The Importance of Social Media

Though the internet has been an integral part of our lives for quite some time now, recent years have seen the heightened emergence of businesses broadening their marketing appeal and impact through social media. And with easy access to platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, business owners are starting to reach out to potential clients, customers and patients virtually by establishing their footprint on the internet. The dental industry is no exception; it is jumping on board too! Have you? If not, it is never too late to realize the benefits of setting up a social media network for your practice.

Imagine ... an individual moves to a new city, and they need a dentist. It is certainly not like it used to be. That potential new patient is no longer likely to seek out a dentist by thumbing through the bulky Yellow Pages. Instead, they will be more inclined to go straight to the internet. Unfortunately, your dental practice might get overlooked if it doesn’t have a strong social media presence. Increasingly, patients are utilizing the internet to glean the extra information that comes through reading personal recommendations and reviews about doctors...and as we all know, firsthand accounts of experiences, above all else, are the most cost efficient and effective exposure your business can have.

Kelly Yale from Paper Blossom Marketing, a Charlotte social media marketing firm, reiterates this trend, “Social media is an incredible tool for sharing recommendations without the hassle of having to really ask patients for them.” By establishing a network in which your patients may comment on their experiences at your office, you are touching others and inviting them to try out your dental services.

Yale echoes the importance of using social media in the workplace, and more specifically, in the dental industry, “With a thoughtful social media plan in place, dentists and orthodontists are starting to really see how using Facebook and Twitter can move their businesses forward.” So how can you use social media to your benefit?

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The following are just a few platforms that many dentists are using.

**Facebook** – a social media platform that enables you to set up a business homepage that other individuals may view similarly to a business’ website. However, Facebook differs from a regular website in that it allows you to interact more closely with potential clients to cultivate personal relationships. Setting up a Facebook page will directly connect you and your practice to over 750 million active users ([www.facebook.com/press/info](http://www.facebook.com/press/info)).

**Twitter** – the best way to provide patients with timely information and updates. This form of social media is one that helps you “talk” directly to your patients and potential patient base. By blogging about your practice, general oral health care, or specialized niche, you are exhibiting yourself as an expert in the profession. And who doesn’t want to go to the experts?

**YouTube** – a video sharing website on which you may upload short video clips. Dentists are using this feature to create short blurbs about their practice, show the dental rooms, waiting rooms, etc. This is a great way to make potential patients feel comfortable and familiar with your office and dental services.

**Website** – the bridge that connects all social media. Yale states that, “By linking your social media with your website, you have created the perfect storm of ways that people can interact with you.” By linking your website to your various social media platforms, patients and prospective patients have all they need to know about your practice in one place, and they do not have to search throughout the web to find valuable information about your practice.

One note of caution with social media platforms is that many of them are interactive (Twitter, Facebook, etc). This means that you will need to commit to responding to people who post on your sites on a regular basis. That being said, this interaction is a GREAT demonstration of the personalized care that you offer your patients and can really drive traffic and a following audience to your social media outlets.

As a conduit between patients and their friends, social media has become the new “word of mouth.”

For additional information about the benefits of social marketing, please contact Kelly Yale with Paper Blossom Marketing at [contact@paperblossommarketing.com](mailto:contact@paperblossommarketing.com).

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**Upcoming Events**

**October 27, 2011:** **Greenville** Seminar Series, “Exiting Your Practice,” Elliott Davis Training Room, Greenville, SC, 8am-1pm

**October 28, 2011:** **Charlotte** Seminar Series, “Growing Your Dream Practice.” Elliott Davis Training Room, 700 E. Morehead St., Suite 400, 8am-1pm

**November 11, 2011:** **Charlotte** Seminar Series, “Exiting Your Practice,” Elliott Davis Training Room, 700 E. Morehead St., Suite 400, 8am -1pm

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- Accounting services
- Compliance
- Cost reduction strategies
- Entity structure planning

Our Dental Services Practice is associated with the McGill & Hill Group. A one-stop financial services resource providing transitions, tax and business planning, legal, accounting, investment advisory and retirement plan services exclusively for the dental profession.

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