

Marketing Guidelines



OPERATING AN INDEPENDENT DENTAL CLINIC IS A SMALL BUSINESS COMPETING WITH OTHER SMALL BUSINESSES AND MAJOR CORPORATIONS AND HEALTH INSURANCE FUNDS.

COMPETITION IS NOW REAL AND INCREASING.
MARKETING AND ADVERTISING IS NOW AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR BUSINESS.

ALLOCATING TIME AND RESOURCES TO PLANNED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MARKETING INITIATIVES IS A MUST.

GETTING VALUE FROM MARKETING EXPENDITURE REQUIRES RESEARCH AND EFFORT.
IF YOU DO NOT MONITOR THE RATE OF RETURN ON YOUR MARKETING EXPENDITURE YOU ARE FLYING BLIND AND WASTING MONEY.

A WELL THOUGHT OUT AND FOCUSED IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH TO YOUR PRACTICE MARKETING SHOULD MAKE IT SELF FUNDING.

TAKE A POSITIVE APPROACH TO THIS NEW LEARNING REQUIREMENT AND GROW YOUR BUSINESS SKILLS AND YOUR LEADERSHIP ABILITIES.

HAVE TO COURAGE TO ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT.

THINK BIG AND GET STARTED!



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WELCOME TO IDN PRACTICE MARKETING GUIDELINES

Your Practice Marketing Guidelines has been developed to provide all IDN practices with a comprehensive resource kit for local area marketing.

Your practice may choose to utilise and customise what you wish of these to help grow your practice.

TOPICS COVERED IN YOUR PRACTICE MARKETING GUIDELINES

- Develop your practice marketing strategy
- Benefit from group marketing initiatives
- Promote your practice
- Leverage and retain your existing patient base
- Increase patient conversion and spend
- Attract new patients

GETTING STARTED

The most critical element of your practice marketing strategy is ensuring that you first focus on utilising your current patient base to further increase revenue. It is much easier to gain ongoing treatment from someone who knows you than someone who does not and your existing patients are a core driver for gaining referrals and encouraging new patients.

Everything outlined in Your Practice Marketing Guidelines has been designed as a useable guide to help your practice. We understand how busy you are and recognise that you often don't have time to develop marketing campaigns and programs, so we have taken this step to help you by creating templates that you may choose to utilise and customise to suit your own practice. IDN will continue to add to this portfolio of marketing resources and will also be adding tips sheets on key marketing topics to further assist you in the future.

If you require further assistance across any aspect of your marketing strategy or implementation, please contact IDN who will connect you with their preferred marketing consultant.



DEVELOP YOUR PRACTICE MARKETING STRATEGY

The following section outlines many elements that should be considered when developing the marketing strategy for your practice. Starting off by defining what marketing is, key things to consider when marketing your practice, the health of your practice and how to track and measure results from your marketing activities. IDN have also developed for your convenience a Practice Marketing Plan Template that can be used as a guide to assist you with identifying who you wish to target and aid you in formulating your marketing plan.

What Is Marketing?

Essentially marketing is the action or business of promoting and selling products or services. The Marketing Association of Australia and New Zealand define marketing more broadly, "Marketing consists of activities that facilitate and expedite satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment through the creation, distribution, pricing and promotion of products (goods, services, ideas)."

Marketing means a lot more than simply advertising a service; it requires communicating information that will help your patients or prospective patients understand the value of the service and how it will satisfy their needs.

In health services, patients see the doctor and their team as experts and a source of information, therefore it is our role to help consumers be aware of both the skills and expertise of our practices and their needs and the potential solutions available to them. If the reference to the words marketing or selling bothers you, think of it in terms of communication or education and ultimately in solutions provision that will benefit your patients

TO CONSIDER BEFORE DEVELOPING YOUR PRACTICE MARKETING PLAN

Do You Understand Your Target Audience?

To communicate effectively you must first understand the needs of your patient and of your target market. This insight will help you to communicate the right information to the right people. You will be able to then educate them on the value of the service and how it will satisfy their specific needs, rather than provide general information that may be irrelevant to them..



If I Commence Or Increase Marketing Will People Think We Are A Good Practice?

You are doing your patients a disservice by NOT letting them know what you have to offer and how you can help them improve their health and wellbeing. The IDN Practice Marketing Guidelines will help you to implement marketing systems that will enable you to better educate your patients and prospects. Education will help your patients to believe, like and trust you more. Patients accept your services only when they trust you. To gain that trust, the patient must first like you AND then believe you AND then have confidence in you. Without these three things trust, will not follow.

Key Questions to As Yourself before Developing Your Marketing Plan

- What is your vision, your mission and the values for your practice?
- What is your vision, your mission and the values for your practice?
- What is your unique selling proposition?
- How do you want your practice to stand out in the local area?
- How would you describe your culture?
- Do you have a business plan with goals and time frames outlined?
- How many patients are in your database?
- What % are active / inactive? How is this tracking overtime
- How many new patients per month?
- What is your conversion ratio?
- What is your average revenue per patient? Is this increasing or declining?
- How much is it costing you to acquire a new patient?
- What is the average treatment value accepted by your new patients?
- What % of your patients keep their 6-monthly recall?
- How many of your patients actively refer?
- What kind of dentistry do you want to do?
- Do you want to specialise or add any new services to your practice?
- Do you see yourself getting qualified to perform other specialties or service (sleep dentistry, snoring and sleep apnoea, implants, Invisalign, veneers etc.)
- Are you providing a memorable experience for patients in your practice? If so, then how?
- What is the competition doing?
- How can you set yourself apart from the competition? What makes you unique from your competitors? What doesn't?
- What kind of patients do you want to treat?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Do you have a succession plan in place?



Your Practice Marketing Plan Template

If you do not already have a marketing plan, or it is out of date, then we recommend you start with developing a simple outline so then you can ensure any marketing strategies or programs you develop and implement fit with your plan.

You can download a basic **Practice Marketing Plan template** here:

<https://www.independentdentist.com.au/members/marketing-portal/>

Sections to Include In Your Practice Marketing Plan

- Introduction
- Market Overview
- Market Research
 - Competitor assessment
 - Trends
 - Demographic information
- Target Market - Who are your patients? What patients would you like to attract?
- Service and pricing
- SWOT - a description of your practices Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- Mission/Vision statement and values

Brand positioning

- Point of difference - what make you unique from your competitors
- Marketing Objectives
- Measures and Evaluation
- Budget
- Marketing Action Plan

If you need help developing your marketing plan please contact IDN who will connect you with their preferred Marketing consultant.

Your Practice Marketing Action Plan

To help you get started, below is a snap shot of what core activities can be implemented. If you would like assistance with developing a specific action plan for your practice, please contact IDN who will connect you with an experienced marketing consultant with specific expertise in the dental space.

A snap shot of suggested marketing activity

IDN Group marketing initiatives

- Cobrand your practice integrating IDN
- Utilise relevant IDN ready to use campaigns
- Introduce Dental Patient Plans and Savings Plan.



**Independent
Dentist Network**



BENEFIT FROM GROUP MARKETING AND INTERACTION

Group Interaction

On joining the IDN network you have instant access to likeminded peers whom we encourage you network with and collaborate with to share ideas, knowledge and experience within the group. The IDN team also wish to keep you informed of what's happening and where the group is heading and believe that regular communication is key to ensure that you are actively part of the IDN journey.

Objectives

- Keep members informed and enable feedback and assistance
- Provide an opportunity for a professional exchange of ideas
- Opportunity for collaboration and comradery
- Networking and growth
- The team at IDN recognise that different individuals prefer different modes of communication and as such are regularly utilising a variety of communication channels to keep members informed and engaged.

IDN Online Forum - IDN CHAT

Provides a professional interactive forum for member's exchange. It offers an instant way to share new information and gain feedback from participants. If you are not already involved in the online forum, please give it a go. If you have any topics you would like considered for the forum or have any queries or concerns, please contact Merv at IDN.

IDN Update Emails

Email updates are circulated to members to keep them informed. These will be distributed approximately once a month if not more, and contain relevant and useful information to assist you and your practice. If you have any suggestions for content inclusion, please contact IDN.

IDN eNewsletters

These will be circulated on a quarterly basis and will give you a wider insight as to developments at IDN, up and coming events, new programs, campaigns and initiatives and highlight any new members and achievements. We encourage our dentists to nominate as content contributors for this mode of communication and welcome ideas and feedback for enhancement.

How to Implement

- Simply participate in the online forum and check and read your emails.

Tips and Hints

- Regularly access to marketing portal to view resources
- Get involved and network with your fellow members, you could pick up something valuable for your own practice and learn what is happening in the marketplace.



IDN has invested heavily to help you with your practice marketing and in house marketing initiatives. We will continue to add to the current marketing material portfolio and will also be adding tips sheets and other useful resources for you to utilise.

Objectives

- Provide easy to customise material for simple practice utilisation
- Raise awareness and reach for your practice
- Increase new patient enquires and conversions

How to Implement

- Go to the IDN Marketing Portal to view an extensive menu of co-branded items:
<https://independentdentist.com.au/members/marketing-portal/>
IDN will also continue to add to this portfolio.
- Click on each selection to view details on the item and you can then also download a sample.
- To order as is items, simply follow the order prompt and your email will be received at IDN.
There are two options;
- **Without customisation:**
IDN will email you print ready files for your ordered items that you can send to the printer of your choice.
- **With customisation:**
IDN will contact you to obtain specific details and will arrange the graphic designing at a competitive cost and then send print ready files to you for printing.

