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GUIDE



6 Marketing Strategies to Grow Your Dental Practice

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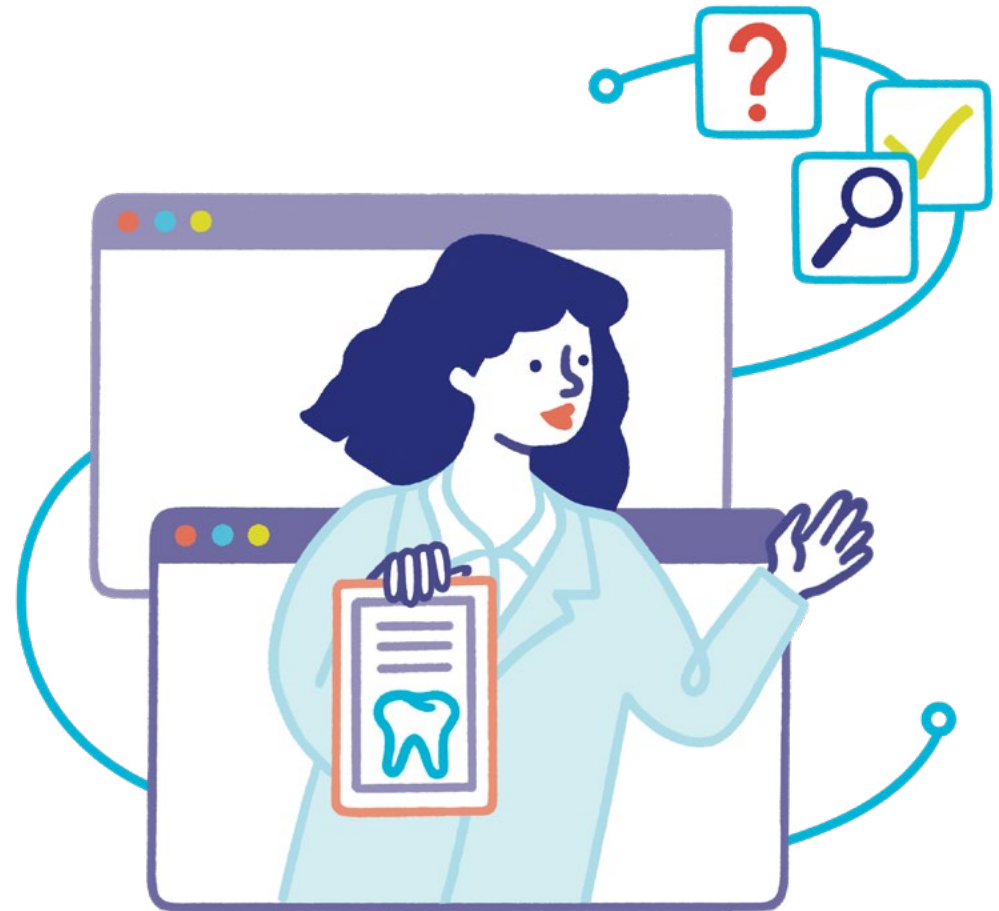
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Introduction:

You got into dentistry to help support great oral health outcomes. So why are we talking to you about marketing?

Having a good marketing strategy is an important way to grow your dental or oral surgery practice. Leveraging word-of-mouth in the digital sphere can help you cast your net wide as you find loyal patients to connect with your practice.

In this guide, we'll provide you with 6 tips to help you get started on your marketing strategy - or to help you take a fresh look at what you're already doing.



What Do We Mean by 'Digital
Word-of-Mouth'?



What Do We Mean by 'Digital Word-of-Mouth'?

Word-of-mouth is a time-honored way that dental practices grow. This part of marketing your dental practice has always been integral. This is still true - and, it's especially true in the digital space.

Word-of-mouth as a concept has seamlessly transitioned into the online arena, manifesting as digital marketing efforts that resonate with the same spirit of personal recommendation. When patients share their positive dental experiences on social media or leave glowing reviews on Google, it acts as a modern referral.

It's important to conceive of marketing in the digital age as simply a newer version of word-of-mouth, where social proof and testimonials play pivotal roles in attracting new patients. Harnessing the power of your online presence allows you to amplify your practice.



Where Should I Start with
Marketing My Dental Practice?



Where Should I Start with Marketing My Dental Practice?



This is a great question - and one we're going to help you answer. Let's get started on the most important considerations for your marketing strategy for your dental practice.

