

Easy, Breezy, Beautiful Marketing Campaigns

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BELOW ARE 5 BASIC STEPS TO GETTING STARTED:

STEP 1 – GRAB THEIR ATTENTION:

You have competition; it may not always be a lot but it's there. You need to address the patient's needs. Consumers become purchasers when they have a direct need that is conveniently and affordably filled by the producer. Remember when you were last looking to purchase a new car? Once you started looking for that perfect car, did you notice more car commercials, billboards, and radio ads? Or even that a car dealership was on your way home from work? Well, the fact is the marketing pieces were always there, but you were not in the consumer mindset, and thus, you did not notice their presence. Since new patients are not always in a consumer mindset, remember to reutilize your successful marketing campaigns on a regular basis. As a dentist, you can provide a solution to a lot of unique patient problems. Market your solutions, not your services.

STEP 2 – SPEAK TO THEM:

You know the solutions you are capable of providing; now find a way of saying: "I'm your answer!" Not only should you be providing patients with the solution to the problem they are experiencing, but you need to be placing a sense of urgency on it. Stress the importance of your answer and consider a call to action on your marketing piece. Many potential new patients already know who you are and where you are, but they need that little extra push to finally pick up the phone.

STEP 3 – WHY YOU:

Patients understand you are a dentist, they also realize there are a handful of other dentists within driving distance of their home. So what sets you apart? I promise it's not the fact that you can cut a great crown prep. Take time to find out why your current patients love coming to your office. Even consider inviting some current favorite patients out to dinner to gather their opinions in a focus group. Here are some novel ideas: Is it your experience? Your environmental awareness?

Your punctuality? Your goodwill? Your education? Your personality? Your great team? Your painless injections? Your convenient locations?

STEP 4 – MARKETING EVALUATION:

Marketing is like a box of chocolates; it comes in many flavors and fancy appearances, but you will not like the

taste of each individual piece. Only a select few will touch the taste buds of your budget and your demographic. Start by analyzing what you have done in the past. What worked the best for you? Have you been able to successfully measure an ROI? Study the marketing brought in the most recall awareness for established patients. Take the time to understand the bulk of demographic. Are they more likely to look through the yellow pages or find you on "Google"? Does radio or TV have more of a presence to your target audience? Do your patients receive text messages? What kind of direct mail has proven to be the most effective? Marketing is not a one-size-fits-all deal.

STEP 5 – FOLLOW YOUR MARKETING:

Investing your hard earned dollars into marketing should not involve picking through mystery boxes. This is not "Let's Make a Deal". Ask your marketing representatives for detailed statistics of previous local campaigns. If they cannot provide a level of detail that makes you comfortable, then move on.

Previous marketing statistics can help guide your initial decisions. However, it is of greater importance that you make the effort to further track the marketing you reveal to the public. Using call tracking numbers can be a great head start. It is also as simple as training your team to ask all new patients (in detail!) how they heard about your office. Simply asking, "How did you hear about us?" is not enough. Train your team to follow up with something similar to, "Have you seen us anywhere else, we just launched a fun new TV commercial and are looking for some feedback?" There is typically more than one source: i.e. a new patient heard about you through a close friend, but they scheduled their appointment only after hearing your radio ad.

To properly measure ROI, you must be able to produce a detailed report of which marketing piece is bringing in how much revenue. This will prove to be invaluable when your office needs to make tweaks in marketing and budgetary strategies.

W. Keith Dobracki D.D.S., M.B.A. has been a featured writer for multiple publications and has spent time lecturing to his colleagues across the country. Dr. Dobracki would be pleased to provide you with further insight on this article, hot trends in marketing, or other practice management topics. Contact him at dobracki@gmail.com.



TECHNOLOGY COMES WITH A PRICE

You better have a backup plan in place. To install a new server and discover the new operating system is not compatible with one of your older software packages can be quite frustrating to say the least.