How to Measure

- Number of enquiries
- Number of new patients
- Effectively rolling out campaigns

Tips and Hints

Integrate IDN brand across all your practice communication touch points to gain most leverage. If you have any ideas for additional material that would be useful to practices, please inform IDN. If you need assistance with adoption and utilisation of any of the material or campaigns, please contact IDN.



IDN National Campaigns

Through our collective national campaigns, we can educate the public to the benefits of choosing an IDN dentist and enjoying freedom of choice.

There are many campaigns available in the marketing portals campaign suite for your practice to customise and then use. Each campaign suite contains a poster, flyer, and digital leader board for use in online advertising. All our practices can continue to maintain their unique practice branding; and can cobrand using IDN to provide an additional avenue to promote your practice.

Objectives

- Raise awareness among the public
- Differentiate your practice from Health Fund and Corporate owned and contracted practices
- Collectively promote the group to improve the recognition of the IDN Brand
- Generate enquiries and new patients for practices
- Educating and informing prospective patients to the value of an independent dentist

How to Implement

- Visit the IDN marketing portal and select the campaigns you wish to utilise
- Customise campaign using your branding and practice details
- Roll out across relevant communications channels to your patients and prospective patients
- The IDN team will continue to upload fresh campaigns this year and beyond, we will notify you as new campaigns are released.
- If you need assistance in campaign customisation or implementation, please contact the IDN team. If you have any suggestions for further campaigns, please provide to IDN.

How to Measure

- Number of enquiries-track enquiries generated from that specific activity
- Number of patients converting from that activity
- Service conversion of the promoted service highlighted

Tips and Hints

- Do use the marketing portal, it has ready to go tools and templates for use
- Choose campaigns that suit your practice and patient audience

IDN Website

The IDN website is a useful tool for prospective patients to gain access to information in terms of dental treatment provided by practices while allowing them to search for a practice to suit their needs for location and service. Website visitors can geographically select a practice that suits their needs and are provided with key contact details for the practice to enable them to get in touch and make an appointment.



Objectives

- Increased patient enquiries
- Increased new patients
- Raised awareness of IDN
- Increased SEO for practice websites

All practices part of the IDN group are listed on this website and have their relevant details listed for prospective patients to access. Any group media coverage received will be directed to the IDN website where potential new patients can educate themselves about the range of comprehensive, high quality services provided by our dental practices. They can also search by location and view the profiles of our practices to help them select the team to provide them with optimal dental care solutions to suit their needs.

IDN team will continue to update the website and make this suitable and engaging for end user patients to utilise with a focus on increasing website traffic visiting the site.

Give us feedback—please feel free to provide suggestions on content, we would love for you to submit articles that we can add to our news section.

Health Insurance

It is a statement of difference to the public that your practice is free from external interference from Health Insurance Funds and provides freedom of choice and personal long-term care.

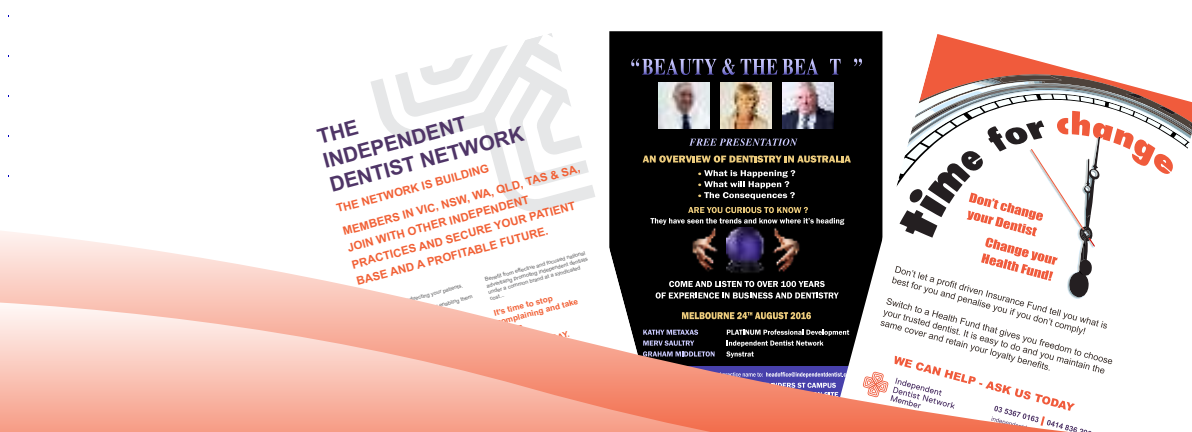
Objectives

- Provide a valuable option for your patients
- Offer a competitive point of difference for IDN practices
- Stop Health Insurance Funds from paying lower value claims because their member chose you.
- Commence a pro-active patient switching to non-preferred provider funds campaign.
- Increase conversion of patients
- Increase value of treatment taken up by patients

How to Implement

- Display brochures, posters and sticker on door on arrival from the supplier. There is a range of single page flyers and posters highlighting the lack of value patients are getting from Preferred Provider Health Insurance Funds.
- You and our staff to view explainer video to gain better understanding of the offering and how to promote to your patients.

Video link is: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3aE1bTkQDdZcWp1SHE0a1pQQ2c/view>



Accessing Health Fund Information

- You should be able to export from your front desk system a report styled “Patient by Health Fund”.
- This will enable you to select patients in the highest risk group and implement an action plan to contact these patients and inform them that you can assist them with a Health Insurance alternative option.
- You can assure them that there are a range of Mutual Funds offering similar cover at similar rates that do not restrict choice and will allow switching of funds without disadvantage.
- For patients who wish to cancel their ancillary cover whilst retaining their hospital cover, you can offer them the means to self-insure through your Practice Dental Plan and save/layby for the future by providing access to affordable patient finance.
- Promote in your patient newsletter, on your website and via social media to ensure message is being conveyed to all patients and prospective patients.

How to Measure

- Number of patients using the option
- Awareness of patients of the existence of the option
- Effective communication of the option to patients by entire team

Tips and Hints

- Display stickers, posters and brochures in your practice to help promote message ensure these are highly visible
- Ensure you involve your team in this practice so that they have a sound understanding of the process and benefits associated
- Your staff can then encourage patients to review their choice of Health Insurance and/or consider self-insurance. (see following section Practice Dental Plans.)

Patient Dental Plan

IDN encourages all its practices to introduce dental preventative care plans that will provide an alternative to Health Fund Insurance.

Objectives

- To provide a viable alternative for patients to health fund insurance
- To give IDN practices a genuine point of difference
- To increase patient conversion for long term dental treatment
- To raise retention and loyalty



Why introduce patient dental plans

- Research shows that preventive dentistry delivered on a regular basis greatly reduces the risk of dental disease and provides a platform for a lifetime of improved oral health. You want to encourage such an approach and we have designed our Practice Dental Plan to help you reward your loyal patients by helping them to plan for their dental care more cost effectively and to provide them with the best chance of keeping dentally healthy and to reduce the need for expensive future treatment.
- When patients join your patient dental plan, they will have the peace of mind that all their preventive dental care will be covered by convenient monthly payments.
- Implementing your individual Patient Dental Plan reinforces your advertising aimed to educate patients and the public that your practice focus is to provide long-term personalised high quality care and treatment in a relaxed, comfortable and safe environment.

How to Implement

As the practice owner, you make the decisions as to what the offering of your Patient Dental Plan entails. The cornerstone of your service is the bi-annual dental health examination that includes:

- clinical examinations for your whole mouth
- investigation and screening by x-rays
- screening for mouth cancer
- screening for gum disease
- oral health advice
- treatment planning for future dental needs.

Treatment not covered by your Preventative Care Plan can be paid under a range of alternative plans that best suit your patients' needs and budget. You are in the position to offer alternatives to waiting for Health Fund eligibility cycles or use of Credit Card debt. You can discuss with your patient's payment arrangements most suitable for their individual dental needs.

Example: Provide a 24 months' projection on estimated needs based on current oral health state and assess cost (with inflation margin) as a guide to the patient as to just what they are dealing with. Another option is to self-insure by starting to budget for the expense by way of a savings plan funded by a monthly direct debit. (Cost divided by 24 months = monthly debit amount). Funds being saved are not held by your practice they are held in a NAB Trust Account and can only be redeemed by the patient providing written authorisation.

To provide peace of mind re any large unforeseen expense, the patient can be offered affordable unsecured finance through Medipay. We have arranged with Medipay that any loans are on a fixed repayment period and at a rate well below credit card finance.

To assist you in understanding just what a Patient Dental Plan looks like we have (with approval) inserted below a copy of Northbridge Dental Practice Plan. Note the offering you decide on will be your choice. **See page 15 and 16 for Brochure Sample**



Once you have decided on your plan offering you can communicate this on your website, patient newsletter, EDM and social media. You can also display via posters in your reception etc. For further assistance in roll out and promotion of your patient plans please contact IDN.

How to Measure

- Number of patients taking up the plan
- Awareness of the plan option
- Increased level of conversion

Tips and Hints

- Include the team in the process of defining what services will be covered under your plan and costs associated
- Make it as simple as possible to administrate, roll out and track

Group PR Exposure

The IDN team will be focusing on raising awareness in the dental industry and in the public. Exposure secured will benefit all practices under the IDN umbrella and in turn will help generate patient retention and acquisition for individual IDN practices to benefit from.

Objectives

- Gain increased exposure for the group
- Raise awareness for IDN and its philosophy
- Be known as a credible source in the industry for media to contact
- Generate increased enquiries and new patient bookings
- Raise retention and patient referrals

The IDN team are targeting key media and informing them of the Independent Dentists Network and what it stands for to gain awareness in the industry and in the public.