#1: Understand Your Audience

To create the right strategy, you need to know who you're creating the strategy for. Thinking analytically about what will be meaningful to your audience is key.

One clue into this is considering your current patient base. This will help give you a sense of what kind of patient comes to your practice.

The key way to gain insights into this is through data. Explore your data on which patients come to your practice frequently - and which ones keep coming back, year after year. This is a great way to decide what direction you want your marketing strategy to go in. For example, if you have a segment of patients who are no longer coming in for regular appointments, it might be worth targeting your marketing strategy towards a different segment of patients who will be returning frequently.

Where Should I Start with Marketing My Dental Practice?

Here is a helpful list of things to consider when you're learning about your audience:

- **Their age range.** How old are your patients? This will help you understand how to best reach them. Younger patients, for example, will really take notice of online marketing, such as videos, social media ads, and more (we'll talk about this in a bit). It's not that older patients won't, but older patients will also be reachable by more traditional marketing strategies, such as direct mailers.
- **Where they live.** Are your patients commuting to your practice from far away? Are they nearby, right in the neighborhood? When you are choosing how you target your marketing, this is an important thing to know.
- **What languages they speak.** Dental healthcare is an important service, and often must be delivered through a language barrier. Consider if there are ways to include all your patients in your marketing, regardless of what language they speak.
- **How long they've been with your practice.** Are most of your patients newer ones? Or are they loyal patients who have been with your practice for a long time? While you want to be flexible and hit more than one type of patient with your messaging, it's important to know what kind of patient your practice already has.



Once you know a bit more about your current patient base, you can begin to strategize not only based on what type of patient your practice already attracts - but also what kind of patient you would like to bring into your practice.

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#2: Establish Your Benchmarks

Having a solid set of benchmarks for dental marketing¹ is crucial for understanding and evaluating the effectiveness of a marketing strategy.

Once you have formulated your strategy, you will be able to see if it's working if you choose the right benchmarks. These benchmarks could range from the influx of new patients to the practice, often a direct reflection of a successful campaign. Or, another benchmark might be the number and quality of reviews left by satisfied clients - indicating a robust reputation. In the digital age, another useful benchmark is increased engagement on social media platforms - a tangible metric that signals a practice's outreach and patient interaction success.

By focusing on relevant and achievable benchmarks, dental practices can ensure that their marketing strategies are not only visible but also effectively resonating with the audience they serve.

¹ 5 tips for marketing your dental practice | American Dental Association (ada.org)

Where Should I Start with Marketing My Dental Practice?

Once you know your benchmarks and understand your audience, it's time to choose your marketing tactics. Let's dive into some tried-and-true tactics for dental practices and oral surgery practices.

#3: Leverage Online Reviews - Especially Google Reviews

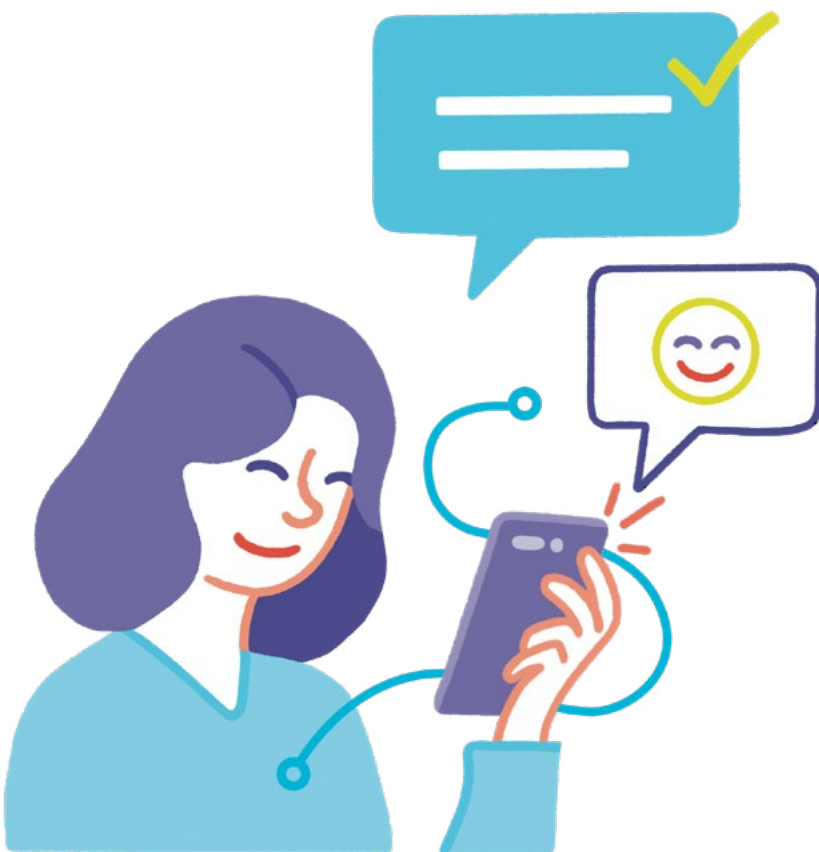
At this point, most dental practices and oral surgery practices know that they should be generating online reviews. Google reviews, in particular, are very powerful. Part of the reason for this is the sheer number of users on Google. The important thing to note, however, is that Google reviews and star ratings in themselves bring your practice up in the algorithm.²

