

HIGHLIGHT

by MicroDental Laboratories

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Summer Spectacular

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Implement effective marketing to close the Summer with a bang and move into the Fall steadily and productively.

Marketing is two-fold: internal and external. Internal marketing refers to nurturing your own patient family—encouraging them to stay with you, proceed with treatment, and refer others to you. About 70% of your marketing budget and efforts will be directed toward internal marketing. Likewise, about 70% of your new patients will come to you as a personal referral. However, internal and external marketing are interconnected.

A message about your practice is received externally (i.e. referral from a friend, an advertisement, website, etc.) and continues to spread internally. What patients have learned about you from external sources, including personal referral, must match what they experience through each contact within the practice. With consistent professional care, patients will refer friends, family, and colleagues to you based on their own positive experience.

About 30% of your new patients will come to you because of external marketing protocols, but if their experience with you is not stellar and does not meet their needs and expectations, they will not say 'yes' to treatment, will not stay with you and, certainly will not refer.

You want to create patients who do the following:

1. Come to you in the appropriate numbers for your practice
2. Accept treatment
3. Agree to the fee and pay willingly
4. Schedule and keep appointments
5. Stay actively involved through your hygiene department
6. Refer others to you

Accurate Messaging

Make sure that your marketing presents an accurate message of who you are and what you do. Once you have identified your practice message and have designed a logo to match that message, be consistent in its delivery. Your message must be seen, heard, or felt 5-7 times before someone will act on it. It must be stated through words, design, and everything you do. Consistency and repetition are the two primary elements of effective marketing.

External marketing relates to marketing directly to people who are not your patients yet. Some common external marketing strategies are participating in health/bridal fairs, speaking to local groups and organizations, as well as advertising in traditional mediums such as radio, TV, and print. The web also plays a vital role in your external marketing. Social media is used by practices as an effective, inexpensive way of reaching a larger audience.

Tips for Creating Successful Advertisements

When advertising, whether it is in a magazine, newspaper, direct mail, etc., your ad should have the following elements:

- a. "You" focused content
- b. One single, consistent message
- c. Call to action statement
- d. Offer
- e. Phone number



MicroDental client, Dr. Ken Hamlett of Dallas, Texas External Marketing Advertorial Piece

"You" Focused and Action-Oriented Content. Your written content needs to be "you" focused and action oriented rather than "me" focused. Make the shift. Let patients know what's in it for them—rather than what you are going to do and how wonderful you are!!

One Single and Consistent Message. Your message should be clear, concise and consistent. If your message changes with every marketing piece, then it is difficult for people to grab hold of it and remember it. Repetition is key.

Call to Action. If you do not tell people to call you, they won't. You cannot assume that by simply placing your telephone number and website address in an ad that the viewer will

act. You must tell people to “Call Today!” Or “Call today to schedule your appointment.”

Include an Offer in the Ad. The goal of your ad is to get people to respond. Do this by including an offer. The inclusion of an offer helps to create a sense of urgency and a reason why someone needs to contact you today. It is an incentive to get the patient to act earlier than he/she might otherwise.

Phone Number. Make sure you have your correct phone number in the ad. Make it large and bold. If the patient were to only see one thing, it should be your phone number. The most appropriate place for your phone number is in the lower right-hand side of the ad.

Social Media

Social media is here. Learn how to use it and maximize it. Facebook, Twitter and blogging are great platforms on which to get started. These services are free. Your investment: office resources. Facebook is a platform that fosters better relationships with your patients. Twitter is a medium that moves quickly. The focus of Twitter is to get out small pieces of useful information (140 characters). Facebook is slower-paced and sets the stage to build relationships.

When posting on your social media pages, 80% of the posting should be giving/relationship building and 20% selling. Social media is a forum where you can post before and after cases, patient testimonials, and any other pertinent information.

After you place veneers on a patient, pull out the camera and video your patient’s reaction. You can video patient testimonials, comments from the team, and your response to a recent CE course you attended. Take these videos and upload them to your social media sites. (Only upload patient photos and testimonials if you have your patient’s written consent.) Be proud of your dentistry and let your patients be proud of their beautiful smiles.

Put one person directly responsible for making the daily posts and for checking your sites daily. If someone makes a post or tweet, the practice should be responding within 24 hours. Not responding loses the two-way conversation part of social media. Marketing is a set of systems and social networking is a division of your marketing system. Pay attention to detail.

Tracking the Results

Tracking your results is essential. The more information you have, the better.

Track or monitor the following:

- Every new patient call
- Patients who schedule an appointment
- No-shows or broken appointments
- Treatment presented
- Treatment accepted

New Patient Call Tracking

Track every new patient call into the practice to see if your marketing is generating activity—even if a person does not schedule. If the phone is ringing but no one is scheduling, what’s happening? Does the new patient call need improvement? If so, modify the verbal skills and try again. If after modifying the verbal skills patients do not schedule, then it is time to look at the marketing message as well as the placement of that message. Go back to the drawing board.

Summary

Summer is nearing an end and Fall is upon us. Be committed to ending the Summer with a bang. Fill your days with excellent new patient numbers. Market both internally and externally to make sure that you have patients entering the practice now so that you will have new cases to provide as you enter the Fall.

Greenwall, L. & Jameson, PhD, Cathy. (2012). Success Strategies for the Aesthetic Dental Practice. Quintessence: Berlin.



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