

# Use Social Media to Elevate Your Dental Patient Base

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If you have been playing hide and seek with your social media marketing, like most dental practices, then you need to shift gears quickly. Social media is no longer just a popular entertainment digital platform. Social sites are increasingly becoming the “go-to place” for patients to find new dentists. So if you want to give practice discovery and patient engagement a new spin, then getting ahead in the social game should be your big focus.

## Quality Health Content

There is always going to be demand for high-quality content related to oral health and wellness. Patients actively look for and gravitate toward sources that deliver fresh and highly relevant content. However, quality content also needs a delivery system that supports faster discovery and easy consumption. This is where social media comes in.

Digital patients spend a lot of time on social sites looking for healthcare information, including information about your practice. If you can provide regular content that is relevant to their needs, then it becomes easier to engage with your social audience.

## Know Your Audience

Get to know your audience. Start by auditing your website and social media analytics and then audit your competitors and their social media accounts. Look for information on audience behavior, how they interact with your digital assets, where they spend a lot of time, and what kind of activity they indulge in while they are on your site and social pages.

Go through your research to gain an overview of what your audience is looking for from your dental practice and which social platforms they’re active on. Once you have this information, you can then start creating

content that is geared toward meeting the expectations of your social audience.

## **Streamline Content Distribution**

There are 5 steps in implementing your new social media strategy:

1. Select social networks that your target audience prefers.
2. Start by using only one or 2 social platforms and go all out to achieve success on those networks—publish content, start conversations, invite comments, ask for information on what your readers want, share content, etc.
3. Replicate the success of your primary social channels on other social platforms that also speak to your target customer.
4. Select the right social media tools that will ease the process of social media scheduling, social listening, and tracking of metrics.
5. Instead of only depending on organic distribution alone, consider paid social media to expand your message reach.

## **Mix Up Your Content**

The most effective way to keep audiences engaged is to use a variety of formats in creating social dental content. So in addition to articles, you can use quizzes, surveys, games, fun campaigns, and visual material such as videos, infographics, and LinkedIn SlideShares to increase your content reach and share potential.

With graphics tools like Stencil and Canva, creating visual content is fairly easy. If you have the budget, however, then by all means, find yourself a designer who specializes in social content. Videos, infographics, and SlideShare can up the ante on patient interactions.

## **Conduct Regular Audits**

The only way of knowing whether or not you are succeeding with your social marketing is by conducting regular audits. Focus mainly on these metrics:

- How many people are you reaching each week/month?
- How many people are talking about your healthcare practice via mentions, shares, and retweets?
- How many visitors are coming to your dental site from your social media channels?
- What is the percentage of social traffic among your overall traffic?
- What is the quality of the traffic that comes from your social sites?
- How engaged is this traffic?
- How many clicks are you getting on your social media posts?

Each of these metrics can help you understand what you are doing great and where you need to make changes. Google analytics is a great tool to track not just your website metrics, but also your social media.

## **Social Influencer Marketing**

Online influencers can give your brand a big boost and connect you with a more engaged audience segment. But it takes time to cultivate influencer relationships. You will need to spend some time searching for influencers within your community or industry.

However, if you can convince these people of your subject matter expertise and provide them with a regular source of useful information, they can become a part of your content distribution and brand awareness system. These influencers can share your content with their own followers, which could position you and your dental practice in front of a huge new audience.

## **Accessibility, Acknowledgement, and Reciprocation**

Once you are on social, you need to be available to your audience. So, consistently publish content and participate in conversations if you want to be fresh on their minds. Building relationships is one of the most

important aspects of social marketing.

Make sure you acknowledge anyone who reaches out to you so they know you care about their presence. This in turn will encourage them to connect with you regularly.

Most importantly, don't just expect your social audience to share your content and always talk about you. You need to do the same for them. Spend time sharing and talking about content published by others as a way of reciprocating their interest in your dental practice brand.

## Conclusion

Don't expect overnight success with your social marketing. Research and audits can definitely help you understand your audience better. However, you will need to experiment with different kinds of content and techniques before you can get your social game right. In the meantime, it is best that you continue to measure your results by analyzing them via social media audits at regular intervals.

**Mr. 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 more than 140 full-time marketers, [ekwa.com](http://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.

*Disclosure: Mr. Arulrajah is the president and CEO of Ekwa Marketing.*

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