

# Three Social Media Strategies to Give Your Dental Practice an Edge in 2022

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Before the pandemic, it seemed like everyone was on social media. Now, that perception is very close to reality, with experts predicting that 96 percent of Canadians will be on social media by 2026. While this marketing channel is more important than ever for your dental practice, it is also increasingly complex. Here are some of the best strategies for success in today's social media environment.

## 1. Audience participation

With limited real-world interaction opportunities, people are seeking more interactivity online. They do not want to scroll through the newsfeed passively; they want to participate. Make your followers more than followers; make them part of your story.

- **Get visual** – Imagine you are scrolling through your favourite social network when you come upon a solid block of text, with those three little dots indicating there is even more. Are you going to read it? Probably not. Most people won't even read enough to find out what the post is about. However, you can't help but notice memes, emoticons, infographics, and photos. These visuals tell a story of their own, and they say it in a way that the brain almost instantly comprehends. In fact, it takes just 13 milliseconds for the human brain to process an image.
- **Short-form video** – Video has long been the king of social media, and that trend continues to grow. Furthermore, as people become increasingly impatient, short videos are emerging as the pack leader. Statistics show that 68 percent of people will watch a video from a business providing it is less than a minute long and that 84 percent of people have been convinced to purchase a product or service after watching a video.

## 2. Bite-size bits

The average user spends over two hours a day on social media. However, it is rarely in one session. The newsfeed is an easy answer to boredom, meaning that scrolling often happens during breaks while waiting for something and other odd moments. Users are rarely invested in consuming lengthy content. They want their social media quick, simple, and easy to consume.

- **Start a conversation** – Many posts are self-contained and do not *need* comments to complete them. Try mixing up the format and inviting responses, such as questions, polls, quizzes, and open-ended statements. You can make it fun by posting a photo and asking your followers to suggest captions. You can make it educational by inviting followers to ask their oral health questions. The possibilities are endless.

- User-generated content – A few years ago, big social media influencers were the hottest trend in marketing. However, as people began to lose faith in them, that trend evolved toward micro and nano influencers with smaller audiences, more authenticity, and better engagement. In reality, you do not need to hire or “partner with” an influencer at all. Everyone on social media is an influencer. The everyday user might have a much smaller reach but likely has a greater degree of influence. That is why user-generated content is one of the hottest social trends of 2022.

### 3. Adapt and diversify

If your dental practice is behind the competition, it might be a struggle to establish yourself in an already saturated market. However, the good news is that social media is far from static. It is constantly evolving, offering new opportunities to get ahead of the game.

- Up and coming networks to watch – If your dental practice is looking to expand its social horizons, there are a couple of good candidates.
- First is Nextdoor, which has been available in the US for over a decade and in Canada since 2019. It came into the spotlight during COVID-19 lockdowns, which led to a 189 percent increase in daily use. With its hyper-local focus, Nextdoor is uniquely positioned to become an online hub for community residents and businesses.
- The other network to keep an eye on is TikTok. As one of the newest social networks with more than two-thirds of users under the age of 40, it generally has not been considered a serious contender in the world of social media marketing. However, it is also the fastest-growing network, and the number of adult users is quickly increasing. It could become the next heavy-hitter if it proves to have the same staying power as more established networks.
- Be an early adapter – In an effort to keep users engaged and interested, social media networks regularly add new features. For example, Facebook Live quickly became one of the network’s most popular features, garnering six times more engagement than pre-recorded video. Always be on the lookout for new and exciting features on your favourite networks and be among the first businesses to try them out. Users, always eager to see the latest and greatest in action, will take notice.

### Analyze and revise

There is no question that some of the best social media posts and strategies are born of creativity. However, never underestimate the importance of science in your recipe for success. Every audience is different, and you need quantifiable metrics – cold, hard numbers – to determine what is most effective for you.

Thankfully, analytic information is readily available. Your social media manager should provide regular reports, and you can find most details within your dashboard on each respective network. Before revising your social strategy, review your numbers to have a clear baseline. Pay close attention to what changes so that you will know what tactics work best for you.

Which metrics you track depends on your social media goals. For example, if you want to grow your audience, then followers, video views, shares, and impressions might be your top priorities. If you're going to increase engagement, then you might want to track clicks, video views, comments, reactions, shares, and direct messages.

## Conclusion

Social media is no longer an adjunct to your dental practice's digital presence. Your patients, and prospective patients, expect to find your practice on social media. They also expect the quality of posts to represent the quality of your work. It is time to stop treating social as an inconvenience and treat it as an indispensable reputation-building opportunity.

### 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

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