

# Adopt New Digital Marketing Strategies for Success in 2016

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Influenced by changes in consumer behavior and technology, digital marketing is rapidly evolving. Brands that don't develop necessary strategies to remain competitive won't just find it difficult to stay ahead of the curve, though. They also may find it impossible to hold on to their market position.

But despite the continuously changing digital and social landscape, the emphasis on delivering personalized brand experiences and the importance of understanding your target audience continue to be top marketing priorities. This has made it absolutely imperative for dental brands to integrate digital and traditional marketing tactics along with new media concepts and technologies into their marketing mix.

The last few years proved to be big for the digital health market in several ways. In addition to new technology, shifting patient preferences brought in a wave of change into how healthcare brands reach out and connect with their audiences. And now as we step into 2016, it will be interesting to see how the digital health space will change again for healthcare brands.

Digital marketing can provide extensive advantages to dental brands. New marketing tools and platforms have paved the way for the growth of innovative marketing strategies. Connecting with "smart" patients not only proved to be a challenge, but also became the new best thing.

Digital marketing presents a wide spectrum of disruptive brand building opportunities for dental brands. It also offers 4 advantages:

- Opportunities to reach out to and connect with a bigger target market segment;
- The ability to use technology to supplement marketing efforts;
- The ability to measure return on investment from marketing strategies, making it easier to understand what works and what doesn't work, which can help optimize marketing spending;
- Access to crowd-sourced brand-building resources such as social media content that can further drive brand marketing.

### **How Digital Marketing Impacted 2015**

One of the most prominent trends of 2015 was the increase in digital ad budgets. Additionally, brands were more focused on improving search-engine optimization and creating personalized content for their target audiences in a time and over a platform or device of their choice. Also in 2015:

- Content marketing helped generate 3 times as many leads as traditional outbound marketing at 62% less cost.<sup>1</sup>
- 28% of marketers reduced their advertising budget with the aim of allocating more towards digital marketing.<sup>2</sup>
- 73% of business-to-business marketers included video into their content marketing mix, and 7% of marketers were keen on increasing their YouTube marketing.<sup>3</sup>
- 71% of companies said they were interested in increasing their digital marketing budgets in 2015.<sup>4</sup>

Most brands not only understood the importance of having a digital marketing plan in place, they also actively pursued the implementation of digital marketing strategies to drive brand marketing.

The best way to keep up with an evolving market space is to evolve with it. The only way forward is to move out of your comfort zone and see how best you can reinvent your digital marketing strategy to keep up with the times. Here are 6 strategies worth contemplating.

### **Mobile Is Only Going to Grow**

Definitely, 2015 was big year for mobile. According to a report from eMarketer, mobile ad spending accounted for 49% of digital ad spending in 2015. This figure is expected to touch 72% by 2019.

Additionally, Google announced the release of the "Mobilegeddon" algorithm update with the aim of driving mobile optimized sites, though Google did later clarify that a mobile-only site without a desktop version was also fine. But when Google speaks, marketers pay very close attention, and a number of brands took to mobile site optimization in 2015.

Another factor driving mobile growth is the fact that the smartphone revolution is not going to slow down. The new generation of Internet users coming online in the next couple of years will use a smartphone to access your website, not a desktop or a laptop. Brands that prioritize mobile marketing stand a better chance of earning brand-building dividends.

### **Increased Advertising Spending**

Digital marketing in the last few years has evolved and become more competitive, a trend that is expected to continue even in 2016. Brands will feel the need to allocate more marketing spending on all areas of digital marketing compared to what they did in 2015. The increase in marketing competitors will drive digital advertising prices even higher.

### **Increased Focus on Relationship Marketing**

Mobile usage is booming and brands that connect with their consumers on a device of their choice and in their exact moment of need will find it easier to build a loyal consumer base. Today the concept of relationship marketing is more wholesome and focuses on building customer loyalty by providing personalized customer engagement in the long run.

Millennial patients, for instance, prefer communicating via digital media and platforms. So, dental brands that use these media to manage their expectations will be able to build stronger connections and benefit from improved lead-generation opportunities.

### **Wearable Technology Will Evolve**

Wearables are expected to keep up the momentum in 2016. And while virtual reality is also gaining ground, wearables will win more traction. A growing number of patients today keep track of their health via wearable devices. However, size is an issue, so Web and app content will need to be optimized accordingly.

### **Build on Your Digital Assets**

Your dental practice website and blog are crucial digital assets that can help drive traffic to your site and earn you much digital attention if managed correctly. Keep your site and blog populated with quality content, as it is one of the most important requirements for optimizing for discovery. Social media is another vital digital asset that can help you connect with a wider target audience.

### **Video Ads Will Dominate**

Video ads are growing in popularity. Facebook and Bing offer video options to advertisers, while Google is now including video content in its search engine algorithm. So video ads will grow in prominence in 2016, and brands can expect to gain solid value in their use.

### **Conclusion**

Technology and consumer behavior changes have swept through digital marketing in the last few years. Reaching out and connecting with a savvy consumer base in a highly competitive space can only happen when brands are aware of the changes and trends that dominate the market and when they openly adopt a creative approach to communicating with their customers.

***Naren 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 130 full time marketers, Ekwa Marketing helps doctors who know where they want to go to get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call Naren directly at 877-249-9666.*

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