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Creating captivating, shareable content to promote your practice

As you take your dental practice into the world of modern marketing, you'll receive a lot of conflicting information. Parsing the value of your competing options – Facebook versus Twitter, blogging versus social media, and traditional advertising versus organic marketing – can be difficult.

There's a saying in the Internet world: "Content is king." The saying was originally coined to be applied to website content, articles, and blog posts, but with the advent of social media, even 140 characters of content can be a royal source of high-quality interaction.

It's not just high-quality content that is important, however. It's timely, captivating, *shareable* content. Publishing content is only the first step. The real test of content effectiveness is whether people respond.

THERE ARE SIX STEPS TO CREATING SHAREABLE CONTENT:

NO. 1:

Keep it relevant to your audience. Your patients don't want to read a beautifully crafted treatise on the technological advances made in dentistry as related to CEREC (Chairside Economical Restoration of Esthetic Ceramics) machines. They want to know what their experiences will be like when they encounter your CEREC while visiting your office.

NO. 2:

Tailor your approach to your core audience. If you are a pediatric dentist, you need to tailor your approach to moms and dads by pointing out the ways in which your office is child-friendly. If you provide restorative dentistry for seniors seeking dental implants or custom bridgework, the benefits you need to focus on are slightly different. Instead of appealing to parental concerns, you should point out the lifestyle benefits from and value of your services.

NO. 3:

Go multimedia in your approach. All text with no images makes Facebook a dull read! Add images, videos, links, and more to your posts, mixing it up on a regular basis. Even a simple emoticon can boost engagement. According to Buddy Media, posts with emoticons receive 52% higher interaction rates overall — with a 57% higher like rate, a 33% higher comment rate, and a 33% higher share rate!

NO. 4:

Cross pollinate from platform to platform. If you see something taking off on Twitter, try repurposing the idea or content for another social platform. Make sure you repurpose the content in the right format and style for its new audience: use hashtags on Twitter, calls to action on Facebook, and the multiple choice polling option on Google+.

NO. 5:

Use gamification to increase interaction. Create a collage of images on Facebook and ask viewers to pick their favorite. Jump on a trending Twitter hashtag and see how many retweets you can get.

NO. 6:

Leverage user-generated content. Post a comical or weird image with a request for a caption, and watch people jump in with their own witty interpretations of the scene. Later, you can select your top four choices, form a photo collage, and ask people to vote on their favorites. Then, promote the winning caption by creating a meme with the text laid over the image to post on all of your channels. The subliminal message for your audience is: "Look how much fun we have on our page!" The bottom line for you is: You've managed to create three separate streams of content out of a single idea.

As "pay-to-play" tactics become the driving force behind social networks, only a fraction of your followers see your content if you aren't spending money on Facebook to boost your posts. In fact, the latest report from Social@Ogilvy explains that organic reach for Facebook pages is down to about 6% — the lowest in years.

This is why it is so crucial to create shareable content; it improves your reach exponentially as people broadcast it across their own networks. *When you create content that inspires people, they want to pass it on to their friends.* Facebook has expanded the idea of friendship in ways that make it the ideal platform for a new version of word-of-mouth marketing, which is exactly what your practice needs to stay competitive. **DE**

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