I am in the rental business and own a number of houses. What I have learned over time is that a house is like a living, breathing organism that needs constant attention and feeding. If you don't keep up with it, sooner or later your house falls apart.

Computers and technology are similar in that they also need constant attention and maintenance. We have a plan in place whereby we replace a few computers in our network every year. We put the new machines in the operatories that require the most powerful units to handle the graphics and we move them down the line to the consult room, or lab, where the speed and power is not as critical.

Every 5 years or so we replace the duplicate, dual hard drive servers (redundant back-ups). By replacing computers on a regular schedule we keep our system running efficiently and never have a huge expense of replacing the complete network. We keep the system fed.

Your office should have a budget and a great relationship with your networking and computer company. It helps to work with a company like Diversified Digital (www.diversifieddigital.com, 888-734-3701) that is familiar with the numerous dental software packages and can often correct problems remotely through the internet. By being familiar with both the hardware and the software you can avoid the all too common blame game that goes on whereby no one wants to take responsibility for a problem and puts the blame on the other guy.

I have often said that I have a "love/hate relationship with computers." They sure make it easy and faster to do things, but at times they can drive you nuts! If you are willing to invest the time and energy in high-tech dentistry it can be rewarding, but go down this road aware of the inevitable issues.

By Dr. Craig Callen²

Dentistry is becoming more and more a high-tech field. When I started practice more than a few years ago, computers in a dental office were very rare, let alone in the operator. Lasers were something you knew about from science fiction movies and we had never heard of CAD CAM.

Today, all has changed. Some for the good, and some not so good. The saying, "live by the sword, die by the sword" comes to mind. "Live by technology, die by technology" is how I see it.

Our office is about as high-tech as they come. We were one of the first to have digital X-ray in the state, one of the first in our area to have computers in the operatories, TV monitors in the operatories, a laser, CAD CAM, CASEY, a website, Powerpoint presentations in the reception room, computerized appointment confirmation, recall, email newsletters, surveys, practice management with Lighthouse PLZ, digital-on-hold system, intra-oral digital pictures, online back-ups and online bill paying. The list grows daily.

We are currently looking at an online system for patient forms and medical history updates. This will streamline our check-in process greatly.

All of these technologies come with a price in both time and money.

With every new piece of equipment, or system, you have a learning curve. Time to train and perfect the use of that system. Time to maintain the system and make sure you have all the updates. Money for the purchase (and these things don't come cheap). Money for repairs. Money for service plans. Money for training. Nothing is free.

While all of these technologies have helped make our practice more productive, efficient and profitable, it is not for the faint of heart. To walk in Monday morning after a big lightning storm over the weekend and find a power outage caused your system to crash is not a great feeling.

Dr. Craig C. Callen is a full-time dentist in the small rust belt city of Mansfield, Ohio. He has written three books for dentists, "The Cutting Edge, I, II, & III," is the associate editor for "The Profitable Dentist", has written numerous articles for national dental publications and has lectured internationally on clinical and management topics in dentistry. You may contact him by email at craigcallendds@gmail.com.

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FROM THE DESK OF GEORGE S. LEE, MD, DDS:

Welcome Fall! As summer comes to a close we are eagerly anticipating the crisp fall air, fall festivals, and pumpkin patches with our families. We hope that you find this monthly newsletter a valuable resource for your practice. Please email your suggestions for future topics to KLee@cumberlandsurgicalarts.com and will address them.

DENTIST APPRECIATION RECEPTION:

We are excited to host a Dentist Appreciation Reception for you and your guest on Thursday, October 1st from 6-8pm, at our office. Please join us for food, fellowship, and musical entertainment. We sincerely thank you for your continued support and trust in the care of your patients. You may RSVP to Katie at 615-498-6734 or email her at KLee@cumberlandsurgicalarts.com.

