



Digital Marketing Tips for Your Private Practice

Consumers increasingly turn to the internet for everything from entertainment and food to finding a healthcare provider. If you're not leveraging online channels to promote your private practice, you are likely missing out on a large pool of potential patients. Whether you've just opened a new practice or are looking to attract more patients to an already established private practice, digital marketing is an effective way to market yourself and expand your patient base.

You don't need a huge budget or extensive experience to begin using these three main digital marketing channels. We've outlined some basic tips and strategies for creating effective campaigns across social media, paid search platforms, and through search engine optimization.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

An effective practice website will be optimized for both users and search engines. Making your website user-friendly is fairly straightforward, but there are a few additional steps you should take to make sure your site is also easy for search engines to understand. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) can help ensure that your website shows up on Google (or other search engines) when a potential patient is searching for healthcare in the area.

IDENTIFY KEYWORDS

The first step is to identify how patients search for your business and services. Google's AdWords keyword tool suggests a variety of relevant search phrases based on your website URL, preset business categories, or keywords or phrases. It also provides search volume estimates so you can see how often those keywords are being searched each month. Choose a variety of keywords, including general terms with high search volume and high competition ("short-tail" keywords) as well as more specific terms that are highly relevant to your business but may have smaller search volume ("long-tail" keywords).

WRITE UNIQUE META INFORMATION

Once you've created a keyword list, you want to start incorporating these keywords into your pages. Most website platforms give you ability to easily edit meta data, which tells search engines and users what each page on your site is about. For SEO purposes, you will want to write unique title tags and meta descriptions that incorporate relevant keywords for every important page on your website. Keep these short as Google sets character limits for what it will display in its search results. A few keywords or keyword phrases in the title tag and 2-3 short sentences describing the page for the meta description is all you need.

CONTENT IS KING

In addition to including keywords on the back end of your website in the form of meta data, you want to incorporate them into the front end. This means writing high-quality website content that centers around important, relevant keywords. You want this content to be informative and well-written. Never write low-quality content solely for SEO and never stuff your content with too many keywords. You will only want to target a couple keywords per page. Populate each page with quality content, and consider maintaining a blog where you can write about other topics relevant to important keywords.

USE ANCHOR TEXT

Anchor text is the clickable work or phrase in a hyperlink. Links between pages help search engines crawl your website and discover all of your content. Find places in your content where it makes sense to link to another page or a blog post. Create a hyperlink, and choose anchor text that is relevant to the page you're linking to. It's important not to sacrifice content quality, so make sure you do this in a way that makes sense within the text.

GO LOCAL

Local search is becoming increasingly important. Google often shows relevant local search results at the top of the page when users perform a search for local services. To help your practice show up in this section, you should create a free business listing through Google My Business. You should also make sure that your practice's information (name, address, phone number, etc.) is correct across third party reviews sites like Yelp and as well as online directories.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

In addition to organic (unpaid) results, Google serves paid ads in its search results. To leverage Google Adwords, you write ad copy and manage your budgets within your Google account. Your ads will show up for relevant search queries, and users can click through to your website. These ads can be a very direct, cost effective way of reaching potential patients.

IDENTIFY KEYWORDS (AND NEGATIVE KEYWORDS)

Just like with SEO, the first step in launching an SEM campaign is identifying relevant keywords. In addition to search volume and competition, you will also want to pay attention to cost per click when choosing keywords for a paid campaign. Within AdWords, you can also identify which keywords you don't want your ads to appear for. These negative keywords can help increase your click through rates and reduce your average cost per click.

LEVERAGE GEOTARGETING

AdWords allows you to have full control over where your search ads appear. By leveraging geotargeting, you can ensure your ads are only appearing within a certain radius around your practice, so you're only advertising to users who are within a reasonable distance of your business. Additionally, if you have multiple practices, you can control where each business is being promoted to ensure the closest practice is appearing for a user.

REFINE & GROUP KEYWORDS BY TARGETED THEMES

Combining your keywords into targeted groups will allow you to create more targeted ads for each set of keywords. By doing this, you'll be able to provide more relevant ads to search users which will increase the likelihood of them clicking on your ad. For example, a dentist might want to create different groups for users looking for a routine cleanup.

UNDERSTAND KEYWORD MATCH TYPES

Understanding match types with keyword targeting in AdWords is crucial to ensuring your ads are appearing for the right types of searches. Since 15% of searches every day are unique, it's important to adapt to the various ways people input keywords into their search to find what they're looking for. By leveraging a variety of keyword match types you will be able to ensure you're able to appear for relevant, long-tail search queries users type into Google.

UTILIZE AD EXTENSIONS

Paid search ads allow you to leverage a variety of ad extensions to provide additional details about your business and enhance your ads. For example, you can add a phone number (call extension) that appears during the hours your practice is open so search users can call your business directly through the ad. The location extension shows exactly where your practice is, which may help attract nearby users. While those are only a couple of examples, there are many other extensions that you can easily set up to promote more information about your practice.

Social Media Marketing

Facebook is ubiquitous these days; everyone from college kids to their grandmothers has an account. This makes it, along with other social media platforms, an excellent way to both stay in touch with your current patient population and reach potential new patients. Read on to learn some strategies for maintaining an engaging social media presence and leveraging advertising on social media platforms.

BE ACTIVE

There's more to a professional Facebook presence than simply creating an account and adding a few pictures. In order to stay relevant and at the top of your existing customers' minds, post on your various social media platforms regularly. Share interesting content, but be clear and concise. People will lose interest if you post long paragraphs of text. Stick with a few short sentences and link to longer content pieces if necessary.

BE VISUAL

Your posts should be eye catching in addition to informative and engaging. It's very easy for someone to scroll past a post that's just plain text. Entice people to stop, read, and interact with your post by including an interesting image or even a video that goes along with the text.

EXPLORE PAID OPPORTUNITIES

If you're in the market for new patients, you can get in front of a large Facebook audience of potential patients on even a small budget. With Facebook's paid advertising platform, you can create an ad using an image or video letting an audience know you're taking new patients. You can learn more about these ads here: <https://www.facebook.com/business/products/ads>.

BE SPECIFIC WITH YOUR TARGETING

When creating ads on Facebook, you want to be sure you're getting in front of the right people. Facebook's targeting options allow you to target people by location (you can reach only those who live in your city or within a radius around it), age (if you're a pediatrician you can target parents), interests (if you're a sports medicine doctor you can target those interested in various sports), behaviors and more.

PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT

If your patients have a good experience at your practice, request that they "like" or "follow" you. You could also request that they write a review of their experience on your Facebook page, so when potential new customers land on your page, they get a positive impression of your practice.

For more information about marketing your private practice, [click here to listen to a podcast on the subject featuring experts from Bankers Healthcare Group and their marketing partner, Digital Impulse.](#)