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7 Proven Ways to Grow Your Dental Practice

by Ryan Adams

Why are over 85% of Dentists in the US claiming that their sales are down by more than 20%? And why are so many Dentists struggling to find a consistent source of new customers? Yes, it's true that our economy is really slow and people are cutting back on just about everything, including dental procedures that they really need, but it's also true that very few Dentists market themselves effectively and the ones that are marketing are growing their client base every week.

Last month **110,000** people searched online for “**Orthodontists Chicago**” and **40,500 people** searched for “**Dentist Chicago**” indicating a strong demand for dental related services. The fact is another Dentist or Orthodontist in your local area is ending up with this business. Most Dentists entered into the profession thinking that they would open up a practice and the business would generate from word of mouth and referrals. This may be true for a select few dental practices, but it's more likely that if you want to compete, you need to market your services.

Traditionally Dentists aren't marketers! But to stay competitive, and if you do what I recommend in my **E-Report: 7 Proven Ways to Grow Your Dental Practice**, you will find you can blow away your competition. According to the Wall Street Journal, only 4% of medical practitioners market their practices, and most are NOT doing it effectively. The key to dental marketing is to **acquire, retain, and re-market**. If you do all 3, you will have a steady stream (maybe a flood) of leads coming into your dental practice.

The best way to grow your dental practice is by using **internet marketing**. Forget TV ads, expensive Radio, or newspaper advertising. We know very few Dentists that these marketing mediums have actually ever worked for. And their lack of accountability, measurability, and limited geo-targeting capabilities will leave you wondering where your investment went. You need to be where your prospects and clients are, **they are online searching** for the products and services they need.

1) **Give to Get** - Bringing in a new client is often much more difficult than retaining an already happy one. Sometimes you have to **Give to Get!** Creating a strong “call to action” or offer around one of your services to get people in the door, will maximize your marketing investment and drive new leads and revenue into your practice. At the beginning stage of your prospecting funnel, all you really want is a chance to talk to these people, show them your level of commitment and service, and prove to them that you are good at what you do.

The end goal of your marketing effort is to get them in the door and create a customer for life. By giving away something today (even at a small loss), you will get a long term client that is happy and also will refer you to all their friends and family. Bundling services is a great way to **Give to Get**. Offer a Free Teeth Whitening service with a Regular Cleaning for new customers only. Or a 20% Off Coupon for a 1st time Teeth Cleaning. Remember, what you are after is a **Customer For Life**, if you might have to give up something to start the relationship, but your business will more than make up for it over the next 10/20/80 years of service for that customer.

2) **Pay Per Click Marketing** - Thousands of potential customers are searching every day online for Dentists, Orthodontists, Periodontists, and related services in your local area. With the right message and a conversion focused Pay Per Click marketing campaign, you can get immediate leads and new clients into your



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practice. Pay Per Click marketing delivers ads in the search engines only to prospects that are not only local to your business, but looking for exactly what you are offering at the exact time they want it! It's highly targeted, and highly measurable marketing unlike anything else in existence.

The problem is Pay Per Click marketing or PPC, is extremely competitive and you really need someone who knows what they are doing to make it successful. If you are going to invest in PPC, you need to make sure you track conversions (emails, phone calls, web forms, downloads, etc). Without tracking this data, you will not know how effective the campaign really is. Also, PPC marketing needs to be constantly monitored and optimized every day to avoid stagnant and lack luster results. To maximize your PPC budget, you need to apply steps #2, #4, and #5. If you DO, you won't just compete in your market, **you will dominate**.

3) **Organic Search Marketing** - Organic or Natural Search Marketing is similar in concept as Pay Per Click, but organic search marketing results you do NOT have to pay per click. It is a much longer and slower process, but its where 80% of your prospects are going to find you. Search Engine Optimization or SEO, is a process by which your site is engineered to show up for certain keywords in the search engines. Organic search results can lead to a consistent stream of leads for your practice, but patience and a lot of time working on your site (and off of your site) is required to take advantage of this strategy. Make sure if you outsource your SEO work, you deal with someone who understands your business, won't spam the search engines, and is someone you can trust with your message and reputation. One wrong move here could leave you black listed by Google and the other major search engines.

