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Reconciling content creation, social media, and branding for dental practices

IT'S EXCITING TO SEE a dental practice's social media marketing begin to take shape. But it's all too easy to allow your overall branding and messaging strategies to become disjointed and fragmented, as social media diverges from what you might have already established for other content channels. How can you ensure your message is clear and consistent?

SHARE NEW, INTERESTING CONTENT

An April 2017 study conducted in the United Kingdom found that eight out of 10 people aged 16 and older forget branded content within three days of seeing it, and five out of 10 are unable to recall a single detail.¹ However, the study also revealed that, if the content has certain attributes, users are more likely to remember what they've read and even take action on it several days or weeks later.¹ For example, 27% of the study's respondents said that if the branded content told them something new and interesting, they would be more likely to remember other details about what they saw or read.¹

STAY ON MESSAGE

Many studies show that many consumers need to be exposed to the same message repeatedly before they take action, but others have found that it's more about the message itself and how it answers the "need" or "pain" of the consumer.² To respond to your patients' needs, make your message do one of the following things:

- **Answer a question**—Patients have questions, and they need answers. Providing them with new information will help them remember your practice later when they need other things—like a new dental home or a specific procedure.
- **Provide a solution**—If a potential patient knows that a root canal is necessary, he or she might expect it to be painful and might not know that your office provides various forms of sedation to ensure comfort.
- **Meet emotional needs**—Patients need to see positivity and want your practice to feel like more than just a clinical setting. Sharing content built around happy patients and community outreach makes them feel that their dental care will be carried out with the same passion and attention.

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

When creating content for various social platforms, the first rule is to ensure that your style, tone, and messaging

are consistent.³ Your practice needs to present a flawless brand presence that is the same and that reinforces your practice's core values, no matter what the method of delivery is. You can accomplish this by doing the following:

- **Work as a team**—Get everyone who is involved with your marketing efforts on the same page, so your blog and social media accounts match your practice's internal and external printed materials.
- **Create a content calendar**—If everyone is working together, a shared calendar can be created a month in advance, and the practice's scheduled events, community outreach, and other marketing efforts can be synced across platforms for consistent, timely messaging.
- **Agree on metrics**—Expectations for different types of content and platforms might vary, but creating trackable, measurable goals should be a priority. Remember, impressions provide brand visibility, but engagement leads to conversions.
- **Optimize for each patient**—Some patients will love being part of your Facebook Page community and will ask questions there. Others prefer e-mail and can be reached with monthly newsletters that encourage them to visit your practice's blog. Find out what your patients prefer (e.g., receiving appointment reminders via text message or via e-mail) and customize their content experiences.

Creating a pool of patients who are informed, engaged, and enthusiastic can only be accomplished if you bring your content creation process into harmony with your practice's social media presence and overall marketing strategy. Formulating messaging that is fresh, consistent, and tailored for the best individual experience is the key to success. **DE**

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