

Include Instagram in Your Dental Marketing Strategies

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A decade ago, Instagram was launched as a simple photo-sharing app for mobile phones. At the time, it was a hit with personal users, but it seemed unlikely to have much marketing potential for dental practices. In the years since, it has not only expanded to other devices, but also grown into a social media powerhouse that you can't afford to ignore:

- Audience: With [a billion users](#), Instagram is the fastest growing social media network.
- Business friendly: [Eight in 10](#) Instagram users follow one or more brands.
- Engagement: About [a third](#) of the most viewed Instagram stories are from businesses.
- Flexibility: With stories, videos, ads, and even product sales, you can do a lot more than just share snapshots.

If your practice doesn't already have an Instagram presence, getting started is simple. Be sure that your dental practice's Facebook page is linked to your Instagram account, which simplifies setup and cross-posting.

Using the platform is equally easy, as it takes just a few clicks or taps to publish a post. But using it effectively, and getting the results you want, does take a little planning and creativity. Here are some of the best ways to make the most of Instagram for marketing your dental practice.

Use Hashtags Effectively

Instagram allows up to 30 hashtags in a post and 10 in a story, but you probably won't need that many. [Research](#) shows that a total of nine hashtags generally garners the most engagement. However, you should worry less about the number of hashtags and more about their relevancy. Never use a hashtag just because it is popular, because your posts will look spammy.

Tell Your Story

One of the most popular Instagram features is stories, used by [500 million](#) people daily. With tools such as stickers and one-click polls, Instagram stories have virtually unlimited potential for creativity. More importantly, they are fun and engaging, and they convey authenticity.

Be Consistent

Whether you post a couple of times a day or a couple of times a month, try to stick with your schedule. Inconsistency with long periods of inactivity is one of the quickest ways to lose your following on any social media platform.

Interactive Is Engaging

You don't just want people to see your content, but also take notice and engage. Quizzes, polls, contests, and even carousel posts encourage people to interact with your content. Also, don't overlook the power of a simple question, which encourages

viewers to comment their answers.

Create an Appealing Instagram Aesthetic

Each post is a complete piece of content. It is also a small piece of a bigger picture, which is your Instagram feed. Consider how each post looks alongside of adjacent posts and strive for a consistent style and color theme. Not only does it look great, but an appealing aesthetic also helps attract new followers.

Include Videos

Sure, Instagram was designed for photos. But it now allows short video clips, as well as long-format videos via Instagram TV. One of the most popular and enduring content types, videos are great for promotional, entertaining, or educational content.

Involve Your Staff

Encourage your employees' ideas and creative contributions to your Instagram presence. This doesn't always have to involve them posting or creating content for your practice's main account. An established brand hashtag lets your team help spread brand awareness with posts on their own accounts.

Encourage Patient Participation

Of course, sharing photos of patients is tricky. You need to be mindful of HIPAA, general privacy issues, and proper consent. But many people, especially cosmetic patients, want to (and do) share selfies to show off their new smiles. Make sure they are aware of your branded hashtag and encourage them to use it.

Advertise

Organic results often produce the highest quality leads, with little to no expense. But if you want to extend your reach, Instagram features a robust suite of tools for [paid advertising](#).

Work with Influencers

User-generated content has the benefits of authenticity and expanding your audience. Those users with exceptionally large audiences, known as social media influencers, can often yield better results than a standard paid advertising campaign.

Conclusion

Social media marketing isn't just about having a Facebook page. If your practice isn't utilizing Instagram, you could be missing out on a marketing and branding goldmine. This platform is rapidly evolving and growing. Don't be shy about using its vast array of features such as videos and stories, as well as trying out new ones as they develop.

Mr. 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 dentists, 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 him.