

# USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO TELL THE STORIES OF YOUR PRACTICE

BY KRISTIE NATION



If anything has become apparent in the world of social media during the past decade, it has been that a picture is worth a thousand words. Images shared on social sites such as Facebook consistently outdo text when it comes to interaction and sharing. Videos can be even more powerful. How can you take this knowledge and make it work for your practice?

First, you have to remember who your target audience is, and that boring is ... boring. In other words, filming a short video about your latest piece of practice equipment is not going to produce anything from your online viewers except yawns.

Erik Qualman, one of KissMetrics' 50 Top Social Media Power Influencers, says: *"Successful companies in social media function more like entertainment companies, publishers, or party planners than as traditional advertisers."* You have to share things that other people can get excited about!

This does not mean you should throw everything you know about visual marketing out the window. Some online marketers will insist that commercials, for instance, do not translate to social platforms. But this is not exactly true. Some of the most often shared pieces of video content *are* commercials. The epic "Look at your man, now back at me" Old Spice series is a perfect example.

So, how do you create sharable video content without a *huge* advertising budget? The answer is by telling stories. Look at Facebook and see how many of the top shared posts are stories. In fact, Facebook even uses the word "story" to describe promoted content.

Here are six ways your practice can create stories that viewers will want to share:

1. When brainstorming ideas for videos, always ask, "Why would someone want to share this after viewing it?" If you cannot answer this question, scrap the idea.
2. Make sure the story your video tells actually qualifies as a story. It should have a beginning, middle, and end. It should have a setting and a plot. It should have a conflict and a resolution. It does not have to be long, but it needs to be a story.

3. Do not forget a hero. This should not be your practice, or even yourself. Instead, the focal point of your videos should be patients since this is who your viewers can relate to.

4. Keep it short. Most Facebook users will not click on a video if it is longer than 90 seconds. According to research from Wistia, the first 15 to 30 of these 90 seconds are your best chance to grab your viewer's attention. So start strong!

5. Focus on content that will remain fresh. Stories that stay relevant even after a year or two have passed will be the most likely to be shared again and again.

6. Use music (but make sure you get permission!). Build relationships with local bands to create a great vibe for your videos. Fantastic up-and-coming sound is way better than stock music. This will not get you in trouble like swiping from big names will. This approach can make a big difference in how your videos are received.

Finally, never lose sight of the ultimate goal of your social media campaign. This goal, according to Deborah Lee, one of Forbes' Top 50 Global Social Media Influencers, is *"to demonstrate what you do well, say why you do it well, and then remind people that you do it well."*

The stories you share on social media should be designed to do all of the above and to encourage others to continue sharing. Social media is a journey, not a destination. So keep growing and do not stagnate. Everything you do should be a stepping stone to the next thing.

Each video you create will be better than the last as you learn what works and what does not. The thrill you get the first time someone books an appointment and refers to seeing your patient's "story" on Facebook will make all the effort worth it. **DE**

---

**KRISTIE NATION** is the founder and CEO of myDentalCMO, a marketing consulting firm that provides strategic marketing "treatment plans" exclusively for dental practices. The firm was founded with a mission to prevent dentists from wasting countless dollars marketing their practices ineffectively. She can be reached at [kristie@mydentalcmo.com](mailto:kristie@mydentalcmo.com) or (888) 557-6443.