

Email Marketing: Why and How To Use It For Your Dermatology Practice



Text and social media have not displaced traditional email marketing strategies.

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>> The demise of email marketing has been reported for years. As text messaging, social media, and other communication channels gained popularity, it was assumed that email would become obsolete. At the start of 2022, email remains a central method of communication and an opportunity-rich marketing channel for your dermatology practice.

WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE A GREAT NEWSLETTER

One of the best forms of email marketing is the newsletter. It provides regular communication, helping to build relationships with current and potential patients. A high-quality, well-crafted newsletter can gain a loyal readership, similar to a blog or podcast. Some of the best tricks for a successful, engaging newsletter include:

- **Consistency.** Newsletters should be published on a regular schedule. Monthly is usually best because most people prefer infrequent emails.
- **Quality content.** A newsletter is not an advertisement. It should focus on patient education, topics of interest, tips and tricks, news about your practice, or similar valuable information.
- **Shareability.** Sharing is not just for social media! People love to pass along interesting or useful information. Be sure that your template includes a convenient sharing link or button.
- **Versatility.** Odds are, you use an HTML template. However, that format is not always compatible with accessibility email readers. Additionally, some people opt to view messages in plain text. Therefore, it is essential to provide a well-presented text version of your newsletter.
- **Timeliness.** Unlike website content, email newsletters are only viewed for a short timeframe. That provides an excellent opportunity for time-sensitive content, mak-

ing the newsletter more relevant, exciting, and fresh. For example, include weather-related skincare tips, holiday greetings, mentions of local events, recent happenings in your office, and other current topics.

PROMOTIONAL EMAIL VS SPAM

If done right, promotional emails can be an effective marketing tactic. However, if your message is viewed as spam, it will not be effective and may have a negative impact on the receiver's view of your practice. The key is to treat promotional emails as another form of content marketing. Yes, you are promoting a product or service, but it is not just an advertisement. It also offers value to the reader.

There are several ways to add value to your promotional emails, including:

- **Provide some relevant information.** Do not just promote your service, but also educate the reader about it. For example, answer a few frequently asked questions, explain relevant clinical studies, or introduce people to a new product.
- **Offer a discount or value-added extra.** In this case, you are not just advertising a service but also alerting

Numbers You Should Know

- Half of the world's population uses email.
- 90 percent of Americans over the age of 15 have one or more active email accounts, per TonerBuzz.com.
- Email marketing has an average ROI of 4400%, according to PC Magazine.
- Email newsletters have an average open rate of 22%.

your reader to a great deal. Limited time offers, such as monthly specials, trigger FOMO (fear of missing out) and tend to spur people to action.

- **Segment your mailing list.** Segmentation involves dividing your mailing list into segments based on interest and selectively sending relevant messages. For example, some patients may be interested in acne and eczema treatments, while others are interested in anti-aging solutions.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Admittedly, email marketing has a bit of a bad reputation for good reasons. It can be off-putting to the receiver. Many dermatologists have tried it with lukewarm results at best. People complain about too many messages clogging up their inboxes. Emails are often deleted, unopened. However, do not let this discourage you. There are many highly successful email marketing campaigns. The key is knowing what to avoid:

- **Do not ignore best practices (and legal requirements).** It is essential that you respect mailing list subscribers' privacy and that you only send marketing messages to people who choose to receive them. This is also a legal requirement under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Be sure that your email marketing software is GDPR compliant.
- **Do not use generic, uninteresting email subjects.** Craft a subject line that makes a bold statement, piques curiosity, uses emojis, or otherwise entices the reader

to open it. Use a conversational tone and customized elements to make the message seem more personal. For example, the open rate is higher for emails that include the recipient's first name.

- **Don't use over-hyped, spammy sounding subjects.** Dramatic claims, excess use of words like "amazing," and similar over-the-top subject lines can be displeasing to the reader. Also, spam words (HubSpot offers an informative blog post on the topic) increase the chances of your message being delivered to the junk folder, where the recipient will never see it.
- **Don't send poorly designed emails.** The quality of content is important, but the email will be ineffective if great content is wrapped in a poor design. The most common design mistake is using a template that is not mobile compatible. The number of people checking email on smartphones is nearly double that of people using a desktop, the website EasySentry.com reports. Other design errors include excess graphics, cluttered appearance, lengthy blocks of text, and weak calls to action.

ALL COMMUNICATION IS MARKETING

Email marketing is not just about newsletters and promotions. You probably do not think of appointment reminders, follow-ups, and responses to inquiries as marketing. These are essential, routine communication. However, every interaction contributes to the overall patient experience.

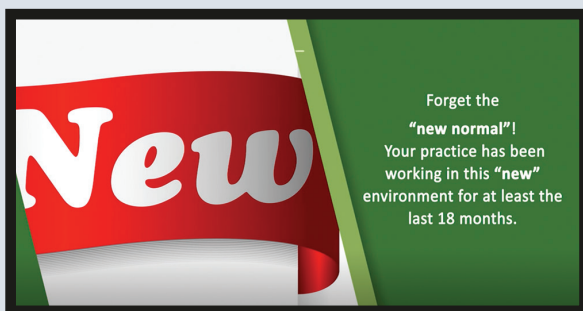
An unprofessional, untimely, or impersonal message will reflect poorly on your practice. Whereas a positive experience helps build strong patient relationships. Happy patients are more likely to return, and they are more likely to leave good reviews. For that very reason, loyalty and advocacy are the final stages of the marketing funnel.

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

Email use is ingrained in today's life and business. That makes email one of the most available, valuable marketing channels for the modern dermatology practice. ■

Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for more than a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dermatologists, 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.

WATCH NOW



You and your staff have been living and working within this "new" environment for almost two years. This Ekwa Marketing video asks, "What is the next normal?" and offers five ways to market for tomorrow's increasingly digitally savvy, curious, socially aware, and educated consumer.

Watch now: PracDerm.com/NextNormal