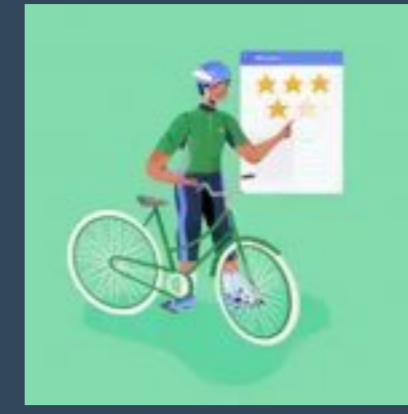


3 Ways Dental Practices Can Save on Marketing Costs



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Are you spending too much marketing your dental practice? Are you operating on a tight marketing budget and want to make sure you're spending is right? No matter the circumstances, it's important to keep a handle on marketing dollar spending. Here are three ways your dental practice can save on marketing.

1. Avoid Overpaying Expensive Marketing Agencies

Dentists, like other small business owners, are busy running their business, with office staff supporting day-to-day operations. Marketing, an integral component to growing the practice, can be a struggle given the lack of internal resources of time, money and expertise. The only solution seems to be outsourcing to a marketing agency.

While outsourcing marketing may cost less than hiring internally, you may still wind up overpaying for outside agency assistance.

How do you know if you're overpaying your marketing agency?

If you're on a monthly retainer, be certain your invoice includes a detailed breakdown listing the number of hours worked, by whom, and at what rate, with details on the actual work completed. Sometimes agencies will have junior-level employees do the work yet bill at the rate of a more senior (and expensive) team member. Requesting detailed invoices will make the agency be accountable for what exactly they are billing you for.

Inquire if the agency can provide reports or visibility into a platform dashboard that you can access to see tangible results. This activity includes a record of new patient phone calls, form submissions on your website and downloads of online materials. Be aware of 'vanity metrics' such as impressions and click-through rates marketing agencies are eager to display to justify the cost of an expensive campaign or retainer. Investigate how these 'vanity metrics' actually impact your business. Can they be tie tracked to an increase in patients or visits to your practice?

Negotiate, or renegotiate, the terms of your contract to include a month-on-month agreement with a 30-day written cancellation. Having an easy out will provide you with flexibility and incentive for the agency to deliver consistently every month in order to retain your business.

2. Try to Do-It-Yourself

Consider keeping some of the easier, low-hanging marketing fruit in-house. Can your office staff find an hour or two in the week to focus on a few marketing tasks? Doing so can cut down on marketing activities your dental practice is outsourcing to an agency.

Here are a few quick suggestions for in-house help.

- ✓ Start with tasks many of your staff are already comfortable doing on their own, like sending emails and posting to social media.
- ✓ Assign a task to one specific individual to avoid confusion and allow for a greater comfort level over time.
- ✓ Add tasks to a calendar or to-do list alongside other office responsibilities and make it part of a weekly routine.

3. Partner with Others to Share Expenses (and Rewards)

Consider working with another local business servicing the same audience to help increase awareness for a new audience. Partnership examples for dental practices include: orthodontists, doctor's offices like primary care physicians or pediatricians, fitness centers, gyms and medispas.

The type of co-marketing initiative you engage in can vary. An easy and free form of cross-promotion could include setting up respective referral programs. If you're going to spend money, co-hosting a local event or webinar together will allow you to split the costs for set-up and promotion of the event, while driving an overall larger number of prospects through your collective efforts.

Another, often overlooked, partnership opportunity is bartering. Is there another local business offering services you need or could benefit from such as swag for an upcoming community event, or repainting the walls in your office? Consider setting up an old-fashioned barter system where you can take advantage of their services at a reduced rate in exchange for providing an equal value of your services to them.

Empowered with the Tools to Take Marketing into Your Own Hands

Now that you have some new ideas on how to save on your dental practice marketing costs, you are ready to put the tools to the test. Whether you choose to tackle some marketing efforts in-house or need all the help you can get, nichepractice can help!

Before entering into an expensive and long-term arrangement with a marketing agency, see what nichepractice can do for you. Take practice marketing (and keep your money) into your own hands and learn more about how other doctors are using nichepractice to manage their marketing efforts easily and affordably.

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