



SOCIAL MEDIA

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Organic versus paid social media marketing for dental practices: Dos and don'ts for 2018

MORE THAN TWO BILLION PEOPLE use social media every day. Facebook holds the largest market share at just over 18%.¹ If your practice is active on Facebook, you're probably already familiar with its organic and paid marketing options.

Most social media platforms formerly encouraged organic marketing as a way to grow their own user bases. In the past few years, however, businesses have been shunted into a pay-to-play dynamic. Facebook, in particular, is constantly tweaking its algorithm, reducing organic reach and driving people to start advertising formally. What do these changes mean for dental practices attempting to maintain a digital presence and attain a decent ROI from social media in 2018?

DON'T GIVE UP ON FACEBOOK

Although the tactics you use may need to be changed to get the best results from social media, Facebook is still the most engaging platform when it comes to user interactions. The platform has 1.13 billion active daily users, and 70% of them log in at least once a day.²

DO CONSIDER PAID FACEBOOK POSTS

The fact that your posts now reach approximately 2% of your followers³ doesn't mean you should ignore Facebook. Your advertising can include paid search with results that will be easier to measure and build on. A targeted campaign can yield prospective patients who are the right demographic for your practice.

DON'T DITCH ORGANIC MARKETING

While bringing in new patients is necessary, retaining existing patients is just as important—and usually less costly. Your organic campaigns on Facebook can continue to provide communication channels for existing patients.

DO BLEND YOUR APPROACH

Most marketers (86%) already use both organic and paid approaches to social media, and almost 60% say they believe paid is more effective.⁴ In late 2016, surveys showed that 39% only or mostly used an organic approach, while 11% only or mostly used paid, and 35% reported using an equal mix of organic and paid social marketing to achieve their goals.⁵

DON'T ASSUME PAID MARKETING WILL BE BADLY RECEIVED

Some dentists shy away from paid advertising on social

media because social media has been hyped as an organic marketing method. While you can (and should) still use social media organically to build your community, there's nothing wrong with targeting audiences for ads or boosted posts, and transparency is built in.

DO STAY ON TOP OF FACEBOOK ANNOUNCEMENTS

Knowing when Facebook is launching a new feature or advertising option can help you make the most of each opportunity for your practice. These are the three most anticipated changes to Facebook advertising for 2018⁶:

- **Dynamic creative**—Facebook will select the best performing combination of images and text for your campaign automatically.
- **Conversion optimization**—Facebook will gather data during each campaign to determine who is most likely to convert into a patient.
- **Remarketing**—Facebook will let you use your own data to remarket your practice to patients who have visited you in the past.

Don't forget to consider paid social media when setting your advertising budget for the year. Using all of Facebook's potential can increase your practice's reach in 2018. **DE**

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