



PRACTICE

SOCIAL MEDIA

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Leveraging social media dynamics when marketing to women

TODAY'S WOMAN IS ANYTHING BUT TYPICAL. She can't be pigeonholed into a "feminine" demographic to be marketed to as if she were June Cleaver. Women today participate in every facet of culture, and they handle the bulk of family finances—especially when it comes to health-care decisions. How do you connect with the women of today and convince them that your practice is the right option?

The answer is social media. Social platforms can be used to market to women by delivering information in a format that is easily accessible and that invites the people they trust most to be part of the process.

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WOMEN MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON TRUST

When it comes to Internet and social media usage, women tend to dig deeper than men do, comparing sources and verifying facts.¹ Social media is used heavily by women to solicit advice and second opinions from peers.² Building a strong, trustworthy presence on social media allows dental practices to provide women with verifiable information they can instantly share with their friends and family.

WOMEN WANT TO BE ASKED WHAT THEY THINK

Women appreciate it when their input is sought before marketing approaches are solidified. After surveying female business travelers, Hyatt discovered that they felt their hotel experiences were "designed by men, for men."³ Asking women how they felt their experiences could be improved led to changes being made and a happier target demographic.³

Social media is the perfect platform for dental practices to ask women questions about what is important to them when it comes to their dental care and their regular experiences in your practice. The ability to engage women directly and harvest a wide range of responses allows practices to tweak their offerings and marketing strategies to focus on what patients really want.

WOMEN ARE ADAPTABLE

Studies show that women are more likely than men to listen to alternate options and reevaluate their choices based on new information.⁴ Women also tend to prioritize others over themselves and need to be able to "justify" decisions that benefit them.⁵ Your practice needs to not just sell the

treatment but also the justification for the treatment and the experience of receiving it.

Social media allows the presentation of pros and cons of treatment, comparisons between dental services, and benefit-driven justifications that make women more likely to address health-care issues sooner rather than later.

Dental practices should, at all costs, avoid the common marketing pitfalls of pink washing, making stereotypical assumptions, or talking down to women. At a recent nationwide event, I was lecturing about marketing to women, and a prominent (male) cosmetic dentist approached me afterwards and said, "You're wrong. Women don't want to see real women [in marketing]; they all want to look 20."

That type of assumption doesn't apply to today's woman. Making cosmetic enhancements to a smile is more about self-confidence and self-worth. Using social media to market to women emphasizes those goals instead of reinforcing outdated stereotypes. By leveraging the automatic trust implicit in the networks women build online, dental practices can target and address the biggest obstacles in the way of attracting and retaining female patients. **DE**

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