



How to Benefit from Podcasts for Your Dental Practice Marketing?

March 14, 2019

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The World Wide Web constantly provides companies with new possibilities to promote their business. Digital marketing is also significantly cheaper than advertising through print media or television.

With the number of global internet users exceeding 4 billion, it is no wonder that smart business owners are increasingly turning towards the internet, to reach a wider audience.

Here, podcasting is a digital practice that enables you to upload audio files, and share them with your target audience as a web series. In a sense, it may seem like a web-based radio show, except that while radio is often streamed live, podcasts are pre-recorded.

This also means that your listeners do not have to be connected to the internet for the entire duration of the podcast. The audio file can be downloaded all at once, and listened to at leisure.

Now you may wonder what a podcast has to do with promoting your dental practice. The answer lies in this multi-dimensional word: traffic.

Today, people spend an average of one hour every day in commute – in a private vehicle, on public transport, or even just walking by themselves. Further, smartphones and seamless Wi-Fi availability (especially in moving vehicles) make it easy to access the internet no matter where you are.

This has resulted in a sharp spike in the popularity of podcasts, as people are eager to tune in during their daily travel. (Some people even listen to them during their workouts.)

Keeping this in mind, here are 11 tips to help you make the best use of this trend to promote your dental practice.

1. Develop a digital marketing plan

Old school businesses tend to take the internet less seriously than other mainstream media. However, such an approach will produce random results for your podcasts and push you to discontinue.

Instead, prepare to invest your time and attention in an exhaustive digital plan, where you make use of other inter-networked platforms along with podcasts. (This can include a website for your practice, medical blogs, social media, etc.). They will collectively work together to maximize your digital footprint and visibility, and dramatically boost the marketability of your dental practice services.

2. Define clear goals and targets for your podcast

The biggest reason podcasts fail, is that the speaker is unclear on the overall vision. Such podcasts will seem haphazard in their choice of topic, and listeners eventually lose interest in following you.

Therefore, before you record your first podcast, take time to define:

- WHY you are creating it –Is it (only) to promote your dental practice? Is it to increase awareness in your industry? Are you a passionate blogger, or even a celebrity in the medical world, and have something valuable to share with your followers? It could also be a combination of all of the above.
- For WHOM you are creating it – this will help you connect with your target audience, as you speak for them, rather than to them.

3. Publish on multiple platforms

Once you record a podcast, you will need to upload it to a web media host (like Libsyn or Simplecast), for a nominal monthly fee. Choose this wisely, as you do not want to make a cheap choice, and then be forced to migrate within the year.

Next, you will publish it to popular broadcast platforms, so they can list it in their directories for public visibility and accessibility. There is no cost attached to this, so you should submit your podcast on as many platforms as possible (like BluBrry, Google Play Music, iHeartRADIO, iTunes, Miro Guide, Stitcher, Spotify, TuneIn, YouTube, etc.).

4. Prime your podcast for iTunes

iTunes continues to remain the leading source for podcasts, with over 18.5 million episodes. In order to maximize your visibility on this platform, it is best to manually fill-in the metadata using an ID3 editor.

This includes:

- Title – You can also add SEO friendly keywords, separated by a colon. (Example: “Daily Tricks for Strong, Shining Teeth: oral hygiene”)
- Name – You can also include your chosen professional title. (Example: “John Doe: Orthodontist” or “John Doe: Medical Blogger Extraordinaire”)
- Description
- Episode title & description
- Cover Art – Include a visually intriguing image that will appeal to your audience.

5. Prepare to do or die the first 8 weeks

This may sound extreme (and we are obviously joking!), but the first couple of months can literally make or break your podcast career. The reason is the splashy “New and Noteworthy” listing of iTunes.

Here, iTunes only considers podcasts published in the past 8 weeks, with 5-star ratings and generous reviews, and a high number of downloads and subscribers. Conversely, if you make it to this elite listing, you can expect your podcasts to enjoy greater visibility with the potential to go viral, and hence experience a quantum leap in the number of downloads and subscribers.

6. Armor your podcasts with a potent launch strategy

A well-planned launch can get you great numbers during the first 8 weeks, so you make it to iTunes’ noteworthy list.

For this, you can consider the following:

- Pre-record multiple episodes with high quality content, all to be simultaneously released during the launch. This will also increase downloads.
- Release intriguing snippets on your social media pages prior to the launch, in order to create a buzz to pull in initial subscribers.
- Create a mailing list of potential subscribers, bloggers, reviewers, and keep them updated.
- Include the review link in the “Show notes” section of a podcast, so your listeners can easily access it. (This section will be available for editing when you upload your file on a web media host.)
- Post release, you can also follow up with anyone who has expressed an interest or a positive comment on your social media, and request them for a review.

