

How to Generate New Patient Referrals with a Facebook Page

Taking the plunge to create a Facebook Page for your practice may be one of the most unfamiliar, yet important steps you make for your online marketing efforts. It's where your patients and patients-to-be are spending their time, and it's where your practice needs to be in order to capture this growing demographic of social-savvy patients. Set-up and employed correctly, a practice Facebook Page (working in tandem with your website) can broaden your online exposure, serve as a valuable educational resource, and improve your ability to connect with new and existing patients for increased referrals.

You can learn how to set your page up yourself, or you can seek the expertise of a professional in websites and online marketing for dentists who can help you take your social media campaign to the next level.

Step 1: Create Your Page

The first step is setting-up your page which involves registering and completing your basic account information. Many practices get through this step and then come to a screeching halt, leaving their page inactive, which is even less valuable than if the page was never created in the first place.

After you've set-up your page, you'll want to expand on its content and design so that it reflects your practice and is appealing to visitors. There are many interactive features available that allow you to personalize your page and better engage your followers. An online marketing provider can help you choose the most useful features for your page and even build custom tabs which set your page apart from your competitors and encourage more patient engagement.

Step 2: Get Fans

So you have a practice Facebook page. Now what? You need to get fans (Facebook users who choose to "Like" your page) if you want to encourage participation and empower your existing patients to spread the word about your practice to their network of followers. There are a number of practical things you can do to grow your Facebook following. For starters, make sure you've added your social media icons on your website home page. You should also include your Facebook URL on all of your other existing marketing materials, including brochures, mailers and newsletters. Most of your patients are already using Facebook daily and will be excited to become a fan of your page. An integrated approach that incorporates your social media strategy with your website is the best way to manage your online brand and grow the number of people following your practice on Facebook.

Step 3: Start Connecting

Most importantly, you'll want to engage regularly on your Facebook page by posting content. No other online channel gives you such a direct way to connect and share information with your patients on a daily basis.

Your posts can range from images and promotions to dental health tips and articles. An automated blog management service provided by your online marketing provider is a great (and easy) way to streamline the entire content management process, keeping your Facebook page updated regularly with informational articles from your blog.

An added benefit of Facebook is that its true viral marketing. Every time a fan (existing or potential patient) engages with your page – from "liking" your page to posting a comment– that activity is

published to their "News Feed" which can be viewed by all of their Facebook friends. Your activity is shared with a greater network, giving your practice increased visibility at an exponential rate.

Consistency is the key to a successful social media campaign and increased referrals. Regular participation from your practice combined with the assistance from your online marketing provider can help you thrive on Facebook and take your online marketing to a new height.

Building a successful Web presence is easy when you team with an expert in dental web design. The ISDS and Officite have partnered together to offer professional website development and online marketing for Members at a discounted rate. As the number one dental website company, Officite offers attention-getting designs, easy self-editing capabilities, local search marketing, mobile websites, patient reviews management, social networking and patient education for growing healthy practices and attracting new patients. Visit www.officite.com/isds or call 888-738-8719 for additional information.