instead, they want to know more about the dentist, the services offered, and the quality of work.

Make a good first impression – The patient experience begins long before a person becomes a patient. It begins the first time that someone discovers your practice, usually online. Good content reflects high quality standards.

Community building – No matter how many social networks you join, or how many ads you buy on those networks, you will not attract an audience without quality, engaging posts.

Build your reputation – Making your website and online profiles an educational resource is an excellent way to establish yourself as an expert in your niche. Additionally, people tend to share valuable content, not only on social media but also in private chats and other platforms, which increases brand awareness for your practice.

Lead generation – Content does not need to be overly promotional to attract new patients. When someone is considering a dental procedure, the first step is usually to learn more about it. If your content has provided answers and demonstrated expertise, then your practice is the natural choice when that person decides to take the next step.

Choosing content distribution platforms

Content marketing does not begin with content creation. It begins with strategy. First and foremost, set goals of what you plan to accomplish. Next, decide how and where you will publish your content. The options for content distribution are virtually endless. Some of the best choices include:

Website – The single most important place to publish quality content is your dental practice’s website. No matter where a person first learns about your practice, he or she is likely to visit the website for more information before scheduling an appointment. Additionally, the quantity and quality of website content directly impacts SEO.

Social media – Some people love social media, and others hate it. However, more and more people are using it, even those who would rather not. In today’s world, social media is virtually a requirement for anyone who wants to stay connected and informed. That means most of your current and future patients are there – your dental practice needs to be there as well.

Blog – This is one of the most versatile and effective content marketing platforms. A blog can be part of your website, or separate. It can cover general dental topics, or a specific niche. Most importantly, if it is well written and regularly updated, it can attract a sizable audience of regular readers.

Podcast – At one time, radio talk shows were wildly popular (and some still are). In many ways, podcasts are the updated and enhanced modern version of a radio show. They are friendly and engaging, yet convenient for multi-taskers. Listeners can listen to their favorite podcasts while commuting to work, cooking dinner, or lounging in the back yard.

Collaborations and contributions – You are not limited to your own website and profiles. In fact, one of the best ways to grow your audience and gain exposure is by sharing your content. This can be in the form of guest posts on other dental blogs, becoming a contributor for patient education websites, or even pitching newsworthy article ideas to local media.

Patient communications – Email newsletters, printed brochures, and other materials are often short on information and long on promotion. That means patients are not reading them. Instead, treat these items like other aspects of content marketing. Provide valuable, well presented information, and seek to catch the reader’s interest.

Develop a winning strategy

Tailor content to the intended platform.

Define your target audience – If you have not already done so, now is the time to analyze the demographics of your current patient base. Are you marketing to high-, mid-, or low-income people? Individuals or families? Do you cater to seniors, children, adults seeking cosmetic treatment...?

Choose relevant topics – Consider your ideal patient, and what he or she might be interested in. Content topics should be relevant to your niche, but they do not have to relate to services.

Use a publishing calendar – Audiences expect some degree of consistency. Even a relatively modest content marketing plan can become overwhelming without some organization.

Answer questions – Content marketing targets people who are looking for information. That means they have questions. Content such as Q&A articles, titles formatted as questions, and “ask a dentist” videos tend to perform well.

Even the best content marketing strategy is not a permanent solution, due to the ever-changing nature of the internet. Measure the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns. When something is not getting results, adjust and improve. When something is getting good results, increase and enhance it.

About the Author



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 dentists, 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

www.ekwa.com/msm/ or simply send a text to 313-777-8494.