DENTAL IMPLANT LUNCH & LEARN WORKSHOPS:

Lunch and Learn sessions are available in your office for you and your staff! These hands on, educational workshops can be tailored to your specific needs. Dr. DeFelice and I provide information on dental implants and the role of 3D imaging technology implant dentistry. Examples of session topics include:

- *Implants as the Standard of Care*
- *Bone Grafting and the Atrophic Mandible*
- *Implant Parts & Pieces*
- *Advanced 3-D Imaging*

Of course, we bring lunch! To schedule your office's Lunch and Learn Workshop, call Lisa at 931-552-3292, or email her at LDotson@cumberlandsurgicalarts.com.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ORAL SURGERY AND IMPLANT DENTISTRY:
PATIENT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPECTATIONS PRIOR TO RECEIVING IMPLANT-SUPPORTED RESTORATIONS*

Implant dentistry has revolutionized the treatment of partially and completely edentulous patients. The purposes of this study were to explore what made patients choose implant treatment and their prior knowledge and expectations of this treatment option. A study population of 117 subjects was selected from 248 referred possible candidates for implant therapy. The subjects answered a questionnaire regarding implant dentistry prior to professional consultation at two hospital/university-based centers and one private implant center.

In most cases, the choice of treatment was motivated by expectations of improved chewing/function (46.0%), appearance (19.5%), or both (18.6%). Improved chewing/function and improved appearance were rated "very important" by 96.5% and 86.1% of patients, respectively. Surprisingly, 57.4% reported that the cost of treatment did not play a role in their decision. Only 6.0% claimed to have much prior knowledge about the treatment and 33.6% had a realistic perception about the length of anticipated service. Patients first received implant-related information primarily (62.9%) from dentists, and 75.2% thought their dentist gave the most useful information. Significant positive associations were found between knowledge about the treatment, the need for periodic professional oral health maintenance, and expected treatment time. The authors found that patients seek implant therapy primarily to improve chewing function and esthetics, whereas cost seems to be less important. Prior to treatment, many patients lack precise information on the importance of necessary implant-related hygiene measures and implant longevity. The general dentist is the primary source of information.

* Simensen AN, Boe OE, et al. • Int J Oral Maxillofac Implants. 2015 January/February;30(1):41-47



Easy, Breezy, Beautiful Marketing Campaigns

by Dr. W. Keith Dobracki¹

Dentistry is a small business. Just like any other business, dentists need to market in a competitive marketplace. As a dentist, you must put your best foot forward or someone else will. Marketing involves nothing more than informing potential consumers about services you provide and what sets you apart from the guy down the street. It really is that simple. Are you keeping it simple? If not, then you may need to re-evaluate the core of your marketing strategy.

I have seen too many marketing pieces full of extravagant graphics and color schemes that resemble a 70's disco party. But those offices are far from "staying alive" among their competition. More often than not, elaborate

marketing pieces can grab a reader's attention, but do not clearly communicate the mission of the dental office to the prospective new patient. Clarity takes the guessing game out of expectations and instills a sense of comfort to patients.

Too many small practices attempt to market themselves the same as large corporations. This is not an effective strategy because dental offices are not typically branded the same as the "big guys." The "big guys" have already invested millions of dollars into national brand recognition. Attempting corporate marketing initiatives leaves patients feeling deceived and misses the core components that frequently get patients in the door.

When patients require medical care, they never search for a sterile corporate environment for their health care. They want their doctors to be human and care about their overall well-being. They look for doctors to address their needs with a personable demeanor. Patients only trust their doctors once they have established a genuine relationship with the office team. Start that relationship early! Start it right with marketing!

It is very important to discover your niche in the marketplace. Amplify your presence by implementing more direct marketing and branding campaigns focusing on what you already excel in locally. Until you understand how to market on "why your current patients already love coming to see you," then you will continue to move backwards in a turbulent flow of competitive marketing. Your campaigns must not only grab the attention of your patients but also inspire them to take action. You must convert your shoppers into buyers!

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