We welcome our dentists to write articles and share them with us to try and publish under IDN, whilst giving the dentist and their practice credit!

If you have any ideas or contacts in the media, please let us know and contact IDN team today.

How to Measure

- Number of new patients-Record the number of patients who have been generated from the PR exposure
- Number of enquires-Record the number of enquiries which have been generated

Tips and Hints

- Let your patients and your team know about any PR exposure, they can then spread the word to their colleagues, families and friends
- Post any exposure on your website and feature on your patient newsletter
- Share any exposure on social media and invite your followers to then like and share to further increase reach.





Our aim at Northbridge Dental Clinic is to provide high quality care and treatment in a relaxed, comfortable and safe environment.

We are committed to continuing education and keeping abreast of advances in modern dentistry.

Research shows that preventive dentistry delivered on a regular basis greatly reduces the risk of dental disease and provides a platform for a lifetime of improved oral health

We encourage such an approach and with this in mind we have designed our practice plan to reward loyal patients, allowing you to plan your dental care more effectively and affordably



Who is our plan for?

Our plan is designed for patients who wish to attend the practice on a regular basis and have peace of mind that their preventive dental care is covered.

Your Benefits

- All your preventive dental care is included.
- Payment by convenient monthly direct debit, allowing for your budget
- Guaranteed registration with the practice and continuing access to your dentist
- Early identification of dental problems to prevent pain, discomfort and inconvenience.
- Appointment times to suit you whenever possible.
- Priority booking in the event of a dental emergency.

Adult(s) Practice Membership Plan

Exam	160.00
Oral Cancer check	Free
Scale and Clean x 2	240.00
Insurance & Admin	0.00
Small X-rays	80.00
Saliva Test	Free
Monthly Total	40.00
Annual Total	480.00

Includes 5% discount on further treatment)

Young Adult Practice Membership Plan (age 10 - 16)

Exam	160.00
Oral Cancer check	Free
Scale and Clean x 1	120.00
Insurance & Admin	0.00
Saliva Test	Free
X-rays	80.00
Monthly Total	30.00
Annual Total	360.00





What does our plan include?

6 month dental check-up, scale and clean x-rays and also 5% off any ongoing treatment, free saliva test and free oral cancer check plus preferential appointment times and a guarantee to see your personal dentist.

How do you join our plan?

We carry out our assessment to ensure that our plan will meet your personal needs and will advise you of the monthly amount to pay to cover your necessary dental treatments. Then joining is simple. All you have to do is complete a registration form and direct debit mandate.

Any Questions?

If you have any question about our plan, please contact our reception team who will be happy to provide further information and guidance.

Making Dentistry More Affordable with NORTHBRIDGE DENTAL PRACTICE PLAN

We are proud to offer Northbridge Practice Plan to you our valued and loyal patient and invite you to join and receive special care and benefits.

Knowing that traditional dental Health Fund insurance premiums are expensive and rising, and that benefits received are extremely limited and steadily decreasing, we have partnered with DI Practice Plan to create a comprehensive and customized membership program that will cover all of your preventive care, like scale and clean, x-rays and exams, at 100% in our practice. And Northbridge Practice Plan members also receive valuable benefits on restorative care, like fillings, crowns and implants, even cosmetic dentistry!

In today's economy, we know that paying out of pocket can be prohibitively expensive; so we have forged this alliance to ensure that our patients have the kind of dental benefits they want and need. So now you can take care of your smile – without breaking the bank. Ask us today about Northbridge Practice Plan and how it can help make dental care more affordable for you and your loved ones. Call our clinic today on 07 4191 4787 and start saving on quality dental care today.

Insert clinic contact details here.

Call our clinic today on 07 4191 4787 and start saving on quality dental

northbridge
dental
clinic

Northbridge Dental Plan



Dental Referral Pad

IDN have developed a co- branded Dental Referral Pad that can be customised to suit your practice. We recommend that all our Specialist practices have these and utilise them and any practices that often receive referrals.

Objectives

- Make it easy for affiliates to consistently refer
- Keep your practice top of mind
- Increase patient referrals
- Increase new patient numbers

Dental referral pads enable easy referrals. You can provide your pads to affiliate partners and other healthcare providers who refer to you to allow them to easily record relevant information about patients they are referring to you. These pads will have your practice location and contact details conveniently displayed for the patient making it easier for them to contact and locate you.

How to implement

- Visit the IDN Marketing portal
- Select Dental Referral Pad and customise using your logo and contact details
- Select for IDN to organise print production or use the file with your own preferred supplier
- Distribute to possible referrers
- Restock when they run low on pads

How to measure

- Number of referrals from providers- Track the number of referrals coming through from what healthcare providers
- Number of pads distributed-Monitor number of pads distributed and used

Tips and Hints

- Always have your front office team request how the patient came to know about the practice, you can add this to your New Patient form.
- You can also add and display your referral pad on your website and have healthcare providers store the template electronically via their software system if they prefer this method.

PROMOTE YOUR PRACTICE

How can patients know what a great practice you have if they don't even know that you exist? How you portray your practice plays a critical factor in determining whether a patient chooses to visit your practice, return to your practice or refer your practice to others.

The following section outlines what you can do to effectively promote your practice to your patients and prospective patients including brand development, creation of co-branded stationery, signage, effective websites, social media and more help people remember you and refer others.



Your brand defines what your practice stands for and generates a perception of the type of practice you are. It is important to develop a professional and unique brand which can then be consistently displayed on all communication material including stationery for your practice. Today it is essential to have an online presence. A practice website that has been optimised to enable search engines to find it and thus patients visit it, allowing you to promote your practice all day every day even when you are not there.

Objectives

- Create a unique brand that defines your practice
- Reposition or reinforce your brand
- Differentiate your brand so that it stands out from the crowd
- Effectively integrate IDN branding
- Ensure your brand reflects your core values
- Make it sustainable, about building an identity not an individual
- Communicate your brand consistently through all mediums



How to Implement

Go back to basics and look at the promise and values of your practice

How do you want your practice to be perceived? Choose adjectives to best describe the philosophy of your practice. What does your practice do well? Listen to feedback or do a survey to understand your patient perceptions. What messages do you deliver consistently? Gain clarity around your core brand and come up with a statement that conveys what you stand for.

Include your team in the process

Let your team have input into the development so they understand the brand message and what you hope to achieve. Ask them to do a personal brand audit on themselves to determine if their values align with that of your practice. When you recruit, not only look for the talent and skills to do the job but also ensure they provide the best fit for your business and will live your values.

Bring your brand to life - logo and image creation

Put your best face forward. Not only with your logo, refresh your stationery and any communication materials and your people. Are they presenting your practice image in a professional way? Ensure your team's personal presentation and customer service skills are perceived positively every day.

IDN co- branding integration

The IDN marketing portal offers a range of resources to enable your practice to easily integrate the IDN branding into your communications material i.e. stationery. Utilising the IDN brand will help you to gain further leverage

Brand refresh and additional assistance

If you are interested in having your brand developed or having a fresh brand created, IDN can refer you to a marketing specialist who can assist you in this area.

Stationery for your Practice

Professional stationery, incorporating your unique logo and co- branded with the IDN logo, is an important step towards branding your practice, reinforcing your identity and keeping it memorable. Your practice provides professional high quality dental care, it is important that everything you do also reflects this professionalism. Stationery with your practice and IDN branding clearly displayed will not only help to achieve this but will also ensure that all relevant contact details are easily accessible for your patients and prospective patients.

Objectives

- Provide a professional image for your practice
- Supplies patients and prospects with accurate and relevant contact details
- A useful resource for your team members to utilise

How to Implement

Please visit the IDN marketing portal to view stationery item options and to organise customisation for your practice.

How to Measure

- Usage of stationery- All your team members need to be using the stationery; this should be easily accessible for them.
- Patient Feedback-Your patients are your most valuable measure of success; ask for input from your patient base regarding design and usability etc.

Tips and Hints

- Business cards that double as appointment cards are useful for patients as they can easily record their appointment and are more likely to stick to it
- Ensure font size is large enough for patients with poorer eye sight to be able to read
- If you wish to write on your business cards, make sure the paper stock allows you to do this
- Include your website URL and mention social media presence where suitable on all stationery
- Watch your stock, monitor your stationery supplies, if they are getting low, and make sure you reorder as soon as you can or better still set up an automatic reordering process



Signage

What is the impression of your practice from the outside? Does it look like a high-quality practice, or is it in need of a makeover and eye-catching signage?

If you look good from the outside, you are more likely to encourage enquiries and appointments. A stylish, attractive, clean, professional exterior suggests the same within.

Objectives

- Provide a professional image for your practice
- Reflect your practice brand accurately
- Can be easily read by passing traffic, can view contact number and/or website.

How to Implement

- Remember to take into consideration the position of the signage relative to the building and the flow of traffic, also observe signage zoning codes and council regulations.
- Ensure signage is easy to read, often less is more when it comes to text, clean, uncluttered signage is more easily spotted and remembered.

How to Measure

- Number of new patients-Monitor the number of new patients per month who come to your practice who have made an appointment because of the signage they have noticed.
- Patient feedback- Ask your patients and colleagues what they think of your signage options.

