

# Optimizing Your Instagram Strategy

June 3, 2022

by Naren Arulrajah, Ekwa Marketing

Instagram was a social media powerhouse, with over one billion active monthly users,<sup>1</sup> before the COVID-19 pandemic. Like other social networks, its role in business and society was cemented by the diminished opportunity for in-person interaction. Global usership of Instagram increased by 16 percent between 2019 and 2021, making it the sixth fastest-growing network during that period.<sup>2</sup>

What does all of this mean to you? If your Instagram presence is lacklustre (or, worse yet, if your dental practice does not use Instagram), now is the time to step up the game.

## Is Instagram right for you?

When you think of popular Instagram profiles, you might imagine fashion models, movie stars, and travellers who visit exotic locations. Those are photos people will want to see. But pictures from a dental office? Well, that doesn't sound so exciting.

Some dentists think Instagram just doesn't make sense. After all, how many people will actually follow a dentist on this network? For Dr. Kevin Sands, the answer is over half a million, and for Dr. Bill Dorfman, it is more than one million. Granted, those examples are a bit extreme. Unless you aspire to become a celebrity, you are not likely to have or need an audience that size. However, a quick search for "dentist" on Instagram will reveal countless local practices (like yours) with hundreds or thousands of followers.

In reality, people are looking for more than stunning photography on Instagram. They are looking to connect, learn, interact, and expand their horizons. Increasingly, people are logging onto Instagram as consumers, looking to research and reach out to businesses. In fact, statistics<sup>3</sup> show that 1 in 2 people used Instagram to discover new services or products, and about 200 million<sup>4</sup> users view one or more business profiles daily.

## The difference between a good Instagram and a great Instagram

Getting started with Instagram is easy. Just create a business account, upload a few pictures, maybe add some hashtags... That's it – you have an Instagram presence. With a bit of effort, your profile can look pretty good. But that does not guarantee you will get any followers or further your marketing objectives in any meaningful way. For that, you need a significant Instagram presence.

One common feature of popular Instagram accounts is uniqueness. Therefore, the ideal recipe for success will look slightly different for everyone. However, there are several simple ways to stand apart from the crowd.

## Write a great bio

It is just a short blurb, limited to 150 characters. When creating a profile for your dental practice, the bio might seem insignificant. Do not be fooled! This bit of text defines your Instagram presence, likely influencing the decision of whether or not to follow you. More importantly, it introduces your dental practice and influences the decision of whether to visit your website, check out your other social media, call your office...

The ideal Instagram bio contains pertinent contact details, projects your brand identity, and makes the reader say, "this might be the right dentist for me." That's a tall order for 150 little characters. Here are a few tips for crafting an outstanding bio:

- Include your dental office's slogan or tagline
- Link to your website
- Use emojis to add personality and say a lot without a lot of characters
- Use special characters such as asterisks or vertical bars for more explicit formatting
- Add your practice contact details
- Include a call-to-action button

## **Include your offline network**

According to the well-documented social proof theory, people are inclined to do what others are doing.<sup>5</sup> They are more likely to follow an Instagram account that already has a following. The problem is that new accounts do not come with followers. One of the best places to start gathering your following is offline. Tell your loyal patients about the new account and invite them to follow. Encourage employees to follow your practice account and possibly even contribute content.

## **Follow the right accounts**

Your purpose is to gain an audience, so you might not give much thought to who you follow. Some businesses do not even bother following anyone, but that is a big mistake. There are a few reasons why you should work on building your newsfeed by following the right Instagrammers.

To begin with, account holders will receive notifications when you follow them. In addition to providing a bit of flattery (which might earn you a follow-back), this effectively alerts them of your presence on Instagram. Secondly, watching your own newsfeed can provide some creative inspiration and help you stay at the forefront of the latest Instagram trends. Lastly, people who check out your profile may look to see who you are following in order to learn a bit more about you.

Some of the best types of accounts to follow include:

- Influencers who are relevant to your niche
- Other dentists who you seek to network with or who may provide inspiration
- Dental associations, publications, and groups
- Local accounts pertinent to your target cities
- Don't forget you can follow hashtags as well

## **Add aesthetic appeal**

Your Instagram Aesthetic is not just about the appearance of individual posts but also the look and feel of your page.<sup>6</sup> When someone views your account and scrolls down the pages, all your posts appear chronologically in a standard layout. Collectively, they tell a story. Without a cohesive

aesthetic, that story is chaotic.

Techniques such as using a consistent style of photography, a theme among backgrounds, specific filters, or a common colour palette can help create aesthetic harmony. Also, be sure to choose images that reflect your dental office's brand identity.

If you aren't a big fan of photos and social networking, then you might have been hoping that it was a passing fad, which would quietly fade away. However, that is not going to happen, at least not in the foreseeable future. Now, more than ever, social media networks such as Instagram represent marketing opportunities that dental practices simply cannot afford to ignore.

## References

1. <https://blog.digimind.com/en/trends/instagram-key-global-figures-2019>
2. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1219318/social-media-platforms-growth-of-mau-worldwide/>
3. <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-statistics/>
4. <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/>
5. <https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/social-proof/>
6. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/establish-an-instagram-aesthetic>

## 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 visiting

[www.ekwa.com/msm/](http://www.ekwa.com/msm/) or simply send a text to 313-777-8494.