

Create Competitive Dental Content for Your Practice in 2017

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The patient journey has undergone a massive change in the last few years. Today, practice discovery and engagement is self-directed, and most of the process is carried out before a dentist can even identify a potential patient.

Your patients make appointment decisions before they actually get in touch with you. What transpires after the initial contact sets the precedent for future interactions. Everything depends on how well you can demonstrate your practice's value, provide customized relevance, and consistently create better touch points at each stage of the patient experience.

One of the most effective ways of achieving each of these goals is via patient-centric healthcare content online. Your content can help impact practice perception, it can drive website and social traffic, and it can boost lead conversion for your dental practice.

Develop a Unique Voice

Practice differentiators can get you noticed and give you a competitive edge in an overcrowded market space. Patients want dentists who deliver and focus beyond the basic doctor-patient dynamics. They want to go to a practice with personality and a unique voice.

Mimicking the unique selling proposition of your close competitors will only get you so far. You will lose out eventually where it really matters the most—attracting the right kind of patients, patient retention, and patient growth.

Since your content is the first and the most important element in building patient engagement in the digital space, you need to use it effectively. The dental practice down the street might have found better patient success

by injecting humor in its voice. But there is no guarantee that it will work for your practice as well.

Look at your core practice values, your mission statement, and your patient demographics and pick up elements that best describe and align with your practice. It is equally important that you maintain a patient-centric approach when creating a voice for your dental practice. So for example, if you find patients respond better to educative dental content, then explore ways in which you can deliver important information via your website, blog, and social media.

What People Say About You

The most important exercise that you need to do to ensure your content is fresh, highly relevant, and competitive is to start listening to what people say about your practice. Monitor conversations of current and potential patients, get your staff involved in the content creation process because they engage with the patients who come to your practice on a daily basis, and engage with your sales and customer support teams to understand what people want. Use the intelligence you pick up to create content that your audience robustly responds to.

If you can consistently deliver on your audience's expectations, they will start associating your practice with a specific value proposition that again adds to your voice, leading to a better reputation.

Variety, Research, Distribution, and Promotion

Creating content that resonates with your audience's expectations is as much about variety as it is about details and processes. While most practices do get their content creation process right, the one area that they tend to overlook is the importance of having a process and content creation structure.

Here are a few tips on how you can create and optimize your content creation process:

- Identify your top pick of topics that bring in the most engagement.
- Go through your competitors' content to see what their audience is currently engaging with.
- Do a Google search on best-performing topics and target keywords.
- Compile a list of topics based on content across the board that is performing well.
- Create multiple lists of potential topics for future reference, which can cut down your time on both research and time spent on picking up topics for your content.
- Maintain an editorial or content calendar so you can quickly pick up a topic and start writing.

If you have been wondering why your content is continuously failing to make the impact you expect, the problem could be with the kind of promotion and distribution solutions you follow.

Most content creators can easily turn out a fantastic piece. But when it comes to finding an effective platform for publishing and distribution, they tend to hop between sites and waste precious time deciding where to post and promote.

Keep the following in mind when planning your content distribution and promotion:

- Identify channels and platforms (blogs, social sites, guest sites, and your website) that best meet the publication and distribution goals for your content.
- It is not only important to monitor and regulate where your content is promoted, but also how it is promoted.
- Detail the time that needs to be dedicated for future promotion of your content.
- Create a list of publishing avenues (in case you want to try [native advertising](#)) and influencers to give your content exposure in front of the right kind of audience.
- Use multiple content formats to ensure better promotional advantages.

Strategic Repurposing of Content

There is a lot of content out there. Your audience has probably come across a variety of different versions of pretty much the same topic over a number of sites. Considering that dentistry is not an exhaustive subject, there

is always something new or of value that can be included with a topic to give it a new spin or fresh lease on life.

So instead of wasting time on always looking for new topics, consider repurposing content. Pick up topics that are generally of good value to your reading audience and build on them. You can add new stats, include information based on new research, or include an interview from a prominent personality in your piece and essentially repackage it. This is a great way to make your content stand out from everyone else's while also saving you a lot of time.

Conclusion

Content marketing is a vibrant area of digital healthcare marketing. Dental practices need to look at ways in which their content and its marketing can continuously improve and stay relevant in a hyper-competitive marketplace.

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.

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