



BusinessBite

Practice Management Information for Implant Dentists

What Is Social Media?

**by Steve Schadt
Einstein Medical**

In order to truly understand what social media is, it is important to clarify what it most definitely is not. Social media isn't going to radically alter your referral patterns, nor is it going to cause your webpage to skyrocket to the first page of Google.

Indeed, modern social media is based on the age-old business practice of networking. By using easy, scalable publishing technologies to produce online content, people can use the Internet to form lasting personal, political, and business relationships. As a professional trying to market your services, you can use social media to control your online reputation, improve your search engine rankings, appear more technologically savvy, and dramatically expand your network.

Above all else, social media is usually the fastest way to share information with the people who form your network. At the core of every good social network is a list of email addresses, attached to actual people, attached to actual bank accounts. The more you communicate with these people, providing them with compelling, substantive content, the more likely they are to buy services, give referrals, and write reviews.

You should keep a list of email addresses of all of your patients, prospects, and phone leads. Such a list is the foundation of an effective social network. Compared to a direct mail list, this list will be more targeted and, therefore, much more valuable.

What Types of Social Media Are Available?

Your Website

Your website is mission control for your social media campaign. Most modern websites can easily be modified by you and your staff. News about your practice, promotions, seminar dates, and other information of potential interest to the people in your network should appear in a central position on your website before it appears anywhere else. Your website should also serve as the primary avenue for harvesting email addresses. You need to think of your website as the hub of your entire online marketing strategy.

Review Websites

Websites such as www.yelp.com, www.citysearch.com, www.insiderpages.com, and www.healthgrades.com feature consumer reviews of local businesses and medical practices. Good reviews are excellent ways to build your reputation and can link back to

your website. Don't hesitate to send satisfied patients a thank-you email with links to these websites and a polite request for a review.

Social Networking Websites

There are hundreds of websites that help connect people and give them a multitude of ways to exchange information. The most prominent of these websites include www.facebook.com and www.linkedin.com. It is highly important that you stake a claim on your name on both of these sites, even if you only establish a page for yourself and never touch that page again. If you don't control your name on these networks, someone else will. Besides, by providing links from these pages to your primary website, you will improve your search engine visibility.

LinkedIn.com is a professional network that is quite effective in drawing the attention of Google. A LinkedIn.com page with your biographical information, curriculum vitae, and other relevant information can be a vital part of your overall SEO strategy.

Facebook.com, on the other hand, is a more far-reaching social network. You can build a network of friends, business associates, and even "fans" of your practice. You can easily send messages regarding promotions and news about your practice to your fans and further develop your VIP email list. Furthermore, every time someone joins your network, it will be announced to people in his or her network. As a result, you will reach people that otherwise might not have had access to your message.

Content Sharing Websites

Content sharing websites such as www.youtube.com, www.flickr.com, and www.vimeo.com give you another set of tools for delivering your message to others and linking back to your primary website. Video, in particular, has become an unprecedentedly powerful Internet marketing tool; one Einstein client uploaded videos to YouTube that have been watched nearly two-and-a-half *million* times. While creating and uploading photos and videos to the Internet may require a substantial time investment, the dividends can be remarkable.

Why Bother with Social Media?

Ultimately, social media gives you greater control over your marketing. Through a carefully devised social media strategy, you can dramatically increase your database of leads and prospects, improve your search engine position, and manage your reputation. Such a strategy requires time and effort on your part, but it can truly give you an edge over your competitors.

Interested in learning more?

Contact the experts at Einstein Medical.

Call 800.258.9221 or visit us at:

<http://www.einsteinmedical.com>