

How to Increase Patient Relationships Through Newsletters

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One popular method of forging personal connections with prospective clients in virtually any profession or business is through the use of email newsletters. The medical profession is no exception, and many independent medical practitioners now use newsletters effectively to engage with their patients.

According to the Email Newsletter Usability report published by [Nielsen Norman Group](#) a few years ago, readers always feel an emotional connection with their newsletters. A total of 270 email newsletter reactions compiled from six different countries were considered while formulating this report. The analysis showed that email newsletters have been an effective means of client outreach across geographies and cultures.



Since newsletters are sent directly to a user's inbox, they tend to be more personal than websites. Over a period of time, this turns into a continuous relationship that becomes a comforting expectation on part of the client. You can form a strong and personal bond between your medical practice and prospective patients with the help of newsletters.

The challenge is to ensure this special connection with your patients is sustained for an extended time. The following are some ways in which you can ensure your email newsletter campaign achieves optimum results.

10 Ways to Increase Patient Relationships Through Newsletters

1. Understand Patient Requirements

Attracting the right audience is crucial when issuing any type of patient communication. Ensuring that patients receive the content that suits their requirements will enable them to resolve any problems they encounter. Take into account your patient's perspectives so as to cultivate an appropriate group of patients. For this, get the answers to the following questions:

- What type of information can help my patients know my practice?
- Who are the patients that stand to gain most from this information?
- Are there any similarities among these patients with respect to demographics or type of procedure?

The answers to these questions will help you understand your patients better and figure out the best way of communicating your message.

2. Determine the Voice

After shortlisting the patients who will receive your newsletter, it is essential to determine the tone or voice that will be most effective in communicating the message. This tone should correspond with the context of the article as well as your relationship with patients.

For instance, the voice used by a cosmetic surgeon will differ from that of a pediatrician. It is essential to have the right voice to effectively communicate your message.

3. Turn to Curated Content

It can be challenging to generate new content and in a busy practice it is usually not considered a priority. Using third-party content can save you time and this can be collected from journals and various reputable sources.

When looking for content it is essential to remember that patients will not read something that they are unable to understand. The aim should be to add value to the patient-physician relationship. Pay attention to the articles you collect and ensure that the doctor verifies the accuracy of the article. Also, cite your sources every time.

4. Keep it Relevant

In order to gain the attention of prospective customers, it is important to ensure that the content of your email newsletter is interesting, important, and informative. In order to ensure this, you should be aware of the *real* meaning of relevant, valuable, and informative content.

According to the study by Nielsen Norman Group, 40% of users named the following features as crucial components of content:

- News associated with personal interests and hobbies
- Sale or price reports, particularly price drops
- News associated with deadlines, significant events, and other similar dates
- Of those asked, two-thirds expressed an interest in company actions as well as work-related news

An example: Over one million subscribers follow the daily newsletter by Hungry Girl [Lisa Lillien](#). She is known for her knowledge on managing weight while eating all that you love. The newsletter contains recipes as well as diets related to low calorie and low fat sweets or eats.

Lillien had humble beginnings as an email newsletter in 2004. Today, she has bestselling book deals from the *New York Times* besides appearing on *The Rachel Ray Show* and *Good Morning America* as well as others.

In the long term, what pays off is a newsletter that is relevant as well as informative. Some examples of informative content include:

- Infographics
- Blog Posts
- Tutorials and tips
- Contests winners or contests
- Reviews
- Videos or webinars
- Testimonials
- Photos
- Interesting facts
- Fan photos
- Recipes
- Holidays, events, and memorable dates

5. Newsletters Are Not the Place for Aggressive Sales

Remember not to focus your email newsletter on sales. It is better to send sales and offers through promo-specific mails. To ensure an effective newsletter, think of it as a close friend whom your reader welcomes into their life and inbox. You would not want someone you thought of as a friend and welcomed into your life to transform into an aggressive salesman.

However, you can incorporate a subtle sales update or a sales pitch into your newsletter. For example, you can say, “The friends and family rebate helps you save 30% this month” or something similar.

6. Keep It Brief, Yet Clickable

It takes an average person only about 51 seconds to scan a newsletter. It is essential to ensure that the content is crisp with bullet points, blocks, takeaway messages, bold call to actions, and snapshots.

Provide just enough information to arouse the readers' interest and get them to read the whole blog, website, or social media network for detailed information. It is essential to remember that the aim of the newsletter is to create a relationship with the audience instead of ensuring a sale. Sales are bound to increase once prospective customers are educated and informed about the offer.

It is also essential to have prominent and bold calls to action follow each content block. It could be as 'Learn More', 'Watch This Video', or 'Read More'. This conveys the message that readers can get all the actionable details by clicking through.

Related: For more on email marketing strategy:

- [12 Tips for Successful Email Marketing for Doctors](#)
- [Simple and Effective SEO Tools to Improve a Medical Practice](#)

7. Be Consistent

You will not rely on friends who are unreliable and inconsistent, especially when making important decisions. The same applies to an email newsletter. If you promise your readers to have an issue of your newsletter ready for them at a particular time, then it is essential to ensure that you keep your word.

One good way to ensure that your newsletter is effective is to adhere to a frequency—monthly, fortnightly, weekly, or daily and so on. Your opt-in forms must also contain details about the newsletters.

According to one study, 69% of people said that they await newsletters eagerly. Research also indicates that these people made newsletters a part of their routines. Newsletters are among a select group of marketing strategies that can ensure your brand this type of consumer engagement.

8. Make the Subject Line Appealing

The first impression assumes significance in all kinds of relationships and in newsletters it is the subject line. Your subject line will either captivate your readers or lose them right at the start. Failure to provide a gripping or fascinating subject line despite being interesting can cause clients to not even open your newsletter.

In the 'From' label, specify the name of your practice brand to boost the chances of people opening it instead of using a personal name.

9. Be Receptive to Responses

It can be extremely disappointing when your friend is unresponsive to you. This indicates that they were not listening to you in the first place. The use of 'do not reply' tags in your newsletter indicates that you are not open to your audience's views and responses.

Maintaining open feedback channels, regularly checking these, and responding to them can ensure that your readers feel looked after and listened to. It is also likely that you will get significant insights, feedback, and suggestions that can help you better your newsletter so that you can gain that client next time around.

10. Learn to Let Go

Ending a relationship can be tough. But, it is easier to end it quietly instead of making a scene. When a reader decides to unsubscribe, you should accept it and move on without taking it personally. Make sure that the unsubscribe link is easily accessible enabling your readers to leave easily. And make it known that they can return anytime.

It will take time to come up with an effective, organized newsletter that is well put together. But it fosters an amicable bond between you and your patients. By following these 10 steps, you can ensure that patients will perceive you as a trusted professional and will feel more inclined to seek your services.

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 doctors. With a team of 180+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps doctors 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.