If you need branding and general marketing advice, IDN can refer you to their preferred marketing consultant

Tips and Hints

- Get input from your patients on what signage THEY think will work BEFORE you have it develop
 - Make sure your New Patient Form includes a box to tick for Signage when your new patient is asked how they came to hear about your practice
 - Keep signage concise, uncluttered and large enough for people to read
 - Keep signage timeless—nothing that will date quickly
 - Use font and images that is appealing to your entire patient base, not just one segment
- Ensure signage is durable and does it enable longevity



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Website

An online presence is an essential marketing tool that can effectively promote and grow your business. With majority of people using the internet on a regular basis for researching and selecting service providers, an easy to navigate, engaging and informative website is more important than ever. Patients are becoming more selective and thus may be attracted outside their local area.

Do you have an effective online presence? Are you promoting all that you offer; or are you missing out on new patient enquiries by the minute?

Objectives

- Strengthen your practice's professional image and credibility
- Increases your reach and growth potential
- Allows you to promote your service offering and educate visitors
- Enhance patient relationships
- Provides access to your practice 24/7, making your business available even when you are not
- Extension of online booking functionality

How to Implement

- Ensure your website is easy to navigate and gives patients what they need quickly. Does your website have impactful images that are professional and appeal to your audience demographics?
- Check all your contact details are correct and that the booking process is very quick and easy to manage.
- Make sure your website is mobile responsive, i.e. able to easily view and use on tablet and mobile devices, over 50% of your patients are probably booking via these devices.
- Does your website have useful information for the patient i.e. about your services, FAQs, practitioners, and about the practice in general? A blog section is highly valuable for providing key content and helping with SEO.
- Videos can aid interactivity so consider using a virtual tour on your website.

Your online presence your website is a critical for your practice. If you need assistance help you enhance your website, help with content generation or anything else relating to your website or online presence please contact IDN who will connect you with their marketing specialist.

How to Measure

- Website traffic and behaviour-google analytics-track number of new and returning visitors, popular pages visited, referral sources etc. regularly
- Enquiries from website
- Number of new patients generated from website
- Patient feedback-ask your patients what they think of your website and ask them what you could do to improve it.



Tips and Hints

- Make sure your site is responsive
- Keep your content fresh and current
- Blogs are key for educating, engaging and for google rankings
- Make it personalised-include images of the team, highlights of community support etc.
- Create a video introducing your practice i.e. virtual tour, podcasts
- Ensure your site is optimised
- Check for typos on your site, google penalises sites that are error ridden.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

It is not enough to just have a website for your practice you also need to ensure it is optimised and ranking well on search engines i.e. Google. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is critical to help prospects searching the internet for dental information and services to find your practice. In simple terms Search Engine Optimisation involves the process of increasing the number of visitors to a website by ranking high in the search results of a search engine, i.e. Google. The higher a website ranks in the results of search, the greater the chance that website will be visited by a user.

Objectives

- Improve rankings on major search engines i.e. Google and Yahoo
- Increase number of website visitors
- Increase number of new patients

Content is king when it comes to search engines. Regular creation of blog articles is a great way to help with your online ranking performance. If you need support with content generation our IDN marketing consultant can assist.

How to implement

- Aim to generate new content on a regular basis
- Ensure SEO plug ins are activated from your CMS, being the back end of your website and continue to optimise new pages created on your website
- Ask your website developer if they have already done this for you

If you have any queries please contact our IDN marketing consultant.

How to Measure

Increased ranking on search engines does take time, so be patient, after changes have been made to a website to optimise it can take up to a month for search engines to index the altered website and add the changes to its database. The search engines also consider other factors such as credibility of the website, relevant quality links to your website from other credible websites and how recently it has been updated.



Tips and Hints

- Make sure your website SEO plugins have been activated and that basic SEOs been performed on your back end
- Encourage affiliate partners to link to your website
- Integrate videos into your website
- Ensure you are listed on relevant free online directory listing

Social Media Platform

A Social media platform can be a powerful marketing tool for dental practices when utilised correctly. Posts keep your name in front of your current patients, enable you to reach out to potential new patients, and grow the awareness of the services you provide just through posting.

Objectives

- Encourage following and interaction
- Effectively engage with your patients and prospective patients
- Keep patients informed and aware
- Keep the practice top of mind
- Increase patient appointment booking and referrals

If you are not already using social media as a dental marketing tool, it may be time to start. After all, it's one of the best low-cost ways to reach current and prospective dental patients as well as colleagues and health professional referrers.

However, most dentists don't have the time or the energy to be on every social media site available in today's overly social world. Therefore, choosing those that are the right social media platforms for you and for your dental practice is extremely important. Begin by considering factors such as demographics, type of content, business goals, advertising options, and such. Then review these top seven social media platforms to determine how they might work into your practice marketing plan.

The most popular social media platform options include:



Facebook

Per recent statistics, Facebook still leads the pack when it comes to the number of unique visitors each month. Facebook is effective when posting relevant content on topics that appeal to your key audiences. Encourage followers to like and share your posts for maximum engagement.



Google+ is Part of Google My Business

If you're already using Google My Business for your dental practice, Google+ is part of the mix. If you're not using Google My Business, it's easy to get started. There are numerous benefits to using Google+ including networking, integration of other Google services, and higher visibility for your dental practice, since Google is the number one search engine.





Twitter

Twitter is the second most popular social media platform in today's market. One of its major differences is that it's all about what is happening right now. Using only 140 characters per post, it requires you to be succinct and to fully focus on your message. Don't forget to use the hashtag. However, there's more.

When you post to Twitter, you can post to Facebook and LinkedIn (#3 below) as well. Using a tool called Hootsuite(www.hootsuite.com) add which allows you to write and schedule future posts – great for time management – you also can cross post to Google+, communicate with customers, and track your performance in social media.



Instagram

Primarily focusing on images – it's easy to get started. Merely sign up, add your profile photo, and then link to your dental website and Facebook account. From there it's simply a matter of exploring your options and adding favourite pictures, videos, and collages. Being visually engaging is key.



LinkedIn

While LinkedIn is primarily a B2B network, that's what makes it different and so useful. You can keep in touch with peers and connect with fellow healthcare professionals who may be good referrers. You can also use as a research and connection tool if targeting corporates and local businesses.

How to implement

To gain optimal engagement from followers it is advised to take on the approach of quality rather than quantity when it comes to posting. Effective utilisation of an integrated content approach is the cornerstone of campaigns enabling smart use of content to inform, educate and generate interest from the target audience. Also, encouraging them to engage, share and ultimately act and book an appointment. If you are seeking assistance or ongoing support with your social media platform management, please contact IDN who will connect you with the preferred marketing specialist.

How to measure

- Engagement -track number of followers, likes and shares and commentary
- New patient enquiries from social media platform
- New patient conversion

Tips and Hints

- Encourage shares, likes and follows
- Use competitions to drive increased reach
- Encourage partners and affiliates to also share your posts
- Use powerful imagery and strong content to link posts wherever possible
- Include calls to action
- There are many tips and hints in this area, see the tips sheet on the marketing portal for further insights.



Electronic Communication

Electronic communication is a fantastic way to easily communicate with your patients quickly and cost effectively.

Objectives

- Inform and educate patients
- Promote all services
- Engage and keep practice top of mind
- Increase conversion
- Encourage retention and referrals



Email Campaigns

The beauty of email communications is that you can view how many people opened your email, how many acted thus, what device they viewed it on, what time they viewed it, where in the world they viewed it, and almost anything you could think of, helping you calculate an exact return on investment (ROI). The other major benefit of email marketing campaigns is that they are cost effective to implement.

Patient eNewsletters

These are a great way to showcase multiple articles relating to your practice and encourage patients to be an active part of your practice's journey. Use short leads in that link to blog articles to keep the reader interested and coming back to your website. Locally relevant stories including new staff members, community involvement and what's new at the practice are always good topics to include. Use imagery to break up text to keep the eNewsletter more interesting for the recipient.

How to implement

- IDN Marketing portal has several ready to go campaigns that you can use for this purpose and will be continuing to add to this suite.
- Discuss with your software provider if email templates can be created and designed as part of the software module options, alternatively you may need to use a system such as mail chimp or another option to generate your templates.
- Ensure you add to your new patient form a section for the collection of email and gaining permission to communicate via this method

How to Measure

- Number of recipients sent email
- Number of opens, click throughs and unsubscribes
- Number of patient appointments generated via this channel



Tips and Hints

- Encourage patients to sign up to your mailing list with competitions and prompts in reception
- Get your team involved, ask them for their thoughts on topics for email campaigns
- Get your patients also involved, what themes interest them
- Get someone other than the author to proof before circulation
- Make sure the content is topical, useful and engaging

Purposeful Promotional Items

Everyone loves a freebie, by giving something for nothing to your patients you are not only building their trust and increasing the chance of them returning to your practice you are also giving them the means to further promote your brand to others in contact with them who will view the item. Promotional products given to patients and prospective patients also help ensure that they have your correct contact information easily accessible to them.

The more likely that the promotional product will be used and seen on a regular basis by this person, the better chance you will have of them coming into your practice and their friends, family and colleagues finding out about your practice. The promotional item acts as a reminder for them to regularly visit your practice as well as raising brand awareness from those around them i.e. at work or home.

By providing promotional items such as branded fridge magnets, toothbrush or floss, coffee mug, desk calendar, stress relief balls and other common promotional items used around the house or workplace, the patient has your contact information readily accessible when they need it. Having your practice name and brand constantly in front of the person is a good way of ensuring you will get repeat business from your patients.

Objectives

- Promote your practice brand
- Raise brand awareness
- Encourage patients to come back
- Provide easy access to contact information for your practice

General appeal items include:

- Magnets
- Calendar magnets
- Tooth brushes
- Dental floss
- Lip balm
- Stress balls

Larger gift items:

- Labelled wine
- Mouse mats
- USBs
- Coasters



How to implement

Before finalising your order ensure artwork has been proofed and a mock up sample provided where possible. Order quantities that are accurate.

