

# Pinterest for your dental practice? Yes! It can be an effective social marketing tool

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*(Pinterest logo courtesy of Pinterest)*

The social networking site Pinterest was launched in 2010 as a small and obscure network. Most people, including business owners and professionals, were unclear about the exact goals Pinterest could achieve for them. However, the rise of Pinterest over the last two years has been nothing short of dramatic.

According to comScore data, the network already has more than 48.7 million users, and it's growing. The data suggests that businesses and professionals are particularly keen on ramping up their presence on Pinterest, considering its strong user engagement levels.

## **Greater commercial orientation**

Perhaps the most surprising part of the rapid evolution of Pinterest has been the high commercial orientation of Pinterest users. This was not expected from the site to begin with, and a growing number of businesses and professionals are realizing they may be missing an opportunity to gain more clients by ignoring the Pinterest network. A BizRate Insights study analyzed the reasons why online shoppers in North America use Facebook and Pinterest. It was found that while Facebook is favored primarily for entertainment and socializing purposes, Pinterest users are more inclined to be there for commerce-related needs.

The study went on to say that compared to 17% of Facebook users who visit the site for buying inspiration, nearly 70% of Pinterest users are there for this reason. More than 43% of Pinterest users like to connect with companies and professionals through the site, while only 24% of Facebook users do so. From the perspective of a dental practice, it is important to note that users do not engage with Pinterest for retail buying alone. The average Pinterest user is interested in finding the best solutions and services, including health care services, through the site.

## **The Pinterest roadmap for you to use**

The goal of your Pinterest network should be to extend the reach of your dental website to new pockets within your target market, elevate your brand appeal and online reputation, and eventually boost your search engine rankings. This requires a systematic approach to building your Pinterest account. If you post irrelevant or unappealing images or videos, it's not likely to serve your marketing objectives.

Make sure that your Pinterest account is developed around the following key parameters in order to achieve your desired goals:

### **• Universal content**

Whether you upload images, videos, graphics, or other forms of content from your own database, or pin from other boards on the site, make sure that the content is universally acceptable and does not offend an average reader. Furthermore, the content should not be impinging upon the privacy of anyone, and should not violate any copyrights. The material should conform to the Pinterest guidelines and general Internet norms and etiquette.

### **• Attraction power**

Pinterest is different from other social media networks because of its high visual appeal. Keeping with the nature of the network, make sure your choice of content that you pin on your boards is eye catching at first glance. Once the viewer's attention is drawn in, the content should be creative and compelling enough to hold on to that interest and encourage viewers to explore further. Hopefully other Pinterest members will repin your content as far as possible, which will enhance your visibility exponentially.

### **• Relevant and targeted message**

Each image, video, or graphic should have some connection and relevance with the core theme of your Pinterest account. As a dentist, every Pinterest board of yours should have content that is useful to potential patients. Each new post should aim at carrying your brand value forward, and be meant specifically for your target audience. The average reader should not be confused about the objective of your Pinterest account.

### **• Educational and inspiring**

A successful Pinterest board for a dental practice should provide new and educational information to readers. A picture can say more than a thousand words, and effective use of pictures can make for powerful communication with patients. Sometimes images can be used to evoke emotions, tell a story, or communicate a strong message. Such material usually makes for great pins, giving plenty of opportunity for repinning from others. If your Pinterest board can move or inspire a reader, it has achieved its goal.

### **• An eclectic mix**

To keep your Pinterest account interesting and make sure readers keep coming back for more and repinning your pin content, it's important to have variety. Not every pin should be heavily educational or instructional. Such pins can be mixed with inspirational, interesting, and engaging content in the right proportion. Some pins should be information about any new procedures or services you may have introduced. Just a few occasional pins can be promotional in nature and talk about your brand, quality, and services.

## **Pinterest leading to actual sales**

A number of businesses, particularly small and medium businesses, engaged in retailing of goods and services are actually able to improve their sales through Pinterest. Businesses post images of their innovative products and services on the Pinterest boards and provide links to their company website. That effectively acts like an e-commerce store catalog, prompting people to make real purchases.

However, for long-term sustainable success with Pinterest, businesses must recognize and treat it as a social network. Instead of focusing exclusively on hardcore sales and promotions, a business Pinterest board should contribute other types of meaningful content that caters to the interests of readers. It's important to remember the cardinal rule for success in social media that it doesn't pay to get too promotional over a network.

## **Does Pinterest fit in with your marketing goals?**

Businesses that do not have anything particularly visual to show off may find it difficult to exploit the best potential of Pinterest. However, a dental practice has plenty of opportunities to display images that can be related directly to the practice brand. This is an exciting time for Pinterest because it's experiencing explosive growth. Responsiveness of Pinterest members is consistently high.

Therefore, the best approach is to create a good presence for your practice over this network, and then monitor the results and responses during the next few months. That's the best way to determine whether Pinterest will work for your practice. As long as you do not become excessively promotional about anything on Pinterest and remain actively involved with pinning, repinning, and creating new boards, Pinterest should yield great results for your practice.



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