



Six tips for Facebook success for dentists

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Dentists traditionally **SHY AWAY** from online media because they do not understand how it works or they think they do not have time. Neither of these excuses are good enough to justify turning your back on one of the most **powerful and effective tools** available for connecting directly with a patient community.

A recent study done by Buddy Media evaluated a large amount of data obtained by tracking Facebook posts, comments and “likes” during a two-week period. The statistics gave some great insights into how to properly leverage the power of social media across a range of industries.

Statistics derived from the study show clear and simple ways to run an effective Facebook campaign. By following these six best practice tips, you can take your dental practice to the next level. Boost your online presence, engage patients where they are, and increase interaction with your most loyal followers with these few simple steps:

Keep it short and sweet

According to the Facebook press room, more than 30 billion pieces of content are shared on Facebook monthly. This may seem like a staggering amount, until you take into account that a mere 19% of these posts have the highest engagement rate and 19% is not the most detailed, most controversial, or most eloquent. In reality, the most powerful posts are the shortest. That’s right. The shortest posts on Facebook (up to 80 characters, far less than the Twitter maximum) have a 27% higher engagement rate. This means you do not have to come up with elaborate posts. Just 80 characters could get people motivated to respond.

Use full-length links

But the same is not true for posts that include Web addresses and use a URL shortener, such as bit.ly, to save space. While this may work on Twitter, Facebook users like to see exactly what they are clicking on, and using the full-length link gives extra text to tell them more about the website. Engagement rates for posts with full-length links are three times higher than for posts with shortened URLs.

Post after hours

While most branded Facebook users post during business

hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time), higher engagement rates are associated with posts made in the evening. The reason for this is simple. Many employers block the use of social networks during office hours. If you want posts to show at the top of your patients’ news feeds, post in the early morning, early evening, and late at night. Posts during these hours have a 20% higher chance of engagement. Posts on the weekend are also much more likely to be read and commented on or liked. So you may wish to preschedule posts for best results.

Thursday is your friend

Interestingly, Buddy Media’s breakdown of best times and days to post by industry showed that Thursdays had the highest engagement rate for brands in the health and beauty industry. One can argue that dentists span each of these categories. So plan your biggest and best posts for Thursday evenings.

Use Facebook-centric words

The main words on Facebook are *post, comment, and like*. Facebook fans tend to follow directions well when terms they are familiar with are used. By asking fans and friends to comment on your link, post one of their comments, or like a photo, you substantially increase the likelihood that they will. You can also increase interest by taking advantage of the events function, using questions to increase interaction, and creating opportunities for your fans to win something by participating.

Ask “Would you?”

Would is one of the most underused words on Facebook, but has one of the best chances of garnering a like when a question is asked. In contrast, the commonly used *why* has one of the worst chances. When asking a question, put it at the end of the post, not the beginning. Stats show that posts ending with a ? have a 15% higher engagement rate.

By wording posts properly and posting at the best times to reach patients, you can achieve success on Facebook and tap into the power of social media. **DE**

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