How to Measure

- Number of enquiries
- Record the number of enquiries generated from viewing a promotional item
- Number of new patients
- Record the number of new patients who have scheduled an appointment after seeing your promotion item.

Tips and Hints

- Provide items that will be useful for your patients and will be used repeatedly
- Try be unique with your promotional items
- Get feedback from patients
- Choose items that aren't gender or interest specific
- Ensure your website and phone number is correctly and clearly displayed
- Logo should be displayed cleanly, avoid using low resolution images that appear blurry and grainy
- Get mock ups created for you to approve wherever possible prior to production

LEVERAGE AND RETAIN YOUR PATIENTS

It can cost up to six times more to secure a new patient than it does to keep a patient. Keeping your patients happy and giving them a reason to return to your practice is a key element in maintaining a successful practice.

The lifeblood of a practice is a repeat loyal patient who can also be your best ally in getting new patients to come through your front door. IDN recommend the first place to start in building your practice is by focusing on leveraging your existing patient base.

Quality service makes this happen. It is the most important ingredient in the mix of keeping your patients happy to ensure they return again and again to your practice, and in the meantime, tell their friends, families and colleagues about you.

When looking at your marketing strategy and planning your activities, focus first on internal marketing—a low risk marketing approach, minimal costs and high returns.

The following programs will help you leverage your patient base and open the gold mine sitting right there in your practice.



Use Your Database

Introduction

Your dental software program is a critical resource for your practice which needs to be optimally leveraged. Not only does it act as a central source to store all patient information and records, but it can also be used as a powerful tool to effectively target segments of your database and market to them professionally.

Objectives

- Have accurate and current database
- Complete details on file for patients
- Continue to grow and leverage database
- Utilise the modules of your software program to maximum capability
- Conduct successful targeted marketing campaigns
- Effectively track campaigns and run reports to help measure activity

How to implement

Many practices are currently under utilising their dental software program, there is ample opportunity to learn more about the capabilities of your software for use in the future.

How to Measure

- Database Accuracy-Information recorded is all current and correct
- Database is current-All information is up to date in database
- Usage-Proficient in running reports, identifying targets, extracting data
- Effective tracking-Ability to track and measure programs and campaigns

Tips and Hints

- Regularly train team members.
- Take advantage of any additional training or online resources provided by your software provider
- Encourage team to share learnings and tips between each other
- Use the support line for your relevant software provider—they are there to be used

Recalls

Recalls are reminders to your patients that they need to keep up their treatment programs, examinations, or cleanings. This will not happen by chance, if you haven't already then you need to develop a process and allocate responsibilities to manage recalls on an ongoing basis. It is important that every team member realises the role they play in this ongoing process. If you have a hygiene department then they should be the hub for your recalls, educating patients on the importance and measuring the effectiveness.

Objectives

- Have all continuing care appointments pre- scheduled
- 40-80% of treatment to be driven by hygiene team



How to Implement

- Create a friendly and efficient recall system that tells your patients that you care enough about their dental health to keep inviting them back for regular care. Set up a systematic system that your entire team understands and that works consistently.

Some examples of recall options

- A recall letter that promotes the importance of achieving and maintaining good oral health.
- Recall email is ideal to use to remind patients of the importance of achieving and maintaining good oral health.
- Recall SMS- with call to action offer

Tips and Hints

When developing your system consider

- Who is responsible?
- Who sets up the system?
- Who sends out the reminders? Frequency?
- Who maintains the system?
- Who reviews the system?
- Who implements changes?
- Ensure you collect accurate patient details



Patient Referral Program

A cost- effective way to secure new patients is to encourage and reward your existing patient base to refer new patients.

Patient referrals are invaluable as these new patients are generally of similar quality to your existing patient base and are ideal additions to your practice and your database.

To gain further leverage from this effective method of promotion a Patient Referral Program can be used in your practice. By rewarding your referring patients with vouchers for your dental services, the program also incentivises repeat visits and loyalty from existing patients.

An incentive based program to encourage your existing patients to speak positively about your practice to their family, friends and colleagues, generating positive word of mouth that results in a constant inflow of new patients for you.

A reward is given to existing patients for every new patient that they refer to you. The reward is in the form of a service voucher that can be redeemed at your practice toward the value of dental services. The use of service vouchers rather than gifts has the secondary benefit of incentivising repeat visits from referrers and does not cost you real dollars.

Objectives

- Encourage patients to refer regularly
- Generate increased number of new patients
- Stimulate repeat business from referrers (who are existing patients)



How to Implement

- Create Patient Referral Program cards
- Provide cards to patients with information on how it works
- Promote program to your patients via all communication channels i.e. poster in practice, social media, website, newsletter etc.

If you prefer to offer an incentive that is non-service related there is a good option to the traditional industry practice of giving a local restaurant voucher, or movie ticket etc. IDN has entered into a bulk membership arrangement with AMBASSADOR CARD <https://www.ambassadorcard.com.au/> to provide members with a very affordable way of rewarding patients via a IDN branded Ambassador

Card that can be overprinted with your individual practice name and logo. Patients can then access a wide range of discount services. Card cost per patient is only \$6 and current for 12 months.

Referral incentives can be accompanied with a personal letter.

Track and measure redemption of vouchers

If you require further assistance to customise and execute your patient referral program for your practice, please contact IDN.

Tips and Hints

- Reward regular referrers, recognise and thank them personally when they visit the practice and give them an additional patient delight i.e. meal voucher
- Some other ideas for referral gifts
- Coffee mug with practice brand—full of quality chocolates—sent to business address
- Tickets to sporting events or theatre you know the patient enjoys

Reactivation Program

Many dentists believe that their inactive patients have forgotten about them. It's just the opposite. Those patients feel like you have forgotten about them since they haven't heard from you. Dental practices are like most other businesses: the biggest expense is in creating a first-time patient. A great way to grow your practice is to make a concerted effort to get all your existing patients to accept treatment and get inactive patients to come back. Therefore, you need a systematic approach for reactivating "sleeping patients."

Objectives

- Effectively identify inactive patients
- Engage with your inactive patients
- Convert inactive patients into active patients

How to Implement

The purpose of the reactivation program is to identify and recapture three types of patients:

- Those who have not returned for their continuing care appointments.
- Those who were presented with diagnosis and a treatment plan but have not completed treatment.
- Those who were diagnosed but not presented with a treatment plan



Before you start your reactivation program, you should clean up your old patient lists and remove all old and invalid addresses.

Find out about their last visit-It is important to assess what happened during their last visit and determine what a logical follow-up visit should have been about.

Suggested strategy - For those patients who have not been seen for 12 months: send an email, call or if they can't be contacted send a letter to these patients. Ask the patients if they'd like to schedule appointments or if they would prefer that you place their records into inactive files.

- While waiting for responses, keep reactivation records separate from the active files.
- Update the reactivated patient records in the active or inactive files based on responses from patients.

How to Measure

- Number of reactivations
- Number of people contacted vs number of responses

Tips and Hints

- Use an incentive program for the scheduler or any other team member who wants to participate in the reactivation campaign
- If a patient does want to remain inactive make sure you find out why
- Always make sure to end your conversation on a positive note that leaves the door to your practice open
- Include an offer on your reactivation letter
- Be polite. Be understanding. Be willing to offer any assistance the patient requires

Patient eNewsletter and Targeted Campaigns

IDN have a number of campaigns that you can customise and utilise within your practice. As discussed in previous sections, patient eNewsletters and targeted emails are an excellent communication tool and a great way to cost effectively keep in touch with your patient base. Regular engagement that is useful and relevant to the patient will assist in keeping your dental practice top of mind for patients and keep the coming back and referring to others.

Objectives

- Inform and educate your patient base
- Promote new offers and services
- Encourage increased treatment uptake
- Provides a vehicle for effective communication



How to Implement

- IDN Marketing portal has several ready to go campaigns that you can use for this purpose and will be continuing to add to this suite.
- Gain permission from patients to communicate with them via email and collect email addresses
- Create recipient list using your software
- Identify key topics you wish to include i.e. featured services, special offers, new staff, events, community support etc.
- Distribution of newsletter via software or other means i.e. mail chimp www.mailchimp.com
- Have an unsubscribe function on eNewsletter
- If you need assistance creating your eNewsletter please contact IDN who can connect you with their preferred marketing consultant.

