USING FACEBOOK TO DRIVE MORE POTENTIAL PATIENTS

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If you do online marketing and social media properly, you have a website and an active Facebook page for your practice. If you do social media like a rock star, your Facebook page is actually sending people directly to your practice website and yielding new patient appointments.

How do you make this happen?

There's a little known form of Facebook advertising that lets you target viewers and highlight content from your practice's website that is shared on Facebook. These ads are called "Domain Sponsored Stories." They can generate considerable extra traffic from Facebook to your website.

To get set up for Domain Sponsored Stories, you have to follow a few steps:

STEP ONE: CLAIM YOUR DOMAIN

Your domain is your website URL such as www.DentalExcellence.com. To claim your domain on Facebook, simply go to your "Insights dashboard" and look at the top right of the page for a green "Insights for your website" button. When you click the green button, a pop-up will appear that reads, "Get meta tag." Fill in the field with your domain URL to get the meta tag.

STEP TWO: TAG YOUR WEBSITE

Copy and paste the meta tag into your website HTML between the < head > tags (or just give it to your website company and have them do it). Then go back and click "Check domain" to make sure Facebook sees the added code. This tells Facebook to create sponsored stories from content shared from pages on your website.

STEP THREE: CREATE A DOMAIN SPONSORED STORY

From the Facebook "Create an ad" page, you will have the option to select your newly added domain as a destination. Choose "Sponsored story" as the type of ad.

STEP FOUR: TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

Take a peek at the "Estimated reach" box to see if the targeting is about right (sponsored stories will be shown only to people who can see your page). You can narrow targeting by geography, viewer age, and friends lists.

STEP FIVE: SET YOUR BUDGET

Decide how much you can afford to spend every day on your Facebook campaign. If your budget is $300 per month, then your budget will be $10 per day.

STEP SIX: SET YOUR TIME FRAME

Research from Buddy Media shows that Thursdays are best for interaction with content in the health and beauty industries, and evenings are always better for interaction with posts by the average patient who works all day and spends time on Facebook when they get home. You can specify that you want your campaign to run during these times for better visibility.

STEP SEVEN: CREATE GREAT CONTENT ON YOUR WEBSITE

On your practice blog, testimonial page, news page, and elsewhere on your website, you can create interesting, inspirational, and important content to share on your Facebook Page.

STEP EIGHT: WATCH SPONSORED STORIES PAY OFF

When content from your website is shared on Facebook, the sponsored story campaign will kick in and show the content to a wider audience. This does not look like a traditional Facebook ad. Instead it shows up in newsfeeds looking like just a regular story being shared by a friend. The only hint that it is being widely distributed is the word "sponsored" in the lower left corner.

Do sponsored stories really work? TBG Digital ran a 10-day, three-client, two-billion impression test, and the sponsored stories ad units received a 46% higher click-through rate, a 20% lower cost per click, and an 18% lower cost per fan than Facebook's standard ad units.

If your practice advertises on Facebook, switching to a sponsored stories campaign for three months just might reveal that direct traffic to the practice website rises along with new patient appointments – a measurable, positive return on investment. **DE**

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