

Avoid These 12 Common Dental Marketing Mistakes

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Digital marketing is the driving force behind a successful dental practice. However, missteps can drive your practice in the wrong direction. Save yourself time, money, embarrassment, and frustration by avoiding these common marketing pitfalls:

1. Incompatible email format: More emails are read on [mobile devices](#) than via desktop clients. That means if your HTML newsletters and messages aren't mobile compatible, you are excluding most of your subscribers. In addition to technical formatting, think mobile when writing subject lines.

2. Keyword stuffing: A few years ago, search was dominated by keywords. The more of them you had, and the more frequently they were repeated, the more visitors you could get. Those days are long gone, as Google focuses increasingly on providing a quality, personalized experience. Keywords are still crucial, but overusing them will harm your search engine optimization (SEO).

3. Lack of analysis: Marketing is not a "set it and forget it" endeavor. Technology, techniques, and trends constantly evolve, as does your dental practice. Similarly, the best marketing strategy is in a constant state of evolution. Track the results of various channels and campaigns, and adjust your future efforts accordingly.

4. Poor customer service: Marketing may get your phones ringing, but it can't fill your schedule with new appointments unless those calls convert. Use phone scripts and implement detailed customer service policies to ensure consistency and quality among your front office staff. If team members are lacking skills, invest in customer service training.

5. Neglecting reviews: Word of mouth is still the most powerful marketing tool, and it can work to your benefit or detriment. Today, most people turn to social media and medical review sites when looking for a dentist.

Update your online profiles with current information and links. Most importantly, watch for negative reviews and take mitigative action promptly.

6. Ignoring the competition: What marketing channels are your top competitors using? What social networks do they have large followings on? What are their best-ranking search terms? If you don't know, it's time to start paying attention. You can learn from their mistakes, get inspiration from their successes, and find marketing opportunities that you otherwise might have overlooked.

7. Being antisocial: What began as a fad among teenagers has grown into one of the most used communication systems in the world. Today, social media is a preferred means of information distribution, utilized by individuals, small businesses, large corporations, and governments everywhere. Today's dentist can't afford to ignore Facebook, Instagram, and other popular networks.

8. Branding inconsistency: An advertisement can't be successful if people don't notice what dental office it represents. Branding consists of more than just a good logo. There should be common threads among marketing materials, advertisements, blogs, social posts, and anything else that you present to the public. Consistency in visual style, message, and tone combine to create a unique and memorable brand.

9. Ignoring local search marketing: Website SEO is central to any digital marketing strategy. However, unless you are an international retailer, you shouldn't be competing with the entire internet for traffic. Google recognizes location-relevant queries, such as a search for dental treatment, and customizes results accordingly. Your full address, including state and zip code, should be in the header or footer of every page. Additionally, incorporate the names of towns or neighborhoods into your keywords.

10. Outdated information: How long has it been since you have updated your website and online profiles? If it's been a while, take a few moments to review them. You might be surprised at the amount of inaccurate information you find. Changes such as updated financial policies, new team members, expanded services, or revised office hours can accumulate quickly.

11. Lack of quality control: Digital marketing is content-centric. Along with frequent website updates, you need a regular supply of new blog posts, images, videos, social posts, and emails. Reviewing, editing, and analyzing everything before it is published may be a daunting task, but the alternative can be disastrous. New or restructured websites should be checked for broken links, device compatibility, and technical errors. For content, check details such as accuracy, visual appeal of graphics, sound quality in videos, and spelling and grammar in text.

12. Legal infractions: Dental marketing is strictly regulated, and the specific rules depend on your location. Are you allowed to call yourself a specialist? Can you legally post patient testimonials on your website? What can you say when publicly responding to a review? If you don't know the answers to these and similar questions, ask your lawyer to review your marketing materials.

Bonus tip: When in doubt, consult a professional. It may seem economical to write blog posts yourself, task the receptionist with web mastering, and have the hygienist manage social media. However, the result is likely to be a weak marketing campaign and unprofessional appearance, unless these people genuinely have the time and expertise needed for the job.

Marketing involves many specialized skills, from content editing to graphic design and JavaScript, none of which are taught in dental school. Whether you outsource or hire an inhouse marketing team, choose people who have the expertise needed for the task at hand. Quality marketing is one of the best investments you will ever make.

Mr. Arulrajah is president and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete Internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dentists. With a team of more than 140 full-time marketers, ekwa.com helps dentists who know where they want to go get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call (855) 598-3320 or email naren@ekwa.com.