How to measure

- Number of recipients, number of opens, number of click throughs
- Take up of offers promoted in eNewsletter
- Patient feedback, ask your patients what they think of the eNewsletter

Tips and Hints

- Include hot topics that will appeal to your patient audience
- Ask for feedback from your patients on what topics they would like included
- Run competitions to increase engagement
- Encourage recipients to forward to friends
- Measure engagement of your enewsletter
- You can also add your patient newsletter to your website for visitors to access.
- As patients come in for visits make sure you have all their correct information recorded, if anything is missing collect it right there and then from them.
- Double check that you have the correct contact details i.e. phone number, website and address
- Proof it—make sure you get someone other than the author to proof before circulation
- Remember to track if an email has been opened and click throughs on email
- Test first—make sure you test your email campaign before you send it to your entire distribution list
- One of the best times to send out an email is during lunchtime, mid-week. Mondays aren't good as people are less likely to read it.
- Have all critical information on top half of the screen, shouldn't have to scroll down to find what they need
- Collect email addresses from every patient, make sure you can read it too



Keeping your Patients Happy with Exceptional Service

- Do you take care of your patients at the highest possible level?
- Are they always happy when they leave your practice?
- Do you go the extra mile and do the little things that really matter?
- Your patients want you to pay attention to them, to pamper them, to meet their every want and need.
- To be effective with your practice marketing you need to focus on want-based dentistry and learn how to appeal to your patient's emotions.
- It is important to wow your patients to ensure they keep coming back and ensure that their patient experience is exceptional.
- Some ways to help wow your patients and keep them coming back and referring:
- Understand your patients, ask them what they want-use online surveys etc.
- Always put yourself in your patient's shoes
- Understand what your patients expect from you
- Observe your practice objectively
- Take time to talk to your patients and know who they are
- Encourage your patients to give you their opinions
- Ensure your practice is efficient-are there ways to speed up your patient care?
- Cleanliness is essential
- Be patient with your patients and treat them with respect
- First impressions count
- Include your team in decision and have regular face to face meetings
- Reward your team for outstanding patient care
- Be one step ahead of your patients, anticipate their needs

Survey Your Patients

Gaining feedback and input from your patients is critical to ensure continual improvement and removal of any aspects that are not proving to be effective for your practice.

Your patients will be grateful and empowered by the opportunity you have provided them to then contribute to the future running of your practice. Just by asking, you differentiate your practice and you let your patients know that you care about them and that their opinion actually matters to you. They also know that sincerity has been offered and a gesture toward a friendlier relationship has been made. As well, they know that they're involved with what you do, that you believe in your practice, that you deliver and that you welcome an honest and direct response. You need to know what makes your patients happy. Most of your patients will gladly tell you, but you need to ask for it.



You can do this with a survey to determine patient likes and dislikes. You should fully understand as much as possible about your patients.

Objectives

- Collect feedback from patients (both new and old; active and inactive)
- Understand how happy your patients really are (not just what you assume)
- Enhance service levels of the practice
 - Improve the patient experience

How to Implement

There are two types of patient surveys

In-practice patient surveys can be used to determine whether the patients' needs are being met. They can also pinpoint problems, which can be corrected before they become worse or more widespread. Surveys that patients complete in the patient lounge are likely to have a higher rate of return since the front office team member is on hand to make sure that they are filled out and collected. On the other hand, that process can also convey a sense of intimidation since the team and dentist will know what the patient wrote.

Online patient surveys bring more honesty to the answers and are easy to track.
Record the number of surveys distributed vs the number completed accurately
Print the survey and have your patients complete the survey in your patient lounge.

Or

Use the online survey tool known as survey monkey. www.surveymonkey.com .It is simple and free to set up if you use a limited number of questions. You can then email the survey link for completion. Survey Monkey then collates results for you to assess.

- Analysis of survey
- Review survey responses and develop a summary of key findings; share with your team; make plans to act and respond accordingly and track changes over time.

Tips and Hints

- Identify exactly what you wish to find out from your patients and then create questions based on this
- Use a survey that is brief and concise
- Avoid use of too much free text for responses
- Use large font that can be easily read
- Make the survey straight to the point
- Do not take negative feedback personally, consider it key input you can use to grow and improve
- Make sure you always thank a patient for their feedback
- Try using incentives to encourage completion of surveys



Patient Delights

Show you care about your patients by doing things above and beyond what is expected. These small things will go a long way in ensuring that our practice remains top of mind for these happy patients and will also encourage greater referrals rates.

Objectives

- Show your patients you care about them
- Engage and retain your patients
- Impress your patients so they refer you to others

How to Implement

- **Get Well Soon card** - send this to patients who call and cancel if they are unwell, if this is the truth then they will appreciate your gesture, if it is not then they might feel guilty enough to reschedule.
- **Birthday cards** - an ecard or a hard copy personally written birthday card is always a pleasant surprise for recipients. You can also include an offer for them (i.e. a service voucher towards a whitening treatment) or you may include a branded gift (i.e. lip gloss, floss) and you can make a comment such as "to help your smile sparkle this birthday"
- Create or purchase cards
- Write and send cards
- Track responses and uptake of any associated offers

How to Measure

- Number of cards sent
- Record number of cards distributed
- Number of patients making appointments
- Record number of patients rescheduling appointments that cancelled previously because they were sick
- Number of patients that take up the birthday offer

VIP Treatment for your Most Valued Patients

Loyalty Program

Make a list of your top spenders and your top referrers -the top 30 or 50 patients. Mark them as VIPs in your database and make sure all your team know who they are. You can decide how, but the sole purpose is to keep your VIPs happy all year round, every year.



IDN recommend that you introduce an ambassador program as part of your marketing activity. IDN has entered into a bulk membership arrangement with AMBASSADOR CARD <https://www.ambassadorcard.com.au/> to provide members with a very affordable way of rewarding patients via a IDN branded Ambassador Card that can be overprinted with your individual practice name and logo. Patients can then access a wide range of discount services. Card cost per patient is only \$6 and current for 12 months.

Objectives

- Increase patient loyalty
- Increase referrals
- Increase patient conversion
- Reduce number of cancellations



How to Implement

Ideas of how to treat your patients like VIPs...

Make them part of your ambassador program, visit the IDN portal for more details on an example supplier who can help you organise cards and gives your patient instant access to local business benefits and discounts etc.

- Invite them to a VIP (Very Important Patients) event—you may have drinks, arrange a premier movie screening in the local cinema, and be creative!
- Send them a voucher to be pampered by a local beauty spa or hairdresser
- Send them a hamper (ideally to their workplace) just to tell them they are appreciated
- Ensure every staff member calls them by their name and they receive priority appointments

How to Measure

- Number of cancellations
- Cancellations should be as low as possible; you want to track this and see a decline
- Patient retention reports
- Track retention and referrals

Electronic Communication

Patient eNewsletter

A regular patient newsletter that you can email to your patient base will remind the patient you care about them even if they do not read it! It will keep you on the top of their mind for dental care. Those who do read it will also be reminded of the quality care and service you provide as well being informed of a new service, a recent advancement or enticed by an offer. See more as information in section regarding leveraging patient base.

Targeted Marketing Campaigns-Electronic Direct Mail Outs (EDMs)

It is important to develop regular campaigns that you can send to a select segment of your patient base to remind them of their fantastic experience at your practice, to highlight the skills and qualifications of you and your team and inform them of unique and relevant services and offers you have available that suit their needs.



Suggested topics

- **New Year** - Kick off the New Year and keep that resolution - keep your teeth healthy and shining brightly. Offer: special price for a clean and whitening treatment
- **Easter** - Chocolate is good for you -Wishing you a Happy Easter filled with lots of healthy smiles. Stay healthy this Easter by eating good quality chocolate and brushing your teeth afterwards.
- **End of Year** - All I want for Christmas is a new front tooth — if you have always wanted to improve the look of your smile, then treat yourself and make that Christmas wish come true. Offer: complimentary smile assessment

Confirming Appointments with SMS Messaging

Text messaging your patients can provide you with a quick, efficient and cost effective way of communicating to your patients. If you aren't already doing this it is a good idea to start. Many dental software programs including Oasis and D4W provide modules which can be used to send text messages to your patient base to assist with confirming appointments. The patient must reply with a yes and the appointment is then updated (this is available for Oasis). Your front office team then only need to take the time to call those patients who do not respond to the SMS.

Objectives

- Communicating cost effectively to your patient base whilst providing a service to them, reminding them of their appointment
- Successfully confirming appointments
- Reducing cancellations
- Minimising no shows

How to Implement

Ask your software provider for assistance to implement.

How to Measure

- Number of appointments
- Record the number of patients keeping their appointments—who SMS "YES"
Vs cancellations
- Response from SMS Number of people who do respond to the SMS sent

Tips and Hints

- Sample message: 'Dear (patient name). This is a courtesy reminder for your appointment on (date and time). We look forward to seeing you then. Regards (practice name)'
- Don't make it easy for the patients to simply SMS "No" ensure that there is a system for forcing them to physically call the practice during opening hours if they are unable to attend an appointment
- Ask for their name - makes it easier to ascertain who the reply is from... otherwise you have to try and work it out from the phone number... this may be time consuming
- SMS should be checked through before sending



Support in the 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 suitable 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. IDN recommends participating in National Dental Foundation activities that benefit the genuine needy in your direct community. NDF makes all arrangements for the day. Be sure to communicate this involvement across communications channels including your digital platform and leverage possible media exposure opportunities, you can also encourage participation and contribution from your team and patient base where suitable.

Objectives

- Give something back to the community
- Generate some exposure from supporting a worthy cause
- Share the experience with your patients, making them feel good too and increasing the good will they share in your practice

How to Implement

- Collate a list of possible potential target organisations, get input from your team
- Approach potential list and explore mutually beneficial opportunities
- Secure organisation through an agreement that clearly states involvement criteria from both parties
- Leverage exposure opportunities accordingly
- Communicate activity across all channels to your patient base
- Monitor activity to decipher return on investment
- If you need further assistance in this area, please contact IDN who can provide support and connect you with a marketing consultant where required.

How to Measure

- Media exposure i.e. secured editorial
- Raising awareness from your patient base
- New patients generated from this activity
- Level of team engagement

Tips and Hints

- Feature your involvement in your patient eNewsletter, social media and on your website
- Get your associates, hygienists and your entire team involved
- Tell your patients about it
- Display images of involvement in your patient lounge
- Leverage support partners i.e. encourage them to share your social media posts etc.



INCREASING CONVERSION AND SPEND

No matter how good a dentist you are, getting the patient to actually complete the recommended treatment is what can often pose as the biggest challenge. The following section outlines programs and templates that you can utilise to help enhance your conversion rates.

