

Starting off on the **right foot**



Carl Burroughs

By Carl Burroughs

We all know how hard it is to attract new patients through advertising these days. The dental sector is spending more on Google ads and Facebook ads than at any other time, which not only means you are always vying for that top spot, but the cost of this advertising is constantly getting pushed up.

Facebook joined the trillion dollar club in June and I'm sure globally the dental sector has contributed to this lofty honour. Instagram ads are also on the rise in the world of dental marketing as the kids who were too cool to be on Facebook, because their parents use it, are all growing up.

Did you know, 63% of all Instagram users are over the age of 25 and 30% of Instagram users are over the age of 35. Instagram is still not the right place to advertise All-on-4, but for cosmetic procedures and gaining a new patient for an exam, scale and clean, using Instagram ads is now a worthwhile use of your marketing budget.

Gaining a new enquiry through online advertising is costly and is still no guarantee of securing a loyal patient, as there are many other steps required to 'WOW' this potential patient into becoming part of your dental family. The quality of your messages at each of the 'touch points' needs to be exceptional. The way your phone is answered, the quality of

confirmation SMS's, your website and your social media all influence how a potential patient views you. Your messages need to be congruent and inspiring. Don't just use the boring template messages built into your software, rewrite them in interesting and compelling ways. If you don't have the time or inclination to do this, then employ someone to do this for you, as very often little changes on how we communicate, can make a big difference to response rates.

One of the ways to start the relationship with your new patient off on the right foot, is to send them a well-crafted 'Welcome Pack'. Receiving valuable information in advance of a patient's first visit, will help them understand what to expect, can save time at the practice and add some 'Wow' factor right at the start of the patient's journey with you. Your new welcome pack should be designed and written for your specific needs, but here are a few examples of content you might want to include:-

- ◆ Link to Online Medical History Questionnaire – with digital signature capability
- ◆ What to expect at your first visit
- ◆ Where to park
- ◆ Free parking voucher
- ◆ Free coffee voucher
- ◆ Link to a report about the links between oral health and overall health
- ◆ Meet your dentist



- ◆ And at the moment you might want to include your current Covid 19 protocols

As Oscar Wilde famously said, "You only get one chance to make a first impression" and in this era of connectivity, using automation to help craft this 'first impression' is a highly effective and controlled way of managing this.

But why stop there? Most practices have a TLC call protocol; my preference is to call every patient after they have attended the practice, but I know many dentists only want to call after a significant procedure. The benefit of the post-operative call is to show the patient just how much you care about them, but what about doing a pre-operative call?

"Hi Sophia, this is Dr Terrific from Wow Dental, I will be seeing you next week, I am just calling to see if you have any areas of dental concern so I can prepare for our meeting" – do you think that this approach might also assist the patient/ doctor relationship starting off on the right foot?

Having protocols like the 'Welcome Pack', the phone calls before and after a patient visits are all key elements that leave a huge impression. They are free, easy to do, fun to create and will differentiate you from your competition. Great businesses, including dental practices pay a lot of attention to these small details which, will be long remembered after the actual treatment. ◆

If you need any help or advice with your marketing or staff training, you can contact Carl on 02 9211 1477 or carl@idm.com.au