Gaining social reviews is crucial - but actively featuring them in your marketing strategy is where you can really make those reviews or testimonials shine.



² What Every Small Business Needs To Know About Google Reviews (forbes.com)

Where Should I Start with Marketing My Dental Practice?



By incorporating real patient testimonials, you can harness the power of authenticity. This is a true building block of trust among prospective patients. This can look a few different ways. You might use a testimonial or review as part of a graphic featured in a social media post. Or, you could use a testimonial in a direct mailer or newsletter. Patients often rely on reviews as much as personal recommendations, especially when it comes to choosing providers for OMS procedures and other dental services.

However, it's not just patients who rely on reviews! GP offices looking to refer patients to an oral surgeon will also consider reviews. This is to ensure that their patients are going to have the best experience possible - and what better way to find that out than reading the reviews of other patients.

The power of leveraging social reviews is something we often hear about in our conversations at Intiveo. For example, Wayside Dental Centre³ started highlighting patient satisfaction and exceptional care experiences through social reviews. This enhanced their online presence, helping to create that digital word-of-mouth that is so powerful for dental practices.

³ Intiveo - Wayside Dental Centre Case Study

Where Should I Start with Marketing My Dental Practice?

#4: Lean Into the Power of Online Ads

These days, there are a lot of places where you can place an ad. Incorporating a diverse range of online ads into your dental practice's marketing strategy can be a great way for reaching potential patients where they spend most of their time - online.

From Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, to Google and Yelp, ads allow you to tap into visual storytelling. They also help you make local, authentic connections.

Let's use Google Ads, and specifically ads in Google Maps, as examples⁴. Imagine that you're new to town. You've just moved in - and you need to go to the dentist. If you google 'dentist near me', and see an ad for a dental practice that's a ten minute walk from you, odds are, your curiosity will be piqued.

Ads can capture the audience members who are actively searching for dental services in your area. By choosing strategic ad placements and optimizing for local search, your practice becomes easily discoverable and accessible.

Seeing this ad is not a coincidence. This is a moment created by a dental practice with a thoughtful marketing strategy.

Plus, ads are measurable! Most advertising platforms will include analytics, so you can gain insights into patient behavior and preferences, allowing for refined marketing tactics that speak directly to your intended audience.

⁴ 19 Genius Dental Marketing Ideas to Grow Your Practice (wordstream.com)

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#5: Don't Shy Away from Video

Marketing relies heavily on the visuals - which is what makes video such an appealing medium! Video has a lot of versatile applications, including:

- **Repurposing across a number of different platforms.** You use short videos in ads, Instagram and Facebook reels, and TikToks. Plus, if you want to use a longer video on YouTube or your website, you can pull clips from the longer video to use in the shorter ones.
- **Humanizing your staff.** In a video, your audience not only gets a glimpse inside your practice. They also get a chance to see the faces and hear the voices of the staff at your practice. This goes a long way towards establishing trust - before your new patient has been set foot through the door.
- **Using patient testimonials.** Patient testimonials truly shine in video format. Work with current patients to deliver authentic endorsements that will really resonate with your audience. Connecting with your current patients in this way also makes them feel valued. Often, they're really touched to be asked!

Both personal and practical, video can offer a lot of tangible assets to your marketing strategy!



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#6: Don't Forget That Local Face-to-Face Interactions Matter

For all that maximizing your online presence is important, that doesn't mean that your local, face-to-face engagement doesn't matter. Whether it's something as simple as going to other businesses or clinics in your neighborhood and saying hello, to participating in community events, these day-to-day moments truly matter in your marketing strategy.

Community marketing is integral to making great connections.

