



## 10 Tips for cost effectively marketing your dental practice

Having consulted for, coached and mentored hundreds of businesses, including many dental practices nationwide, Leonie Arnebark from Reality Marketing understands the challenges many dental practices face, in particular being budgetary constraints, lack of know-how and lack of measuring systems, when it comes to marketing their practice.

Leonie is currently a marketing consultant for Independent Dentist Network and will be a guest speaker at the up and coming IDN National Conference being held in Melbourne in June. Below she shares some top tips for cost effectively marketing your dental practice.

For many dental practices, the marketing budget is often small or non-existent, but taking a smart, integrated and planned approach can help you maximise your marketing effort and cost.

### 1. Have a plan

Marketing your dental practice cost effectively requires the same if not more strategic thinking and planning than what a significant marketing budget would entail. Even if you are engaged in a no-cost activity to promote, this will still equate to a cost of time and effort. Regardless of the cost of any given tactic or activity, it must be an integral part of a strategic marketing plan to generate the most return on your investment.

### 2. Know your ideal patient/customer

Don't waste your time or money chasing the wrong type of patient/customer. Start by understanding:

- Do you know what they need or want?
- How do they search for your service?
- Who and where do they seek recommendations or word of mouth referrals about your services from?

### 3. Differentiate from competitors and know your key message

You should be marketing all the time — wherever you are. Therefore, you need a compelling story. You only have a brief time to make a first impression, make it a good one. This needs to be different from your competitors to enable you to stand out from the crowd.



#### **4. Build strong partnership alliances**

Identify and establish relationships with synergistic, non-competitive businesses in your area i.e. other healthcare providers. For example GPs, with a similar target audience can act as cross referrers. Piggy back on any communication activity your partners are implementing with their database i.e. contribute an interesting feature in their newsletter. Encourage reciprocal website linking with partners to help increase reach and assist with SEO.

#### **5. Be smart with your online presence**

An online presence is critical in today's digital world, being smart with your strategy is key to getting maximum return. An integrated online strategy that effectively utilises your website, blog, SEO, social media, targeted campaigns and newsletters can be cost effective and successful in attracting patients. Do your research, engage with good providers where needed and always measure activity i.e. use google analytics etc.

#### **6. Support your local community**

Let your patients know that there is more behind the surgical mask and they will feel good supporting you and your practice. Identify and align with a sporting club and/or charity that fits with your practices philosophy and values. This involvement provides an ideal opportunity to give back to the community, creating a sense of good will while also affording your practice a chance to increase reach to prospective patients. This involvement can then be communicated across all channels including digital platform and leverage possible media exposure opportunities as well. You can also encourage participation and contribution from your team and patient base where suitable.



## **7. Awareness raising and education**

Many people detest public speaking however, there are many organisations seeking qualified, industry experts who can present to their groups. Take a deep breath and volunteer. Ensure that your content is relevant, useful and engaging for the audience. This will also assist in raising your profile and positioning you as an expert in your field.

## **8. Ask for referrals and reviews**

Don't be shy about asking for referrals and reviews. Majority of people say they are willing to provide a referral or review if asked, but very few take the initiative to do it on their own. Now more than ever people are looking at google and Facebook reviews as part of the decision-making process.

## **9. Focus on retention**

It is a lot less expensive to keep a patient/ customer than it is to get a new one. That's why establishing strong relationships with your patient base is crucial. A patient delight and loyalty program are just some of the cost-effective ways of keeping patients happy. Proactively seeking patient satisfaction feedback is also important.

## **10. Monitor activity**

Whatever activity you do, track it. Set up a lead capturing mechanism which enables you to monitor all enquiries and where they came from, this will enable you to accurately measure ROI and gain a true insight as to what is working and what's not.

These ten, inexpensive marketing strategies can assist you in effectively engaging patients, building relationships, and ultimately keeping you and your practice top-of-mind. It's not always



about the money you have to spend on marketing, it's about the time and effort you put into it, how to measure it and above all, the relevance it has for your patients.

[www.realitymarketing.com.au](http://www.realitymarketing.com.au)

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