MARKETING MYTH #1: “My marketing’s most important purpose is to promote my services.” False! The most important purpose of your marketing is to establish that you can be trusted. Most of us don’t do business with people we don’t trust. While your prospective patient is considering whether to have you perform implant surgery on them, she is also trying to determine whether she trusts you.

MARKETING MYTH #2: “My prospects know the services I offer.” Not true. If you believe patients know the services you offer, you will start losing them to dentists who make their offering of specific services crystal clear. Write a detailed list of your services and give a copy to all patients and prospects -- because if prospects don’t see the service they want on your list, they may go to another dentist.

MARKETING MYTH #3: “My referral sources will send me all the new patients I want.” It won’t happen. Certainly you’re grateful to get referrals from time to time. But if you think all the new business you want and need will come from referrals, 99% of the time you’re wrong. You must develop a marketing program that will attract patients directly to you so you don’t rely solely on referrals.

MARKETING MYTH #4: “When patients have dental questions, they will call me.” Not true. People often hesitate to call unless they know their calls are welcome. This is particularly true of patients who may not feel they have established a strong relationship with you. In all of your communications, invite prospects and patients to call you with their questions or problems. Often, their questions lead to work you can perform on their behalf.

MARKETING MYTH #5: “It makes no difference whether my photo appears in my marketing materials.” Not true. Your photograph is a key piece of your marketing puzzle. A warm, friendly, engaging photo with good eye contact can do wonders for your marketing. It helps
establish a friendly, trusting relationship with your prospects and increases your reader’s comfort. Prospects don't care what you look like, but they feel better when they know.

MARKETING MYTH #6: “Interacting with prospective patients is a waste of time.” Wrong. Always look for new ways to get prospects to interact with you. The more prospects talk with you, the more opportunities you have to explain how you can help them. Your interaction can take place over the telephone, in your office, by e-mail -- almost anywhere. The nature of the interaction doesn't matter as long as you and your prospect carry on a meaningful dialogue.

MARKETING MYTH #7: “I have to be careful not to repeat myself when talking with prospects.” Wrong. When people take in new information, they forget most of it. And unless prospects remember what you say, they won't likely become your patient. It's good to repeat yourself when you want to make a key point. Selective redundancy gives you the opportunity to convey your message from two or three different perspectives.

MARKETING MYTH #8: “My prospects understand what I say because they should know basic dental terminology.” Not true. When you assume your prospects have basic knowledge or understand simple terms, you're often wrong. For example, do you use the term caries or cavities? You understand the difference, but don't count on your patient to know or appreciate it. Make sure you're not talking over your prospects' head.

MARKETING MYTH #9: “Marketing methods don't work as well today as they once did.” Not true. If your marketing doesn't work, it's probably due to a poor, inadequate or incomplete marketing message. Don't blame the method that delivers the message when it's really the message that's lacking. You should design your marketing message as carefully as you prepare a treatment plan.

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Trey Ryder specializes in Education-Based Marketing for professional practices. He offers three free articles by e-mail: 17 Fatal Marketing Mistakes Professionals Make, Marketing Secrets of Superstar Professionals and 7 Secrets of Dignified Marketing. To receive these articles, send your name and e-mail address to trey@treyryder.com and ask for his free packet of marketing articles.