A solid SEO strategy is rooted in delivering good quality keyword rich content to your site. Writing content for the web is a lot different than writing content for a brochure or off-line marketing collateral. Make sure you work with an SEO team who understand the complexities of search engine optimization, can create a realistic plan, understands your business, and can measure the results.

4) **Landing Pages** - Internet marketing for dental practices is competitive and if not done correctly, you can squander your marketing dollars pretty quick. Developing a custom landing page is a technique to develop a small 1-2 page website focused around a very specific service (Implants, Teeth Whitening, Cosmetic Dentistry, etc), and developed around a strong "call to action."

By utilizing a focused page to send targeted traffic to, you are properly aligning what someone is searching for in the search engines with the exact result they are expecting to see when they click on the pay per click ad or organic search result. Conversion rates can increase 100% or more using a landing page strategy. Landing pages tend to work best when used in conjunction with a Pay Per Click marketing campaign. When it comes down to it, effective marketing is all about doing it better than your competition. Landing pages, when used correctly, can dramatically accelerate your lead generation efforts and squeeze more out of your Pay Per Click budget.

5) **Email Marketing** - Email marketing is a great strategy to use for retention and re-marketing and a way to present your-self as an industry expert. You need to stay in front of your existing customers and potential prospects every month. The average prospect needs 6-7 "touches" from a business before they actually do business with them. Mailing out letters is not the answer and is very expensive. Email marketing is quick, measurable, and extremely effective. Keep your customers engaged and aware of all the services you have to offer



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and any new exciting breakthroughs in the field of dentistry.

When developing an email marketing strategy, you need to plan it out carefully and make sure every campaign is created with a strong offer or call to action. Don't be too pushy or over-burden people by sending out more than 1 email campaign per month. Email marketing is a key piece to the internet marketing puzzle and can help maximize all of your marketing efforts.

6) **Conversion Focused Web Design** - To effectively market on the internet, you need a conversion focused web site. What you DON'T need is a website that collects dust. Think about it...just about every dental practice has a website of some kind. Most are poorly conceived by graphic designers or stock templates and were implemented with no strategy, no call to actions, and are basically just a brochure. A brochure isn't going to cut it as we move forward into a more competitive marketing space on the internet. Most of your competition has a brochure, but to convert traffic into prospects and then into customers, you need a much stronger "pull" to get the prospect to what to do business with you.

An internet marketing consultant can help design and organize your site to move you beyond "brochure-ware" to a highly productive lead generation machine. Also, an effective web solution should put you in control of your site and content. Make sure your site is built with a Content Management System (CMS) that will allow you or your staff control to make simple edits without having to hire your designer at \$100+/hr for each little web change needed.

7) **Social Media** - Social media sites are where your prospects and customers are spending a lot of their time. So how come most dentists are not utilizing this marketing strategy? It's most likely due to a lack of time and lack of knowledge on how to use Social Media to your advantage. Get on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Face Book, and at least start engaging with your prospects and customers. Post relevant articles, and quick tips on how to keep your teeth healthy, or post your opinion on over-the counter teeth whitening kits, or whatever you want to talk about that helps present yourself as an expert. Social Media is all about engagement. Also, Social Media can help your organic search results, build your email marketing database, drive more traffic to your website, and help with reputation management.

If you are a Dentist, Orthodontist, Periodontist, or other dental specialist, I encourage you to implement all 7 of these proven marketing strategies into your business today. The longer you wait, the more your competition will gain more and more of the market (and their friends, family, co-workers, etc). All of these strategies need to be worked on and improved upon over time, so don't think that what worked today will always work tomorrow. Create a clear strategy to maximize your internet marketing investment and set realistic expectations. With the right plan and execution, internet marketing will not feel like you are taking a risk by "spending" your money on it and hoping for something in return. Internet marketing is a tried and true investment that will deliver consistent returns for your business.

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Ryan Adams is a Certified Internet Marketing Consultant (IMC) with WSI and has a passion for helping Dentists and Medical professionals market their businesses more effectively using the internet.