



## SOCIAL MEDIA

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# YouTube: The tool your dental practice might have missed

Are you using YouTube to promote your practice online? If not, you could be missing out on one of the most effective visual tools available. How can you ensure that this valuable tool is used—and used correctly—to benefit your practice?

## IS YOUTUBE REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

According to YouTube's "Statistics" page, the video site receives over 800 million unique users per month. Users bookmark or favorite millions of new videos each day, view over 500 years' worth of YouTube video content on Facebook daily, and have rated or commented on over half of all existing YouTube videos.

According to Google, 77% of patients search for health-care information and options online. Sixty-four percent watch videos to learn about providers, clinics, and hospitals, and 56% view them to learn more about specific treatments or procedures. Sadly, many dentists are ignoring video as a possible conversion tool—a mistake that could be costing them potential patients.

## POPULATING YOUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Setting up a YouTube channel is easy (having a Google+ Page or a Gmail account makes it even easier), and you can quickly build up playlists for your patients to enjoy. There are three ways to fill your YouTube channel with excellent content:

- **Create videos yourself.** As you already know, most smartphones are equipped with an HD camera, enabling dentists and team members to shoot video with a few simple clicks. Making videos yourself humanizes your practice because it allows potential patients to get to know you and your staff. Keep it short and simple; one to two minutes is completely adequate.
- **Ask your patients to share.** User-created content is extremely valuable. Most dentists ask for testimonials, but very few are asking for video testimonials. Get ahead of the curve! (But make sure you have written and signed permission to post patients' videos.)
- **Curate great content from others.** This is a great option when someone else has already made the best video ever about a topic you want to cover. Unless it's a dental practice located in the same town as yours, there's no competition issue, so share the love.

## IDEAS FOR YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Besides patient testimonial videos, there are two other types of videos that can be beneficial for your practice. Most dentists are not creating these kinds of videos, and they should be!

1. "How-to" YouTube videos are some of the most popular videos on the web. Do a how-to video about proper brushing and then one about proper flossing. Follow up with relevant tips; for example, one tip might focus on how to tell if a toothbrush needs to be replaced. Keep a running list of ideas for short how-to videos, and get your staff involved in making them.
2. Answering common patient questions is another great source of material for YouTube videos. This can be the jumping-off point for another list. Jot down the questions that patients ask during office visits, and create short videos in which you answer their questions.

You can also do more personal videos. Consider choosing a children's book about visiting the dentist to read aloud on video, or consider asking a patient what he or she likes most about your practice. The possibilities are endless!

## FOLLOWING UP AFTER POSTING VIDEOS

Once you've created your videos, don't forget to share them. Google+, Facebook, and Twitter all support YouTube. You can ask your audience to submit questions, which you will respond to on a video that you later share, or you can have one day a week when you share a how-to tip.

You'll also want to track responses to your videos. YouTube provides a way to annotate videos and add a clickable link, so you can end each video with a call to action and send viewers to your practice's site.

YouTube can be a fantastic addition to your online marketing campaign. Don't miss out on this valuable opportunity to talk directly to your audience! **DE**

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