

Improve Your Marketing ROI

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The old adage “it takes money to make money” was probably coined about financial investments, but it could just as easily apply to marketing. Website design and hosting, social media management, responding to online reviews, publishing newsletters, content creation, software, digital services, and paid advertisements are just a few of the most common marketing expenses, easily adding up to thousands every month.

Is the cost of marketing worth it? The answer is, it depends. The cost of losing a few patients can be much higher, so an effective marketing plan will pay for itself many times over. Yet, ineffective marketing can drain your budget while your practice continues to struggle to find new patients. That is why ROI (return on investment) is one of the most important marketing metrics you need to know.

Measuring ROI isn't as simple as it sounds

At first thought, this seems like an easy metric to measure. Multiply the number of monthly new patients by the average value per patient, then divide by your total marketing expenses. Many practices use this simple formula. Unfortunately, it doesn't work. Here's why:

- Every case is different. Some patients seek expensive treatments, while others just want a checkup. Some keep coming back, and others don't. Don't only look at the number of patients you get each month, but also the type of cases. You can improve your ROI by adjusting marketing to target the most valuable patients.
- Every marketing channel is different. Call tracking numbers, tracking pixels, website analytics, and other tools can help you determine which channel or which campaign is generating the most patients. If most of your expense is going to the least effective aspects of marketing, it's time to make some adjustments.
- Patient retention matters too. If your marketing focuses exclusively on generating new potential patients, then you are missing an opportunity. Social media, newsletters, and many other marketing tactics can help build and maintain patient relationships that are already formed.
- You might not be measuring expenses accurately. For doctors on a tight budget, in-house marketing is an appealing option, especially if you have any team members with applicable skills. However, in-house isn't free. Don't forget to count employee hours in your budget. Most importantly, don't overlook the high value of your own time. Writing your own blogs, supervising employees, or meeting with contracted marketers takes time out of your day.



Looking at the big picture

How can you measure your practice's marketing ROI more effectively? Start by calculating the number and value of new patients gained from each marketing channel. Make adjustments for improvements in patient retention. Lastly, keep in mind that the value of marketing isn't entirely quantifiable.

Branding and building your professional reputation may not immediately bring in new leads. However, those things lay the foundation for future growth and success. Assign some value to whether you like the way your current marketing strategy represents you and your practice.

Tips for improving ROI

Now, you've done the math and realized that your marketing investment isn't paying off as much as you would like. What can you do about it?

Adjust, rather than eliminating, problematic channels. Today's patients are internet savvy, and they expect the same of their doctors. If your website or social media isn't bringing in new patients, consider adjusting your strategy for those channels to make them more productive rather than slashing the budget.

Use patient surveys and listen to the feedback. Simple questions like, "How did you hear about us?" or "Do you find our newsletter useful?" can give you a wealth of information from the patient's perspective.

Research and refine. When a particular channel or campaign isn't performing well it might be targeting the wrong audience. Do you know the demographics of your average patient and your ideal patient? Do you know the best channels to reach those specific people? If not, it might be time to invest in market research and analysis to reach the proper audience.

Sometimes a marketing strategy is bringing in plenty of patients, but the price tag is so high that it drives ROI down. In this case, the goal is to keep doing what is working, but find more budget-friendly ways to do it. If you are paying for multiple different services, consolidating into a complete marketing package might make sense.

Or, perhaps you could save money by bringing some outsourced services in-house. Maybe it would be more effective to outsource things that are using up your own time. Every situation is unique. Consider, and price, all your options.

The bottom line

Marketing ROI isn't as simple as bringing in most patients for the least money. The true cost of your investment includes your time and your team's labor. The true value of marketing results includes the quality of new leads, patient retention, and reputation management. If you continuously work to optimize these factors, you will have a winning strategy.

For more practice management insight, read on [here!](#)

About the Author:

Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. [Ekwa](#) provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy doctors, 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 Naren.