

# Achieve Social Media Success for Your Dental Practice in Three Steps

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You created a business page on social media for your practice, added all of your information, and posted a few things. Now you have a dozen followers, all employees and personal friends. Suddenly, social media marketing doesn't seem so simple. You find yourself wondering how to reach potential patients who aren't following your page, how to acquire a following, and where you should go from here.

At this point, some dentists give up, leaving inactive social profiles to remain in eternal digital limbo. But they are giving up one of the best tools in modern digital marketing. Don't let that happen to you. Follow these simple steps to put the power of social media to work for your practice.

## **Choose the Right Platforms**

There are hundreds of social media communities, and more appear every day. Some are destined to fade away as soon as they appear. Some are dedicated to specific topics or lifestyles. And some fail to gain a significant membership.

It simply isn't feasible to join them all, and you certainly wouldn't be able to keep every profile up to date anyway. How can you decide which networks are right for your practice?

First, use the major networks. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter continue to dominate the social space. Maintaining a presence on most or all of these networks is sufficient for most dental practices.

Next, find out where your patients are. If you want to be more selective with your social media activity, find out what networks your current patients use the most. Chances are, those networks will produce the best leads. Asking in conversation during appointments is an imprecise way to gather data, and it may be awkward. Instead, add a question about social media use to your patient surveys.

Finally, seek out local networks. By nature, most social media is global, or at least national. However, some small networks are location specific. A few, most notably the rapidly growing [Nextdoor](#), have broad membership but a hyper-local focus. Look around and see if any location-targeted social platforms are especially popular in your city.

### **Start With a Solid Foundation**

The process of creating a business page or profile is a little different on every network, but generally it isn't difficult. You will need to fill out a little basic information, but most other parts of your profile are optional. In fact, social networks make it so easy that business owners often skip over important steps. Don't get in a hurry to publish or advertise your page. Take the time to do it right:

- Complete every part of your profile, including office hours, categories, services offered, team members, and anything else that is applicable.
- Make sure your business and service description are well written and appealing, including important keywords.
- Choose high-resolution, appropriately sized images for your profile pictures and header or cover images. A picture of you or your logo is a good choice for a profile picture.
- Check for errors. Proofread all text and verify name, address, and phone number consistency. View the page on various devices with different sized screens to make sure your profile and cover images display properly.

### **Grow Your Network**

There may be millions of people on the network, many of whom would make ideal patients. However, they aren't seeing your content yet. You need them to follow or like your page. You need to get them talking and excited about dentistry, a topic that strikes fear in the hearts of many. It is challenging, but it's not impossible.

Use paid advertising effectively. Virtually every network has options for purchasing ads. Here, you aren't just advertising your practice, but your social profile. Boost your best, most creative, and engaging posts. Use audience selection tools to target people near your practice, especially those with demographics that align with your ideal patient. Once people like your page, they will continue seeing your content.

Also, encourage employee involvement. If you just mention the new Facebook page at this month's staff meeting, some employees might go like it. If you discuss it regularly while in the planning phase, get employee input, ask them to contribute photos, and generate enthusiasm. Then, employees will be more inclined to like the page, share it, and ask their friends to check it out.

You need to turn your patients into advocates as well. You aren't just trying to reach new leads. Announce your social accounts to your current patients, encouraging them to connect with you. As a whole, dentistry isn't a feel-good topic, and people are wary of potential bad experiences. Generally, this is seen as a disadvantage in dental marketing, but it does have an important benefit. Happy, loyal patients tend to be proud of their dentist. They feel like they have found a treasure and something truly special. Like anything else special, they are eager to share with their friends on social media.

Finally, use social sharing buttons. Increasingly, social media is being seen as a good place to learn more about a dental practice. Someone visiting your website or reading your newsletter is likely to gravitate to a platform such as Facebook, so make it easy for them. Use recognizable icons for buttons to visit your profile and add social sharing buttons to your content. Additionally, don't forget to include social links at Google My Business and any other online listing that has an option for it.

## Final Thoughts

If you follow these tips and post quality content, you are well on your way to building a thriving community around your practice. However, you should be aware that social media is not a once-and-done endeavor. To keep it growing, you need to reply to comments and encourage conversation. Promptly answer questions. Remove offensive or inappropriate comments. Post new content consistently.

Your practice's presence on social media isn't enough. It needs to be active and involved. If you don't plan to keep up with it on a daily basis, hire a service or assign a responsible employee.

**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 180 full-time marketers, [ekwa.com](http://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](mailto:naren@ekwa.com).

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