From providing patients with welcome that informs and reassures them that they have made the right choice by coming to your practice, to making them aware of patient dental plans and payment plan options available, all make the entire patient experience a more positive one, increasing the likelihood of patients completing their treatment plans

Patient Welcome Communication

An important part of making your prospective patient feel comfortable enough to become an active patient at your practice is making them feel special and confident that they will receive the quality oral health care they are seeking and deserve. You can begin this process with welcoming the patient before they are seen and informing them of all the practice has to offer.

Objectives

- Engage with the prospective patient
- Inform and educate them about the practice
- Make them feel confident and comfortable enough to attend their initial appointment

How to Implement

- IDN has created a new patient welcome letter that you can customise and utilise in your practice, visit the marketing portal to download today.
- Your welcome email or letter template should contain relevant information for that patient and is personally addressed. Highlighting key services provided and any other important information regarding car parking, directions and how to best prepare for the appointment, are all important inclusions.

How to Measure

- Number of welcome emails/letters being distributed
- Number of patients attending their first appointment
- Patient Feedback
- Ask your patients what they thought of the welcome information and any suggestions for future enhancements.



The alternative to health fund insurance

Research shows that preventive dentistry delivered on a regular basis greatly reduces the risk of dental disease and provides a platform for a lifetime of improved oral health. We encourage such an approach and with this in mind have designed Patient Dental Plan to reward loyal patients, allowing IDN dentists to plan patient's dental care more effectively, to provide the best chance of keeping patients dentally fit and reduce the need for future treatment.

When patients join the Patient Dental Plan, they will have the peace of mind that all their preventive dental care will be covered by convenient monthly payments.

The aim is to provide high quality care and treatment in a relaxed, comfortable and safe environment. IDN dentists are committed to continuing education and keeping abreast of advances in modern dentistry.

The cornerstone of service is the dental health examination that includes

- clinical examinations for your whole mouth
- investigation and screening by x-rays
- screening for mouth cancer
- screening for gum disease
- oral health advice
- treatment planning for future dental needs



Treatment not covered by this plan can be paid under a range of alternative plans that best suit your patient's needs and budget.

Alternative payment arrangements are available and patients are encouraged to so consult with their IDN dentist to ascertain the most suitable payment plan for their individual dental needs.

Please visit the IDN portal for further information and materials for utilisation to help you launch the plan program in your practice.

Benefits for patients

- You are in control of your oral health and minimising future cost by having treatment when you need it and not letting minor issues escalate into costly major issues.
- Eliminate the fear of facing a large unforeseen expense by forward budgeting for treatment that you know you will need.
- Gain a 5/10% concession on fees.
- Receive priority appointment scheduling and access to your preferred dentist.
- Additionally, it is your choice as to whether you continue on with your Dental Health Insurance cover or decide to self-insure to cover your personal needs rather than be limited by Health

Funds terms and conditions and level of rebate. If you do decide to retain your Health Funds cover you can still claim for all treatments carried out under your Patient Dental Plan and bank the refund.

Onhold Messages

Losing a caller on hold is a lot like losing a tooth... You don't always get them back, and they're much harder to replace once gone. On hold messages work because, like teeth, looking after your patients is essential for your business.

On hold messages should act as concise, punchy nuggets of information that allow you to cost effectively promote your services without staff involvement.

All you need is a phone system and you're On Hold message provider can do the rest, they will provide copywriting, installation and programming where required.

Objectives

- To build credibility and instil confidence in your patients by creating a professional impression
- Inform your prospects and patients as to the services you offer

How to Implement

- Brief your supplier as to the messages you would like to convey
- Review their script and recording; once finalised it is all ready to go live.
- If you need additional assistance with copywriting of script, please contact IDN

How to Measure

- Number of patients requesting the services highlighted on the message on hold, ask them how they found out about it.
- General patient feedback-Ask your patients what they think of your messages

Tips and Hints

- Keep messages brief and concise
- Tailor your message to suit what the patient would want to hear not just what you want to tell them
- Remind patients that they can book online if this option is available



Patient Payment Plans

Patient Payment Plans allow your patients to begin treatment immediately and then pay for it over time. IDN has partnered with Medipay with all IDN practices will benefit from the reduced rates provided to IDN practices by this partnership. Find out more visit <https://medipay.com.au/> and contact IDN to implement/access.

Objectives

- Increase case acceptance of patients
- Reduce accounts receivable and associated billing and collections expense
- Improve cash flow by receiving direct electronic payments before you commence treatment

How to implement

Contact IDN to request access to the concession service. IDN will provide full details and introduction to Medipay for you and will arrange for a supply of Medipay brochures to be despatched direct to your practice.

How to measure

- Effectiveness of promotion within your practice- Are your team informing your patients of the Patient Payment Plans? Are they identifying suitable patients and promoting this to them?
- Number of patients using the Patient Payment Plans-Record number of applications, number of approved plans and which plans are the most popular.
- Increased case acceptance- Record which patients had concerns regarding the cost or affordability of treatment; record where case was accepted or larger treatment value accepted due to patient having access to payment plan.

Recalls

Recalls have been covered in our previous section 'leveraging your existing patient base' however these can also be used for increasing case acceptance. By informing, educating and keeping in regular contact with your patients you will be more likely to see them proceed with treatment.

Attracting New Patients

As a general guide, it is much easier to attract new patients (and convert them) if they are Pre-interested, Pre-educated, Pre-qualified and Pre-disposed. To make it easier to establish this, the following section outlines various ways of helping you to attract the right new patients to your practice.

Identifying the type of Patients you want to Attract

Who is your ideal patient?

It is for you to decide who you want to be treating. Think about the location (and positioning) of your practice and the type of services you would like to provide.



As a general guide, we hear from our Practice Principals that they want to attract patients that value premium service and high quality care and who are happy to invest in maintaining optimal dental health.

It is much easier to attract new patients (and convert them) if they are...

Pre-interested - in quality dental care, general health and wellbeing and/or in the specific dental service or benefit, i.e. straighter teeth

Pre-educated - know what the service is, understands the benefits and what is involved in the procedure

Pre-qualified - know that it is relevant and they are a good candidate for the service, for example, no point asking for implants if they have no missing teeth!

Pre-disposed - all of the above and they have a general idea of the cost involved and are wanting to have the treatment

How to Do It

Ask yourself the following questions to determine who you would like to attract to your practice:

- Who are your top patients?
- What type of patients and cases would you like more of?
- What do they have in common?
- How did they originally come to your practice?
- Where do they live?
- Where do they work?
- Where do their kids go to school?
- What are they interested in?

Prioritise who you would like to target/ attract to your practice.
Do not forget to get input from your team.



If you need help in targeting new patients
Contact IDN who will connect you with their preferred Marketing consultant.



Targeted Campaigns

As mentioned previously, targeted campaigns tend to be the most effective when it comes to engaging with your audience and stimulating the appropriate response from them.

Objectives

- Attracting new patients for general care
- Attracting new patients for specific dental services, i.e. Invisalign, Implants
- Educating these prospects so your leads are qualified and mostly come pre-interested, pre-educated, pre-qualified and pre-disposed
- Encouraging prospective patients to schedule an appointment

IDN have developed and will continue to develop a portfolio of targeted campaigns that are available for you to utilise that are designed to attract new patients to your practice.

Please visit the IDN marketing portal. If you would like assistance with creating and implementing specific campaigns specific to your dental practice please inform IDN who will connect you with our preferred marketing consultant.

How to Measure

- Number of enquires generated from the campaign
- Number of appointments scheduled
- Value of accepted treatment

Patient Referral Program

See details on the Patient Referral Program outlined in our earlier section, 'Leveraging your existing patient base'. This program is ideal for generating new patients for minimal cost based on referrals from your existing patient base. It holds true that the best way to get more quality patients is to have your existing quality patients refer them

Online directory Listings

In order to gain new patients they must firstly know you are there. When prospects are looking for a service provider they will search online and may refer to online directories in their research. You need to consider where you will list your services. Visit the IDN marketing portal for a basic list of online directories to consider listing your practice. Being listed will further assist your website with SEO and also potentially generate additional enquiries and new patients. Please submit any other online directories you are aware of and can recommend to IDN.



Educational Sessions

It is important to keep your patients and prospective patients up to date on what is happening and available in the dental industry. The information gap, which can be wide and continues to exist between what the dental community knows about oral healthcare and what lay people know.

Community Groups, Schools and Clubs

Give presentations to community groups, become valued for sharing your knowledge, become the expert. Use presentation opportunities as image and brand builders to increase interest in dental care/the specific service and wanting the dentist or hygienist who gives the audience presentation as their own dentist. Topics i.e. mouth guards to sporting teams, general care to the local surf club members. Ask if they have a health education program and if they provide dental health information. If not, offer your services as a resource to speak or to send them information about your services

Corporate Oral Health Push

Health and wellness educational program for local businesses. Get in touch with companies in your local area and ask if they have a health education program and if they provide dental health information. If not, offer your services as a resource to speak to their employees during lunch or breakfast seminars. They may also provide employees with health & wellness benefits which you could be included in.

Objectives

- Engage with your target segments
- Inform and educate
- Reassure and comfort audience- break down barriers to having care
- Encourage an appointment to be scheduled

Hints and tips

You can also hold open day events at your practice to showcase your practice to the community.



Strategic Health & Business Alliance Referrals

Why not contact local businesses in your area and ask them if you can be the business-endorsed dentist for all of their employees. You may offer their staff a small incentive to visit you. These businesses can make for valuable referral sources for your practice.

