



The importance of social media for marketing to women

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According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, 90% of U.S. adult **WOMEN** are responsible for **health-care decisions** for themselves and their spouses/significant others, children, and/or adult relatives. This includes dental care. Unfortunately, many dentists fail to market effectively to women. In many cases, they actually alienate the very demographic they are trying to target.

Women have more control over purchasing decisions and spending power than ever before. In fact, women-owned small businesses contribute more than \$3 trillion to the economy annually.

Female consumers are also the most likely demographic to use social networks when making purchasing decisions. When it comes to personal health and their loved ones, women are much more likely to be influenced by their peers in choosing a provider.

In the U.S., 56 million women use Facebook on a regular basis. This makes the social networking platform one of the most valuable tools when it comes to introducing yourself and your practice. There are many different ways to effectively attract women to your practice using Facebook:

① **Create an emotional connection.** This is achieved by presenting yourself as the solution to a problem that may have caused your potential patient or a loved one emotional distress. A bad experience with a dentist can lead to fear. Also, long-term neglect of teeth can lead to feelings of embarrassment and an unwillingness to move forward with dental care. So, share how your office procedures

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are designed to reduce pain and stress, or how your staff is trained to be considerate and caring no matter what a patient's situation.

② **Provide value online.** Sharing tips and information via your Facebook builds trust and respect. You can keep patients up to date on the most advanced dental techniques and report on the latest research concerning their health and their children's oral health as it relates to diet, drinking water, stress, and hygiene. Your community will begin to look forward to your weekly educational post.

③ **Ask, listen, and act.** Invite your patients to weigh in on their care and suggest ways for you to improve, then follow through on those suggestions to show that you are paying attention. Do your patients get cold during procedures that take a long time? If so, add lap blankets to your list of amenities to increase patient comfort and satisfaction.

④ **Make everything easy.** Women are busy and do not need more steps added to their day. If you offer a new service, make it quick and easy for women to find out about it. If you decide a promotion is in order, make it easy to sign up for the promotion and redeem it. Once you convince a woman to make an appointment, ensure the process is as hassle-free as possible. Do not complicate a woman's life; streamline it!

⑤ **Include, do not exclude.** Find ways to include women in what you are doing in the community by participating in activities, events, and charities they believe in and support. You want to be on their side. If you do this, it is the fastest way to find them joining your side.

⑥ **Market to real women.** The fashion model does not need your services as much as the harried mother of three who runs a business and has not made time for a dental appointment in four years. Show that you can meet her need and you will have a patient for life.

Target effectively, and you will find success. Women and social media go hand in hand. The trick is falling into step beside them and listening to their conversations so you can meet their needs. **DE**

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