

Marketing a Dental Practice

by Evodia Hoff

Most of my personal exposure to dental marketing has been characterized by cartoon teeth with smiley faces that actually make me feel rather uneasy. As a marketer, dentistry poses an interesting challenge as most people associate the practice with pain and a generally unpleasant yet necessary chore. How then, would a marketing professional approach a dental practice, and what messages would they utilize?

To represent a dental practice in an appealing way, there are certain messages I would want to convey. I would seek to take people's minds away from the gauche tasks that occur when a person goes to the dentist. First, I would of course emphasize cleanliness. As with any industry centered on hygiene, nothing should seem dirty or indecent in advertising materials. Another main idea I would want to employ is the impression that this dental practice will not invade the customer's comfort zone. I would emphasize the business as non-invasive and low-hassle. Dental customers want to accomplish necessary tasks in order to improve themselves with ease. This improvement may be hygienic or cosmetic depending on the nature of the practice. Regardless, the website or other media would have to seem open and personable while emphasizing the results of dental work as opposed to the process. I think that these messages would serve to make a customer comfortable enough to choose a certain company.

The reason I feel that these messages are appropriate is that they give an overall positive impression. Going to the dentist is a necessity, and someone looking at dentistry materials is most likely set on going to one or another. Therefore, I do not think the selling point is what they do, but how they do it. I have seen some advertisements showing before and after pictures of gruesome to pristine teeth; I would want to focus more on the positive outcome. In most cases, people do not have horrible nasty teeth, and showing such images does more harm than good. These images are shocking, and chances are, they will be the lasting impression a customer will recall.

In order to convey a positive message of a clean, caring, no hassle dental practice, I would portray these messages through the created media. For example, in a website for a dental practice, I would add images of people smiling and enjoying themselves in everyday settings. I would place the main visual focus on the customer, but also include the practice itself. In going deeper into the website I would include images of the physical building to build familiarity, and show openness. I would include images of the doctors and staff somewhere as well, maybe with a short bio. The customer could become comfortable with the faculty and staff beforehand. I would also make the website easy to navigate, so as not to waste time and effort and therefore give a productive impression of what the business will be like. This can be accomplished through information architecture. Ease of use would reinforce the ideals that the campaign focuses on.

As a marketer hired by a dental practice, I would work to create welcoming media that would show customers cleanliness and efficiency. Through this comforting and simple marketing campaign, I believe that customers would choose this dental practice for the sake of simplifying their struggles in choosing a good place to complete their dentistry.