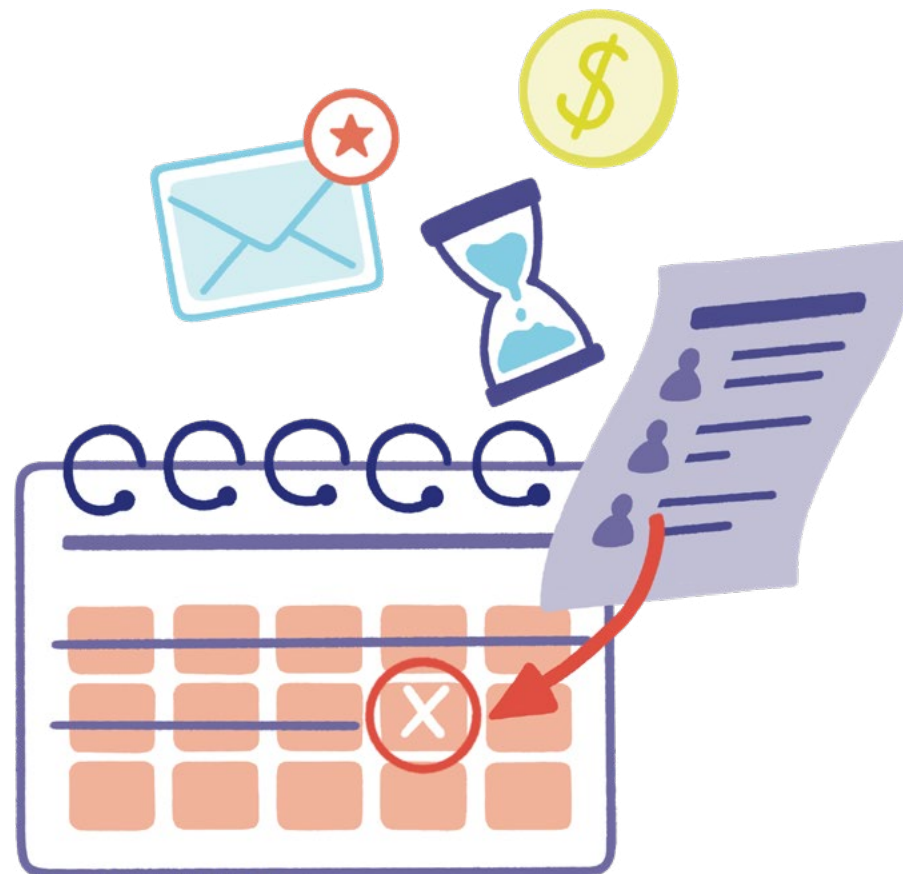
There are a lot of ways to be involved in your local community, such as:

- **Host an open house.** Invite members of your local community in to see your practice. Establishing yourself as a presence in the neighborhood fosters trust - and, you never know when someone who needs a new dentist is going to walk through the door.
- **Support a local charity⁵.** This doesn't necessarily mean a direct financial contribution! There might be opportunities for your dental practice to donate pro bono services for a silent auction fundraiser, or for your staff to volunteer as a group.

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- **Be aware of community events.** Does the block your dental practice is on just really love Hallowe'en? Or is there maybe a cultural holiday that is particularly common in our local community? Participating actively in these kinds of community events creates a lot of goodwill and gets your practice's name out there.
- **Direct mailers.** It may surprise you, but direct mailers have a high ROI⁶ Sending something hardcopy in the mail can be a powerful piece of marketing for your audience. It can feel novel - and, it can feel personal, like getting a holiday card.

Making connections in your local community can be especially powerful when paired with online marketing - marrying both traditional and digital word-of-mouth.



⁵ 31 Dental Marketing Ideas & Strategies That Still Work in 2024 (And How to Track Effectiveness) (titanwebagency.com)

⁶ Direct Mail: 13 Reasons Why It Isn't Dead (neilpatel.com)

Intiveo is Here to Help

Intiveo is excited to offer an abundance of resources tailored specifically for dental marketing needs. Serving as the premier patient engagement platform for general practitioners, OMS practices, academic institutions, and various other specialties across Canada and the US, we're in constant conversation with dental professionals. These insights have helped us create tools such as ROI and cost calculators, comprehensive template packages, and extensive guides dedicated to amplifying patient engagement. Explore the suite of resources on our website, designed to empower your dental practice with effective, seamless engagement strategies. If you're interested to learn a little more about Intiveo, speak to one of our reps today - or come to our booth at the next trade show we attend!

