

Why You Should Showcase Your Dermatology Practice on Pinterest

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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 that Pinterest could achieve for them. However, the rise of Pinterest over the last two years has been dramatic. According to recent comScore data, the network already has more than 48.7 million users and growing.¹ These numbers indicate that businesses and professionals are particularly keen on ramping up their presence on Pinterest.

GREATER COMMERCIAL ORIENTATION

Perhaps the most surprising part about the rapid evolution of Pinterest has been the high commercial orientation of Pinterest users. This was never expected from the site to begin with, and now a growing number of businesses and professionals are realizing that they may be missing a potential market opportunity to gain more clients by ignoring the network.

A recent BizRate Insights study found that while Facebook is favored by users primarily for entertainment and socializing purposes, Pinterest users are more inclined to be on the network for commerce-related needs. The study also found that, compared to 17 percent of Facebook users who visit the site for buying inspiration, nearly 70 percent of Pinterest users are there for this reason. More than 43 percent of Pinterest users like to connect with companies and professionals of their choice through the site, while only 24 percent of Facebook users do so.²

From the perspective of a dermatology practice, it is important to note that users do not engage with Pinterest



for retail buying alone. An average Pinterest user is interested in finding the best solutions and services, including healthcare services, through the site.

THE PINTEREST ROADMAP FOR YOU

The goal of your Pinterest network should be to extend the reach of your dermatology website to newer pockets within your target market, elevate your brand appeal and online reputation, and eventually help boost your search engine rankings. This requires a systematic approach to building your Pinterest account. For starters, make sure that your Pinterest account is developed around the following key parameters in order to achieve the desired goals. Posting irrelevant or unappealing images or videos is unlikely to serve your marketing objectives.

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

Attraction Power. Pinterest is designed to be different from other social media networks because of its higher visual appeal. Keeping with the nature of the network, make sure that your choice of content that you pin on your boards is eye catching at first glance. Once the viewer's attention is drawn, the content should be creative and compelling enough to hold on to that initial interest and encourage the viewer to explore further. Other Pinterest members should re-pin your content as far as possible, which can 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 dermatologist, every Pinterest board of yours should have content that is relevant and useful to a potential patient. Each new post should be aimed at carrying your brand value forward, and meant specifically for your target audience. The average reader should not get a confused message about the real objective of your Pinterest account.

Educational and Inspiring. A successful Pinterest board for a dermatology practice should provide new and educational information to the readers. A picture can say more than a thousand words, and effective use of pictures can make for powerful communication with existing and potential patients. Sometimes images can be used to evoke emotions, tell a story, or communicate a strong message. Such material can usually make for great pins, with plenty of opportunity of re-pinning 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 to make sure that readers keep coming back for more and keep re-pinning your content, it is important to have variety. Not every pin should be oriented towards being heavily educational or instructional. Such pins can be mixed with inspirational, interesting and engaging content in the right proportion. Some of the pins should lean toward information about any new procedures or services that you may have introduced. Just a few pins occasionally can be more 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 due to Pinterest. Businesses post the images of their innovative products and services on the Pinterest boards and provide a link to their company website. That effectively acts like an e-commerce store catalog, prompting people to go ahead and make real purchases.

However, for long-term sustainable success with Pinterest, businesses have to recognize and treat it as a social network. Instead of focusing exclusively on hardcore sales and promotion, a business Pinterest board should contribute other types of meaningful content as well that caters to the interests of the readers. It is important to remember the cardinal rule for success in social media: It never pays to get too promotional over a network.

DOES PINTEREST FIT WITH YOUR MARKETING GOALS?

Given the network's recent explosive growth and consistently high responsiveness of its members, it is an exciting time for Pinterest. And while some businesses may find it difficult to exploit the best potential of Pinterest, a dermatology practice often has plenty of opportunities to display images that can be related directly to the practice brand.

When it comes to determining the best way to measure the utility of Pinterest in your practice, the best approach can be to create a good presence for your practice over this network, and then monitor the results and response over the next few months. As long as you do not get excessively promotional about anything over the network and remain actively involved with pinning, repinning, and creating new boards, Pinterest should yield great results. ■

1. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/21/net-us-funding-pinterest-idUSBRE91K01R20130221>

2. <http://www.bizrateinsights.com/blog/2012/10/15/online-consumer-pulse-pinterest-vs-facebook-which-socialsharing-site-wins-at-shopping-engagement/>

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