



Social Media Planning and Marketing

Let's start with the million dollar questions. Where do I find content for my page? How do I get people to like my page? How do I get new patients with social media? What social media promotion should I do in my practice? Plain and simple – it just depends. It depends on your target demographic, the social media site, your goals, your budget, and your plan. Social media marketing, just like all other forms of marketing, requires strategic and proper planning before execution. There's no one-size-fits-all answer.

Demographics are typically explained as a population's characteristics and include age, gender, income, race, and ethnicity. Demographics can give you an idea about how people spend their money, what they spend money on, and what grabs their attention. The first step in creating a marketing plan is identifying demographics. Who are your current patients and who do you want as a patient? In healthcare, women are typically a good target demographic because they make approximately 80% of the medical decisions for a household. A growing demographic in healthcare is young professionals.

Once you've identified your target demographic, you must next figure out how you will communicate with them, and with what message. Put together a list of the demographics' interests, activities, commonalities, and likes/dislikes and use this information to build your promotion. For example, if your target demographic is young professionals you might build an Instagram promotion with a grand prize giveaway of an iPad. Below is basic demographic information for some of the major social media sites.

Facebook: 57% female, 46% over 45 years old, 47% have a household income of \$50,000-\$99,999/year

Twitter: 59% female, 33% over 45 years old, 38% have a household income of \$25,000-\$49,999/year

Yelp: 51% male, 42% are 18-34 years old, 36% have a household income of more than \$150,000

When running a promotion via social media, always check the site's rules first to make sure your promotion is not violating them. For example, Facebook asks that all contests be managed through a third-party system instead of directly on Facebook (check out TradableBits). Rules may change how you run your promotion.

Get the word out about your promotion through multiple channels including emails, in-office flyers, and direct mail to maximize your reach. Communicate a clear next step for your audience to take and make it easy for them to take that step. For example, create and add a QR code to in-office flyers directing people to your Facebook page when running a Facebook promotion. QR (quick response) codes are like barcodes that people can scan from an app on their smartphone to be directed to a web page. QR codes are free to generate from many websites (just search QR code) and work well on printed materials, but should not be used online.

Don't forget that attracting social media fans and followers is sometimes just as easy as presenting the topic. Is your staff including this information in conversations with patients? Are you making it easy for people to find and follow your page after they've left your office? If not, start there.

