

Ways to Position Yourself as a Dental Expert and Improve Patient Engagement

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A dentist's reputation is determined by their clinical success, networking, community involvement and the quality of the content they may publish on their own website, blog or on third party websites as a guest columnist. While academic papers and research work may be sufficient to judge a dentist's knowledge, they do not necessarily lead to a doctor's popularity.

Like in any other profession, in the world of digital marketing, dental professionals have to position their brand successfully in order to be successful and popular.

The idea of brand positioning is to create a lasting and desirable impression in the minds of the target audience. This leads to an increased patient engagement and credibility which is an essential ingredient of success in the dental profession.

Irrespective of your area of specialty within the dental profession, your efforts to position yourself as an expert and building a robust online reputation remain the same. Take note of these methods which have the potential to help you achieve digital marketing success for your dental practice.

Blogs

Blogs are an effective way of online marketing and thus are one of the easiest, cheapest and best ways to increase the engagement of any small business. Dental profession is no different. Blogs can not only improve patient engagement but can also push your website's ranking up in the search engine's results.

However, a blog must be well maintained and frequently updated to reap the maximum benefits out of it. A good blog in the field of dentistry should ideally contain the following content:

1. At least 2-3 blog posts per week in the specific area of your dental expertise. The blogs can be related to patients you have dealt with, recent news or innovations in the field, or even your opinions on various procedures available. While describing a patient's treatment, their privacy must be protected.
2. An "About Us" page, listing your academic credentials, area of your expertise, services you provide, etc.
3. A page dedicated to "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs).
4. A "Contact us" page listing your dental office address, email and phone number.

Social Media

Social media is another potent tool in the field of online dental marketing. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram accounts should be maintained. Through these channels, you can add to the general dental conversation and connect with your audience more effectively.

The content in these social networks need not be exclusively related to your profession. The real idea is to maintain your regular online presence.

Apart from these social media sites, the details of your dental office must also be listed in leading online professional directories like RateMD and ZocDoc, and general directories like City Search and Yelp.

Press Releases

Press releases, both offline and online are a good way to expand your reach and build your credibility. The content of these press releases may vary widely and can include information on the new equipment purchased by you, an award or honor bestowed upon you, your participation in a charity event or your participation in a conference related to your dental field.

You can also distribute your press releases through online service providers like PRLog, PRWeb and PRBuzz. Don't forget to share a copy of the press release on all your social media accounts, especially Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Presence in Local Media

You should try to work with the local media to increase your reach and strengthen your professional reputation. The general population trusts the local media more than the national media, and you can benefit from their credibility to build your own.

You could try to engage with local newspapers, radio stations and news channels through which you can share your specialized knowledge about treatments and procedures that are immediately relevant to the readers or viewers of these media organizations.

Two things to keep in mind are that the knowledge you offer must be evidence based and your objective should be to educate the general public and not just the patient population.

Another key to maximize the gains for your brand through such engagement is to speak or write in a simple language which is understandable to the common man. Academic jargon should be avoided when communicating with potential patients. In a situation where it can't be avoided, you should explain the meaning in simple terms.

Become an Author

Publishing a well-researched academic paper in a reputed journal is a good way to build a reputation among your peers and get attention from the media. It will also present you with opportunities to speak at dental conferences which will help you emerge as a thought leader in your field.

Apart from academic papers, you can also consider writing an e-book. A popular e-book can not only enhance your credibility, but also help build your e-mail subscriber list.

Listen to your Patients

Give adequate time to your patients, whether you are in your office or engaging via social media. To sift through the colossal amount of posts on social media and find the relevant ones, you can use social listening tools available online.

Listening to your patients and the general public will help you gain better insights about how to promote your dental practice. Through careful screening of social posts and working to implement relevant suggestions from your patients, you can be better at what you do.

Also, you can use the social media to analyze your competitors and learn from their strong points and their flaws. You must always strive to draw inspiration from the traits of your competitors which make them more likable and avoid the ones which have an opposite effect.

Promptly Respond to Reviews

Your patients often will not have the patience to wait for days and weeks to hear back from you after they have written a positive or negative review. On top of that, a majority of patients who post negative feedback are likely to feel better when you address their concerns and make a genuine effort to resolve them.

Therefore, responding promptly to patient reviews or at least acknowledging them is nearly as important as maintaining your presence on social media. In case of negative reviews, even when you can't resolve the concern immediately, you must acknowledge the complaint and empathetically assure the patient to get back as soon as possible.

If you are hard-pressed for time, it may be prudent to appoint a person who specializes in social media management and can deal with this additional burden on your behalf.

Takeaway

Although clinical excellence and commitment to patients remain the cornerstones of success for a dentist, it may not be sufficient in today's increasingly digitized world that lays emphasis on brand value and online reputation.

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.

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