

THE 7 THINGS YOU SHOULD BE DOING ON YOUR PRACTICE'S FACEBOOK PAGE

BY KRISTIE NATION

Facebook, like all social media, is an ever-changing game. If you have not been paying attention to recent changes, you may have missed some important opportunities in the past few months. Your practice's Facebook presence could be due for an update.



Here are seven steps to take on Facebook to maximize the impact of your social media endeavors:

1. Add a call to action to your cover photo. Facebook just started allowing this. You can complete your practice's profile with a reminder to call today for an appointment or consultation. You should also put a working link in the cover photo description. By adding the link, you make it easy for viewers to click straight to your practice's website and access a contact form. This is a great way to track ROI.
2. Search on Facebook for the query, "*Favorite interests of people who like [name of your practice].*" This gives you more information about what your viewer base likes. You can also search for "*Pages liked by people who like [name of your practice].*" If a major influencer likes your page, you can find out what other things they like by searching for "*Pages liked by [name of influencer].*" This can give you a good idea of what other types of content your fans want to see, and you can tailor posts accordingly.
3. Cross reference data. If your practice's website has a blog, and you promote your blog posts on Facebook, you can use Facebook analytics plus Google analytics to see if the time of day you post has a measurable effect on traffic driven from Facebook to your website. You can use this information to time future posts for the highest possible response.
4. Use hash tags appropriately. Don't pepper every Facebook update with hash tags, but judiciously add them when needed for extra punch. Seasonal hash tags such as *#BackToSchool* can aid with a late summer promotion, or *#TeethWhitening* in advance of holiday picture-taking. Alternately, target more specific terms such as *#RootCanal* or *#ScaredOfTheDentist?* to share information about your practice's solutions for nervous patients.
5. Avoid overly long updates. If you exceed 70 words, stop and ask yourself what your message is. Chances are you have strayed off topic. Keep every post concise and check to see if it gives your fans value. Then add a short call to action and hit "post." If you feel the need for the occasional longer post, make it a once or twice monthly event.
6. Engage fans with "caption this photo" posts and encourage others to post to your page (make sure you are monitoring daily if you leave your page open for posting). You can also create surveys, polls, "fill in the blank" posts, and "Has this ever happened to you?" questions to encourage fan interaction. You can also use fan-generated content as prime posting material – pictures of smiling patients' post-braces treatment or images of grinning team members at a local charity 5K event can make an impact.
7. Focus on what works for your practice. No matter how many guides to successful Facebook management you read and how many tips you absorb, only your observations will lead you to the ultimate right combination for your practice. Pay attention to what works on a day-to-day basis, and then do more of *that*. It does not matter if a hundred other practices do it differently. What matters is how *you* manage to relate to *your own* existing and potential customer base.

Keeping up to date with Facebook dos and don'ts is just as important to your marketing efforts as keeping up to date with techniques and technology is to your in-office services. If you ensure your practice is at the top of its game in both cases, you are much more likely to experience success. **DE**

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