

The Google+ Hangout: A Marketing Tool For Your Dermatology Practice

Dermatology marketers can employ this tool effectively to promote their practices or simply use it as a powerful and free communication tool.

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The Google Plus social network has introduced a promising and innovative new tool for participants to virtually connect. Called the Google Hangout, it allows up to 10 people at the same time to connect via Google+ to chat, share videos, and interact.

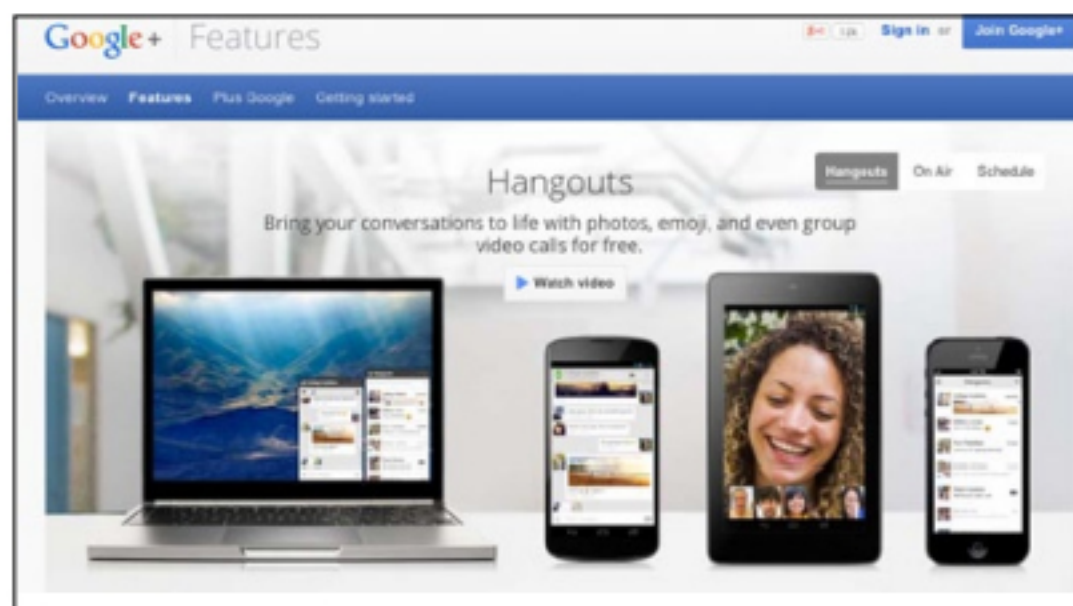
AN OVERVIEW OF GOOGLE HANGOUTS

Google Hangouts has emerged as a popular live streaming video platform over a short period of time. However, the technology is still fairly new, and many people are unaware about how to use it to their business or personal advantage. Dermatology marketers can employ this tool effectively to promote their practices or simply use it as a powerful and free communication tool. Two primary types of Hangouts are Hangouts and Hangouts on Air.

Hangouts are commonly used for personal video chats with another individual or a group of people. These private meetings are only visible to the people who have been invited to them and are not recorded to YouTube. On the other hand, Hangouts on Air are open to public view and get recorded automatically to the YouTube channel that is connected with your Google+ account. Up to 10 individuals can be a part of such a hangout at a given point of time. The general public cannot be invited to be a part of the meeting on air, but the meeting, by default, is viewable to everyone.

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION TOOL

Google Hangouts have effectively replaced Google Chat and Google Talk. Google calls the Hangout a unification of its chats, video, and messengers services all under a single umbrella. Users can simply use it the way they use Skype,



if they like. The quality of audio and video is superior. To record private sessions on hangout, you will be required to use ScreenFlow or Camtasia. As a dermatologist, you can use these sessions for meetings with your staff, training new members of your team, or meeting with vendors or other people connected to your practice.

When you launch a hangout on air, you are in a position to create a group chat or give an individual presentation for the sake of your potential patients, fellow dermatologists, or others. The tool allows you to manage who is shown in the larger screen, which is usually the leader of the meeting, and remaining participants are shown in smaller screens. To link your recorded sessions on a YouTube channel, it is advisable to have your channel verified for uploads of more than 15 minutes. Most hangout meetings with multiple active participants may last longer than 15 minutes.

EXTENSIVE ONLINE VIDEO CONTENT

One of the key advantages of Google Hangouts is that you do not necessarily need to have a prepared script

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to create a video, or make any dedicated efforts for this purpose. Your actual meetings, discussions, seminars, presentations or chats can simply become your online video content. Therefore, when you stream your hangout live to your YouTube channel, you are simply creating new YouTube content automatically during the broadcast. That gives you the possibility to have unlimited YouTube content to market your practice. You can optimize your video marketing efforts quite effortlessly with this powerful tool from Google.

Another benefit of Google Hangouts is that when you stream your meeting live, it will also run your Google+ profile page simultaneously. Once the hangout on air has been launched, you can also take the embed codes and share them over your social media networks, website or blog. That allows your social media, website or blog visitors and readers to watch the content through those channels. When you share the embed code on Facebook, you are announcing to everyone over the network that you are going live on air. An exclusive ‘Hangouts on Air’ page is made available on your account that will list all of your hangouts that are currently on air.

DOES IT REPLACE A WEBINAR?

Many users are viewing Google Hangouts as a potential replacement for costly webinar programs. Particularly if you are going to do only a few webinars, they may not be a cost-effective option. Webinar platforms may also charge on the basis of the number of viewers. However, with a hangout on air, you are effectively achieving unlimited viewership without having to pay for it. To launch your hangouts on air, Google does not require you to purchase expensive plug-ins for your website.

All you need to do is enter your email address and then move over to a Watch Live page. You can invite potential viewers to opt in through your website and then flip through to your Watch Live page. The technology is designed to promote engagement with viewers and keep

them from getting distracted. Content sharing is possible with both Hangouts as well as Hangouts on Air. You can do so simply by pressing the “Screen Share” button. You can create PowerPoint slide presentations and load them to Google Drive and share them over your hangout meeting.

SUPPORT FOR YOUR ONLINE MARKETING EFFORTS

The very fact that Google Hangouts are linked with YouTube makes it a marketer’s delight. When it comes to Internet search, video content tends to gain higher search rankings. If the hangouts on air are search engine optimized well, they have an excellent chance of showing up on the first page of Google. In a fast-moving cyberspace, hangouts on air allow you to live stream your content to YouTube, as opposed to a regular video where you have to create and edit it before you can release it.

To reach out to your target audience effectively, you need to be convincing and generate their trust. Online videos and live streaming allow you a great opportunity to let people come face to face with you and improve their familiarity with you. You can disseminate useful information and help people learn new insights from such live experiences. You can even create weekly, monthly or quarterly web shows that will help build a dedicated following for your hangouts. You can share exclusive content with your loyal followers and build lasting relationships over time.

With strategic optimization of your hangout on air content, you can enjoy top search rankings on Google and other search engines. ■

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