Objectives

- Promote the practices services to these businesses
- Encourage patient referrals
- Attract new patients

How to Implement

- Identify and make contact with relevant local businesses. See the list below for ideas of who to consider.
- Send them a personalised introductory letter or email highlighting your practice what you offer and invite them to visit your practice.
- Consider running an open day/evening and invite them to visit your practice and discuss how you would care for their patients/customers.
- Segment the businesses so you can focus more on the relevant services for their patient/ customer base, i.e. medical specialists, health and fitness, cosmetic
- Provide them with business cards and promotional items i.e. magnets to give to their own patients/customers
- Encourage them to share your social media posts, EDMs and patient enewsletters

List of business to consider:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| ● Gyms & fitness centres | ● Beauty Salons and Day Spas |
| ● Personal trainers | ● Cosmetic surgeries |
| ● Pilates and yoga classes | ● Tanning Salons and solariums |
| ● Dance Studios | ● Modelling agency |
| ● Doctors | ● Photographers |
| ● Pharmacist | ● Florists |
| ● Allied health providers | ● Formal Wear Stores |
| ● Medical specialists—physiotherapist, chiropractor; acupuncturist, naturopath | ● Limo Services |
| ● Massage Therapists | ● Bridal Gown & Accessory |
| ● Hair Salon | ● Wedding Consultants |
| | ● Party Planners |
| | ● Health Food Stores |

How to Measure

- Number of referrals from that business- Record where your referrals are coming from
- Number of new patients-Record number of new patients generated from that particular referral source

Tips and Hints

- Keep your eyes open for new businesses opening up in your local area
- Identify what marketing and communications activity they are doing and piggy back on this where suitable to increase your reach to their database



Public Relations

Your public relations strategy positions your practice as the leading practice in your area, creates compelling word-of-mouth, educates your market on the advances in dentistry and attracts the right kind of target patient to your practice who is ready, able and willing to accept and pay for total treatment. You want to be considered a premium dental service provider for which your patients are willing to invest.

Health and wellness continues to be a major hot topic for the media in Australia today, leverage this and secure editorial exposure.

Objectives

- Increase awareness of your practice and the range of services you offer - generating interest and enquiry to your practice that turn into a reliable source of new patients
- Enhance credibility of the practice; subtly reminding your patients how good you are To find out more about PR and how you can use it for your practice visit <https://www.stateofdigital.com/>
- Win patients trust, for life – visit <https://www.psychologytoday.com>
- PR is essentially free advertising.
- The press always turns to a recognised professional to explain how new health matters affect them and you can get a tremendous amount of free press each time you volunteer an article or are available to discuss a subject. If you are the person that the public sees, you are perceived as the expert. This exposure will build awareness of your practice and result in a source of new patients.
- Your patients are always looking for credible proof that they've made the right decision in choosing you as their dental healthcare provider. Any evidence showing you featured in the local press recently or in the past is the kind of proof they are looking for.
- People assume that if you are in the press for one thing, you automatically become an expert in all other areas of dentistry. This will help to increase case acceptance in all areas and generate increased patient inflow.

How to implement

- Understanding and building a relationship with the Media Building a relationship with the media can be a tremendous asset to your practice. Every time you or your practice is featured in a story, you get free publicity. Free publicity can be attained through a feature story in your local community newspaper, a posting on a website, a radio interview, the placement of public service announcements, or simply listing your activities on local community.
- Once you establish a positive relationship with your media contacts, the likelihood that they will consider your stories increases significantly.
- Creation and circulation of media release with consistent follow up is key to securing editorial. If you require assistance with generating media releases and securing editorial please contact IDN who will connect you with their marketing consultant.



Hints and Tips

- Make it easy for the media to run your story by providing it in a ready to run manner
- Make yourself available for interviews
- Include relevant quotes from key stakeholders
- Provide compelling images to accompany your copy
- Respect the media's time and be aware of their deadlines
- Create Newsworthy Events-Think about the topics that are most relevant to the services your practice wants to focus on and are of most interest to your target market. Write articles that can be submitted or position yourself as the expert and try and get a regular column in the publication to introduce a topic and enable listeners/readers to ask questions of the expert.
- Make it local-Keep on the look-out for items of interest in the community
- What's Notable - If you receive an award or support a charity you can let the press know about it. You should also build a relationship with a local photographer so you have great pictures to go along with your press releases. Also add these to your website.
- Press releases need to be punchy with an interesting angle; they should also be pitched according to the audience of that particular media vehicle.
- Keep your eyes open for exposure opportunities, they rarely just come to you.

How to Measure

- Number of enquiries generated from the press exposure
- Number of new patients driven from the exposure
- PR agencies will attribute a value to the level of exposure you get, for example if you get an article published, they would value this as the cost it would be to place an advertisement of the same size in the same paper.

ADVERTISING

If you are still looking to attract more new patients after implementing all the programs outlined previously, then advertising is your next step. The dental world has changed and industry spending on advertising has increased dramatically due to the actions of Health Funds and Corporate entities. To stay competitive, you need to raise your profile and effective targeted advertising is key part of the marketing mix for dental practices.

You may want to investigate a range of online and offline advertising i.e. in local newspapers, online publications and magazines, radio etc. and focus on those that have high reach amongst your ideal patients.



How to implement

Your first step is to ask your ideal patients what newspapers and magazines that they like to read. Simply have your team members ask your patients when they come to their appointments and record this feedback.

When you have decided on the publications that you want to advertise in, meet with your graphic designer for mock up advertisement preparation, if you need assistance please contact IDN.

When your ad is ready to go, take small steps before you take big ones. Don't blow your entire budget on one ad in one publication. Remember to test, test, test to find out which ad draws the best response. Try smaller ads in several publications to determine this. When you have determined which one is the strongest ad, you can then consider using bigger ads in more publications.

Based on this feedback you can then call each publication and ask them to send you their media kit. Also, ask them to send you several back issues so that you can see if your competition advertises in their publication.

This will also help you to understand where to place your ad in each publication. When the kit arrives take a close look at each publication's circulation area and the ratio of advertisements to other content. They should cover at least 75% of your market area and there should be at least a 60/40 content to advertising ratio. Otherwise, you will not be seen amongst the clutter and it's time to move on to the next publication.

Select the publications that are well written, respected and attractive. Make sure that they are directed at your ideal patients and have reasonable prices for their ads when compared to the number of readers that will be viewing your ad. Also find out if there are any special editorial features coming up that you can use to tie in to your practice. This is very important—gain as much added value as you can from your advertising.

Tips and Hints:

- Double check phone number, address and website details are correct on advertisements
- Track your adverts—response rate, conversion rate and value of accepted services
- Include a call to action to encourage urgency and response
- Once you do run an advertisement you will have more leverage to secure added value editorial, explore this with the editor



TV and Radio Advertising

If you have progressed in your Marketing Plan to the point where you are considering Radio and TV as a possible marketing program, you should really consider getting some professional marketing advice before you get too involved. We don't mean professional advice from the Radio or TV sales rep who will not provide an objective point of view. Discuss all of your options and related costs with IDN who can connect you with a marketing consultant.

You'll find that you can quickly spend a lot of money on radio and TV ads. Not only can spots be pricy but the production costs can also break the bank. Tread carefully when using this channel.

Free Exposure - Always Best

The best form of TV and Radio exposure, especially in healthcare, is by being invited as a speaker, on a panel, as the expert to the program. Not only does it not cost any more than your time, the viewers/ listeners are usually more receptive and open to listening as well as you gain respect as an expert and prospects are more likely to call you.

If you are going to be appearing on TV or radio as a special expert guest, see below for a few tips:

Take several questions into the first session to fall back on, or have the host write up some questions from the staff at the station so that they can immediately benefit from your presence and so that you can get some topics going that will stir a listener into picking up the phone and dialling in.

Try to make sure that at least every 2 to 3 minutes the host is giving out your name, website and phone number along with the station number, because people who don't want to have their voice on the air will call your practice personally.

Online Advertising

Internet advertising is one of the fastest growing mediums for communicating with consumers. This method is not only cost effective but can be more easily updated if required. It also provides you with a vehicle to test campaigns and modify accordingly to ensure a higher response rate from your target audience.

Google Adwords

What is Google AdWords?

Adwords is an online advertising program run by Google. With Ad Words, you can create and run ads for your business, quickly and simply. Run your ads on Google and their advertising network and you will only pay when people click on your ads.



How does it work?

- AdWords are displayed along with search results when someone searches Google using a keyword. The benefit in using Adwords is that you'll be advertising to an audience that's already interested in your business.
- You create your ads
- You create ads and choose keywords, which are words or phrases related to your business.
- You attract customers
- Advertising using Google Adwords can be effective as it gives you access to a specific target market however this really does need to be managed and measured regularly to ensure you are getting a return on investment. Also make sure you set a budget for this and stick to it. A combination of organic SEO and PPC/Google adwords can provide the best results, **however bear in mind depending on factors including geographic location, competition can be fierce resulting in high cost per click .**

IDN recommends a marketing agency to assist practices with google words/PPC, ask us for an introduction if you are interested in finding out more

Tips and Hints

- General rule of thumb = Trial then measure
- Success in advertising can often be a game of trial and error. How do you know your local advertising is achieving the desired result? The simple answer is to trial your advertising with cues that can help you determine where the lead came from i.e. 'mention this advertisement when booking your appointment or by using a dedicated phone number for that specific advertising campaign.
- Avoid doing too much at once—spread your advertising activities across the entire year, measure the results and repeat the winners.



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