

# 8 mistakes that can derail your dental social media campaign

April 16, 2015

By Susan Hutson, with Vikas Vij

According to Social Media Today, 93% of marketers use social networks for business, and the fastest growing segment on social media is the group between ages 45 and 54. The opportunity to promote a dental practice on social media is huge, but not everyone is able to leverage the power of social media effectively. Many online marketers make some common mistakes in their social media engagement, which can nullify the desired results or even backfire.



### 1. Underestimating the marketing power of social media

A majority of dentists do not have a focused social media strategy to boost the prospects of their practice. Even though publicity through social media is practically free, many dentists do not believe it can yield true benefits for their practice. Social media is certainly not a cash cow that produces a return on investment in terms of hard income.

However, over a period of time, a cohesive and systematic social media strategy can build a positive online reputation, increase awareness about the practice, improve patient engagement and satisfaction levels, and give the practice a chance to reach out to new patients. All of this translates into tangible benefits for the practice.

### 2. Failure to put the audience at the center of engagement

Many marketers who engage actively on social media forget the cardinal rule – to put the client at the center of every conversation. Instead of speaking about the patients and their needs, marketers get too busy talking about themselves. Social media is not the place for blowing your own trumpet. It's a place for mutual discussion and constructive engagement.

The easiest way to drive away members of a social network is to speak about your own concerns and needs instead of theirs. Social media marketers should not view themselves as advertisers, but more as information providers and participants in an interactive medium. Storytelling, actionable suggestions, wit and emotion can be powerful elements of any successful social media conversation.

### 3. Targeting the wrong demographics

To achieve the right impact on social media, it's important to identify the target audience and focus maximum efforts to engage with that segment. However, many marketers ignore this goal and aim for maximum coverage without worrying about the demographic profile of the audience. For instance, a practice in Chicago will have little to gain by extending its engagement to people from other cities or countries. Strictly from a marketing point of view, the effort should remain localized. Similarly, a practice specializing in esthetic treatments should target female audiences as often as possible.

### 4. Trying to be present everywhere

Social media networks have proliferated in the last few years, with Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, Tumblr, and others joining the fray with the older players such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. It's a mistake to try and diversify presence to every network without making a strong impact on any of them. It's important to discriminate and identify which social networks may be of direct relevance to the practice. If the marketer has the time and capability to handle all social media accounts with efficiency and dedication, only then does it makes sense to reach out to target audiences from all possible channels.

### 5. Lack of consistency on multiple social platforms

It's essential to have a cohesive social media strategy and unified branding if a dental practice decides to have a strong presence across multiple social networks. The appearance and performance across different networks should reflect the same level of professionalism, ideology, and focus. This allows audiences to connect better with the brand and appreciate its identity. The use of background, colors, fonts, logo, images, and videos should be consistent, along with core text such as the mission, vision, and objectives of the dental practice. If any special offers or announcements are made, this should be done consistently across various networks.

### 6. Poor responsiveness on social networks

The first duty for a social media marketer should be toward the people who are already a part of the network. The marketer should take out time to respond to relevant comments, feedback, inquiries, and suggestions. A high level of responsiveness will eventually grow the network and draw the interest of more people.

Messages on social networks should be personalized wherever possible so it does not sound like a mechanical response. If the marketer remains focused on building engagement, the long-term results should be better than by simply driving indiscriminate traffic to the network by all means.

### 7. Staying disconnected with prevailing sentiment

Just like other marketing tools, social media is highly sensitive to current sentiment. However, many marketers in their enthusiasm to push their own agenda forget how people may be feeling about a particular situation, and they continue to harp on their own products and services. A natural disaster or national tragedy is likely to seize the imagination of participants on social networks for some time. During such periods, it's critical to remain sensitive to public sentiment and stay involved with their concerns. Rather than trying to control the direction of the conversation, an experienced marketer should choose to go with the flow and allow the conversation to decide its own substance and pace.

### 8. Failing to make sustainable social engagement

Another social media marketing folly is to kick start a conversation and then leave it incomplete and move on to the next conversation. Speaking first and thinking later should be avoided on social media. The risk with social media technology is that once a comment, viewpoint, or opinion has been disseminated publicly, it may reach far within a short time and it will be impossible to retract it later.

Social marketers cannot afford fickle-mindedness. Engaging in sustainable and focused conversations and discussions can help build a strong social network with long-term sustainability that can deliver real results. Using social communities for business interests requires a commitment to meaningful engagement and helping others, rather than exclusively chasing self-interest.

**ALSO BY SUSAN HUTSON AND VIKAS VIJ:** [Pinterest for your dental practice? Yes! It can be an effective social marketing tool](#)  
[Today's dental marketing means being familiar with variety of screens and devices](#)



*Susan Hutson is vice president of marketing at Ekwa.com, a complete Internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media marketing, and the online reputations of dentists. Vikas Vij is the marketing manager for Ekwa Marketing. Visit the website at [www.ekwa.com](http://www.ekwa.com).*