



Kristie Nation

Creating dental practice social content that succeeds

IS YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE creating content that succeeds online? Web-based content often has a specific audience that can be carefully targeted. You can even build your own audiences from scratch. The kind of content you create will determine both its reach and its shelf life, as well as the appeal it has for your prime demographic. How do you make the most of every piece of content you post?

TELLING STORIES IS KEY TO ENGAGEMENT

The interactive experience that exists online is predicated on storytelling. People browse Facebook, Twitter, and their preferred social networks looking for stories that pique their interest. Content that takes advantage of web users' natural behavior is the most successful. Humans are storytelling animals,¹ and managing to connect emotionally is how you make an impact. Try the following:

- Share your story and the stories of your staff: "Here's why I chose dentistry," "My favorite part of my job is..."
- Share patient stories (with permission, of course): "Jack's new smile," "Hannah's first dentist visit."
- Share stories from the community: "Our practice just bought gear for the youth league!" "Join us for the charity 5K this weekend!"
- Ask for input: "Share your stories! What's the funniest thing that ever happened to you at the dentist?"

BE VISUAL ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS

Facebook and Twitter work best when you have a blend of text, links, and visual content. Imagery is powerful and most likely to generate an emotive reaction. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. Other platforms, such as Instagram, the fastest growing social network,² and Pinterest are almost entirely visual. Try these ideas:

- Share images of the practice and staff: "Check out our new kids' play area!" "It's our dental hygienist Rhoda's birthday today!"
- Share images of community participation: "Today our back-to-school drive gave away 80 supply-stuffed backpacks!" "Look at all the kids who showed up for our Meet-the-Dentist Day!"
- Share images of patient smiles (again, with permission): "Check out our Patient of the Month, Timmy!" "Congrats to Briana who got her braces off today!"

EXPAND CONTENT LIFE WITH AMPLIFICATION

Some content will be a flash in the pan. Some is seasonal. Other content is "evergreen." Remember that a piece of

content can be repurposed across platforms, taken from blog to social, or vice versa, and it can be reposted at various times for expanded impact. Studies show that while the first two weeks generate about half of the anticipated traffic, evergreen content amplified weeks or months after the fact still has a high potential for conversion.³

Even timely content that generated a large volume of interest can be used again, especially in conjunction with nonbranded hashtagging.⁴ Repost handpicked reader favorites as "#ThrowbackThursday" posts and renew that interest at a later date. To repurpose content, try this:

- Analyze your content and identify high-performing content.
- If needed, tweak it by using hashtags or updated information for relevance or by formatting it for a different social platform.
- Post it on a different social platform or repost it to the original platform used.
- Amplify its reach by using a "pay-to-play" mechanism, such as Facebook's "Boost" function, if desired. While this can expand your reach, it isn't necessary for retargeting previous viewers.

The content you create, share, repurpose, reshare, and amplify will determine the visible brand you are developing for your practice. When your content stinks, your practice image does too, so be aware of the process and ensure everything that is published passes the sniff test.

In the end, it's all about the story. Make sure your practice tells a great one. **DE**

REFERENCES

1. Howell P. Why we're storytelling animals with Jonathan Gottschall. Convince&Convert website. <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/podcasts/episodes/why-were-storytelling-animals/>. Accessed September 15, 2016.
2. Alton L. 8 tips to help boost your Instagram marketing success. SocialMediaToday website. <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/marketing/8-tips-help-boost-your-instagram-marketing-success>. Published September 24, 2016.
3. Decugis G. Get your content to generate 2-3x more results by using organic content amplification. Scoop.It website. <http://blog.scoop.it/2016/06/13/get-content-generate-2-3x-results-using-organic-content-amplification/>. Published June 13, 2016. Accessed September 15, 2016.
4. Wood A. 7 lessons brands can learn from the most creative accounts on Instagram. <https://blog.hootsuite.com/lessons-brands-can-learn-from-creative-accounts-instagram/>. Published June 13, 2016. Accessed September 15, 2016.

KRISTIE NATION is the founder and CEO of myDentalCMO, a marketing consulting firm that provides strategic marketing "treatment plans" exclusively for dental practices. The firm was founded with a mission to prevent dentists from wasting countless dollars marketing their practices ineffectively. She can be reached at mydentalcmo@gmail.com or (877) 746-4410.