

11 Tactical Errors to Avoid in Your Dermatology Social Media Strategy

Tactical mistakes can dilute the impact of your overall social media effort.

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Social media networking has become intrinsic to most online marketing campaigns for dermatologists. However, many of marketers continue to make a number of tactical mistakes that dilute the impact of their overall social media effort. Take note of the following common errors that you need to avoid in your dermatology social media strategy.

1. Relying Exclusively on Facebook. While it is true that Facebook has more than a billion active members worldwide, it is not the only platform that your potential patients are likely to visit. To reach out to a diversified audience and to maximize your local reach for different demographics, you must spread your effort across different social networks, including LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, and Google+, apart from Facebook.

2. Adopting a Self-Serving Approach. If you make your social media engagement only about yourself, it will put off your network members. Social media is all about getting social, and not about directly pitching your own products and services and indulging in self-promotion. Spark useful conversations on your social media networks, address queries, disseminate new information, and build a two-way communication channel with your audience to achieve results.

3. Posting Messages Casually or Carelessly. Think twice before you send out any post on your official social media accounts. Staying disciplined on social media is a pre-requisite to maintaining your online reputation. Do not post in a hurry. Check the grammar, spelling, and quality of content. Ask yourself whether the message is relevant, reader-friendly, accurate, legal, and has any copyright issues. Use only trusted sources for information, and credit the sources wherever applicable.

4. Responding Impersonally. One of the common mistakes many professionals make on social media is that they provide terse and impersonal responses to those who engage

with them. Your visitors and inquirers deserve better treatment. You can turn them into loyalists, who will share and spread the good word about you, if you personalize your responses to them.

5. Not Tracking Reputation. If you do not spend time to listen and know what others have been saying about you and your practice on various social media channels, you will miss the crucial signals on where you need to correct your approach. A variety of free online tools can help you track your community's commentary and feedback about you. These tools include Social Mention, Hootsuite, Topsy, TweetDeck, IceRocket and Google Alerts.

6. Ignoring Profile Optimization. One of the first things that many of your social network visitors and members will like to view is your social media profile. If you have not bothered to include details about your qualifications, training, specialization, experience, and accomplishments, you stand to lose a good opportunity to impress new people. From an SEO perspective, your social media profile should have the right keywords, titles and URLs to enable easier social search.

7. Ignoring Social Media Promotion on Your Site. If you have already invested considerably in developing a comprehensive website for your dermatology practice, you must capitalize on it to promote your social media networks. If you fail to provide social media icons or buttons for your various accounts prominently on the homepage and other major landing pages of your website, you are not going to generate the right traffic of targeted visitors from your website to your social media networks.

8. Failing to Share Exclusive Content. You may be writing informative articles or posting blogs and interesting news items on your website and other forums. If you do not offer these as special previews to your social networks,

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you are depriving them of the privilege of being the first exclusive readers of the latest content. If you provide such privileges, it will create incentive and motivate them to stay loyal, engage more, and spread a positive word about your practice within their respective networks.

9. *Failing to Remain NAP Consistent.* NAP refers to the name, address, and phone number of your dermatology practice. This basic contact information should be provided accurately and in a consistent manner across all your social media platforms as well as your website, blog and other online forums. This is not only beneficial from the point of view of your social media followers, but it also eliminates the confusion for search engine crawlers when they try to establish connections between your multiple social media accounts and websites.

10. *Using Paid or Dubious Means to Win Followers.* One of the biggest mistakes that you can make in your social media strategy is to fall prey to the temptation of 'purchasing' likes, fans or followers in bulk through dubious online sources. This is likely to attract penalties from the social media company, and may even result in lowering of your Google search rankings at some point. You need to build your social networks through legitimate, natural and organic engagement and involvement to enjoy long-term and sustainable marketing benefits.

11. *Paying Little or No Attention to Analytics.* Most social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, offer you periodic data about how your account is performing in terms of social engagement. If you do not take time to review and analyze the data, you will not know where your social media campaign is going and whether it is serving its desired purpose. You need to know how many people read your posts, what type of content attracts maximum attention, and where do a majority of your visitors come from, in order to improve your strategy constantly.

If your social media campaign is able to address all of these common tactical errors, you are likely to reap rich marketing dividends over time from your social media effort. With a little care and due diligence, you can reach out to a lot of people and engage effectively to strengthen the long-term business prospects of your dermatology practice. ■

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