7. Plan an aggressive social media campaign

Again, remember the 8-week timeline to make a sizable impact with your podcasts. This means that you will need to begin promotions on social media, at least two weeks before the launch. Here are some suggestions.

- **Twitter:** This is a good place to start as it asks very little of you, but has the potential to help you reach out to its 326 million users.
- **Facebook:** It has over 27 billion users and is the king of social media platforms. However, you will need to engage with more time and attention in order to build a loyal follower base. Paid Facebook ads can also help boost your visibility, but obviously come at a cost.
- **WhatsApp:** This is a close second to Facebook with 5 billion users. It is also effortless to use on your smartphone, so you can send messages quickly with text +graphics to all your mobile contacts.
- **Pinterest:** With more than 250 million users, this platform is more popular amongst cooking, gardening, crafting and other DIY enthusiasts. If your podcast is the kind that goes best with an image and instructions, Pinterest is right up your alley.
- **Reddit:** This has 330 million users and acts like a catch-it-all, with headlines, social news, viral memes, and so on. However, you will first need to understand and get comfortable with this platform before you can become effective at using it.

For all of the above, begin with one sharable element a day – like a tweet, a Facebook post, a Pinterest pin and so on – as you give your audience a sneak peek into your upcoming podcast launch (like titles, topics, and other interesting tidbits).

You can also include a customized button on your company website so your followers can share these notes on their social media pages. This kind of targeted audience engagement can make your promotions viral. Finally, remember to step up the frequency of your social media posts for the last 1-2 days leading to the launch.

8. Build an engaging relationship with your social media followers

None of the above tips will work if you do not have followers who are interested in listening to your podcasts. Here, social media platforms are as interactive as they come. This means that you will need to invest your time, attention and intention for the following:

- Network online with fellow users so they become your friends and followers.
- Tweet/Post/Pin something interesting every day so you get traffic from your followers, and inspire new users to join your popular social media page.

- If you have celebrity friends or guests who are familiar with your podcasts, encourage them to share your social media posts for a wider reach.

For this reason, potential podcasters prefer to get on social media, blog sites and other digital platforms, at least 3-months before they publish their podcasts. This is time well spent on understanding the interests and passions of your target audience so you can factor them into your podcasts. You can also use several analytic tools (like Google Analytics) to help you measure traffic and engagement to your podcasts, and refine your promotional strategies accordingly.

9. Build a rewarding partnership with your target community

Your personal podcasts will thrive only when the community thrives as a whole. For this reason, do not restrict yourself by becoming a lone warrior in your industry.

You can and should:

- Invite guests into your podcasts – perhaps others within the medical field, or even bloggers/ social media stars who understand the mindset of your target audience.
- Accept invitations to feature in podcasts published by others.
- Volunteer a service for other podcasters. You can also find possibilities that will benefit both your communities.
- Use the goodwill generated from the above to encourage cross promotion of podcasts on each other's websites and social media pages.
- Include contests, giveaways, and other fun activities to keep engagement at high levels within your online community.

10. Collaborate with a celebrity guest

People admire celebrities, so it is worthwhile to find one who also feels passionate about your chosen field. If you are able to get a celebrity to feature in your podcast as a guest, they are essentially validating the popularity and legitimacy of your podcast series. This will also get you big numbers in new subscriptions and viewership as the celebrity's followers are likely to be tagged in their social media promotions.

Remember that this may not happen overnight, as celebrities are extra cautious about what and whom they endorse. They may also need you to have certain viewership numbers before they agree to be on your show. Here, a little bit of patience, creativity, resilience and ultimately your own honest intentions can go a long way in producing miracles.

11. Collaborate with YouTube

Yes, YouTube is not your typical podcast platform. In fact, you may even need to create additional video footage to go with your audio podcast. However, search engines love YouTube. This is reason enough for you to open a YouTube channel and publish your podcasts on it. You can also use SEO-friendly keywords to increase traffic and trigger more subscriptions and downloads.

The Bottom Line

Content is king. This is the ultimate truth of any publishing platform, digital or otherwise. The above-mentioned tips can help you creatively promote your podcasts, provided your content continues to be original, engaging and relatable to your target audience. Now what exactly makes for such content – this is secret knowledge that only time and experience can teach!

About the Author

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 180+ full time marketers, www.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 to speak one-on-one with Naren.