

Social Media for the Dental Practice



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Let me introduce you to some of the latest trends in online marketing for your dental office.

An online encyclopedia (Wikipedia) defines Social media as “online content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. Social media is a shift in how people discover, read and share news, information and content; it supports the human need for social interaction with technology, transforming broadcast media monologues (one to many) into social media dialogues (many to many).”

Social media has become very popular allowing users to connect and form relationships, but how can it benefit your practice?

I like to explain the benefits of social media, like **virtual handshakes** that you are making in cyberspace, by adding content, comments, information and education with different technologies. The result is exposure, link backs to your website and top search engine rankings for the continued activity. You probably have heard of search engine optimization to drive traffic to your website, but this science is constantly changing, and social media is helping websites gain excellent rankings. Here are a few options:

First, you need to have a **website**. Yellow page advertising is an expensive option, yet the results are diving further down year after year to online opportunities. For the cost of your ad, you should be able to have a site developed and maintained year after year that provides a lot more information and return on investment. Patients look for dentists online.

An active **Facebook** account or group can include your practice logo, professional bio of the dentist(s) and list the services that you offer. You may even list your local speaking events on the calendar, create photo albums with before and after cases, post team pictures, advertise special events and cross link your Facebook account with your website, and your website with your Facebook account.

At least once a week, post an update to your Facebook group page. It can be an educational piece that would benefit your patients. For example, information

on a new technology or product, a short video of a procedure like whitening, a hygiene tip or even a patient testimonial. The key is not to forget about the Facebook account. Its purpose is to feed people a regular small dose of valuable information.

You can take it further, with a **Twitter** account to micro-blog about your practice and patient health, or a professional **blog** of your own where you can share content, photos and convey a genuine interest and concern for patients and dental education.

Social networking is almost free and it's very powerful but it does require a constant commitment of updates. The more “virtual hand shakes” you create, the more benefits to your practice. You do have options: you can delegate it to a staff member and make it a weekly task on their job description, or you can outsource it. Regardless of your option, your regular posts and updates need to be professional as they do represent your dental office culture. The small expense of these technologies can leverage your website to work for you.

What is a new patient (or 10) worth to you each week? Our web and office consulting company can help you. I invite you to call me for a free consultation.

Penny is a consultant committed to helping dental offices achieve their goals with training and motivation toward practice goals. She can be reached through www.NorthernLightsPresentations.com.