

Stay Healthy with Regular Marketing Check-ups

Online in marketing is hardly a “one and done” proposition. Be sure to nurture your program.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH WITH VIKAS VIJ

The purchase journey of the connected consumer of today includes many touch points, with each one offering an opportunity to win a quality lead and improve traffic to your dermatology practice. But you need to evaluate along the way that the message you are delivering at each touch point in that journey is making the desired impact. You need to ensure that your marketing efforts and investment of time and money are working, and you are not making a misdirected effort, or worse, alienating new potential patients.

Regular and better measurement of your marketing campaign areas is the answer. It is the key to determining that you are making the most of these interconnected consumer touch points. If your measurement foundation is strong, you will be able to eliminate the gaps or the friction for the consumer wherever it may arise. This gap or friction could be in some of your web pages, articles, social media posts, blogs, how-to videos, ads, or other means of connecting with the consumer.

TRACK ONLINE PATIENT REVIEWS AND COMMENTS

Many of your existing and past patients are likely to talk about you at some point over the Internet. They are going to share their experiences and opinions related to your practice over the social media, on discussion forums, blogs, review sites such as Yelp, RealSelf, DrOogle, HealthGrades, and other places. If they read your column or blog, view a SlideShare or infographic, or watch a YouTube video, they are going to leave comments.

This constant generation of online feedback not only continually redefines your online reputation, but it also provides you crucial insights into how your marketing efforts to reach out and engage with potential patients are being perceived, and how the new patients are reacting to the treatment experience they receive in your office. Be proactive about

monitoring and addressing the issues that may regularly arise in this diverse online conversation that is taking place about your practice all the time.

One of the most effective ways to generate and measure patient response to your marketing efforts and practice services is to create your own online patient review form and include it prominently on your practice website. Once a patient has submitted a positive review, your site may redirect them to a ‘Thank-you’ page where they are encouraged to share their review on their personal social media networks. The ‘Thank-you’ page may also include a compelling video about your practice that you may want your actively supporting patients to share with others.

KEY MARKETING METRICS TO WATCH

Perhaps the most important marketing metric to watch is brand awareness, which is a primary campaign objective. Brand awareness is a key performance indicator (KPI) that will eventually drive new patients to your practice. Google Analytics can serve as a powerful tool to let you measure how many new people visit your website every month and how far do they engage on your site. You can install Call Tracking software in your office to track how many new patients call for inquiries or appointments in a month.

Social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter will provide you with their own analytics reports so that you know how your social campaigns are performing in terms of new member activity. However, a common mistake is to use these metrics without context. For instance, a new YouTube marketing video launched by your practice receives 500 views in the first month. If you launched the video to generate awareness among new potential patients, but the bulk of these views came from previous or existing patients, your marketing goal may not have been served.

Therefore, analyzing online comments to that video might provide better insights about your marketing effort rather than just the number of views. The right metrics will vary according to your practice goals. For instance, if your focus is to optimize profits rather than sales, you may need to evaluate how much an average patient is spending when they visit your practice, rather than focusing on the total number of visiting patients.

PATIENT-CENTRIC MEASUREMENT

To deepen your understanding of your patient base, and focus more of your marketing efforts on the right ones, you need answers to the following questions:

- Who are your patients?
- Which geographical areas do they come from?
- How loyal do they remain to your practice?
- How much have they spent over a period of time?

Based on the answers to the above-listed questions, you should:

- Identify patient segments who sought high-value services
- Identify patient segments who bought repeatedly
- Identify patient segments that are not performing well

Based on this patient segmentation, you should:

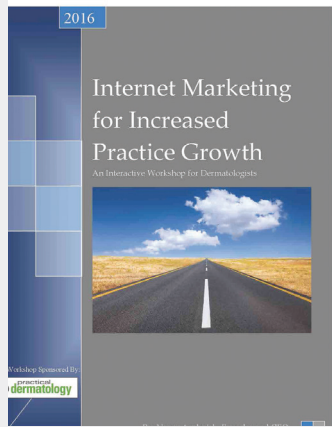
- Determine which marketing channels or combination of channels, and which search keywords helped you acquire your most desirable patients; then reinforce your marketing efforts on those channels.
- Direct your marketing efforts and tools on potential patients who closely resemble your best existing patients.
- Engage and personalize with the best patients to consolidate relationships and drive long-term value.
- Cut down waste by reducing marketing expense on segments that do not perform satisfactorily.
- Keep testing segments and keep improvising.

DIAGNOSTICS: THE BEST TRACKING METHODS

A number of data-driven tracking tools are available to measure your marketing performance. From your perspective, the most useful tracking methods will include the following:

Website Analytics. Website analytics is the most powerful tool to continually improve your website and mobile marketing. It will automate the collection, measurement, analysis, and reporting of various on-site visitor activities so that you can comprehend the needs of your site users better and reconfigure your site to meet those needs.

CRM Software. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software tools are available to let you capture segment, contact and transaction data. CRM can track multiple marketing channels, including visibility into indirect chan-



It is time to ask yourself: "Is my practice geared up to be a part of a new, connected patient's purchase journey from the search engine or mobile to my practice door?"

Download Free Workbook

Download this self-help workbook to gain new insights into how to market your practice, build your brand, and win new patients. This workbook is currently being offered free of charge, exclusively for the readers of Practical Dermatology®. Get it at PracticalDermatology.com

nels such as display, social or affiliate.

Call Tracking. An automated call tracking system installed at the front desk of your office can be a vital link in your online marketing campaign, and help you gauge its effectiveness. It can allow you to determine which particular marketing strategies, campaigns and tools are generating patient inquiries, and which are not.

Measurement tools as well as regular monitoring of your marketing efforts will help to protect your brand reputation; ensure that right patient segments are being targeted within online search, social media, and affiliate; provide optimal daily frequency capping to avoid marketing excesses; focus on geo-targeting to reach out to the right consumers at the right place; reduce overlapping between channels, campaigns and sites; and deliver insights into top and bottom performers to plan future campaigns. ■

Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete Internet marketing company which focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education and the online reputations of dermatologists. With a team of 130+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps dermatologists 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 Naren direct at 877-249-9666.

