MARKETING MYTH #10: "The more complicated my message, the more prospects will understand the need for my services." Wrong. Every day, your prospects suffer from information overload. They screen out complicated messages. Keep your message simple because a simple message is the only message that has any chance of getting through to your target audience.

MARKETING MYTH #11: "How an advertisement looks is not as important as what the ad says." Not true. Graphics in print ads are critical, not only to your image, but also to make sure your ad seizes your prospect's attention. Yes, a powerful message is important. But without strong graphics, your prospect may never see your ad. Then you've wasted your money.

MARKETING MYTH #12: "Prospects and clients don't mind when I'm slow to return phone calls. They understand that I'm busy." In your dreams! Everybody's busy. Delays in returning phone calls are one of the biggest sources of complaints about any professional's services. They are a major hot button with patients and prospects. When you return phone calls promptly, you make a powerful, positive impression. When you don't, the impression you make is far more negative than you might imagine. Prospects cannot easily assess the depth of your knowledge or experience. But one thing they evaluate quickly is whether you return phone calls promptly.

MARKETING MYTH #13: "The articles our marketing firm generates will attract new clients." Maybe not. In most cases, PR programs bring exposure, but exposure does not always bring new patients. A large number of professionals routinely report, "We were happy with the number of articles about our practice, but we didn't get even one new patient!" A good publicity program can be an important part of your marketing program. But whether it generates only exposure or solid marketing results depends on the experience and know-how of the person conducting your program.

MARKETING MYTH #14: "The most effective time to deliver my marketing message is when my prospect is in my office." Wrong! The most effective time to deliver your marketing message is when your prospect first thinks about his or her dental problem and wants to know what solutions are available. You have a significant advantage over other dentists when you have a packet of materials you can provide to your prospect, regardless of his or her location. You can offer your information packet any number of ways, such as through your advertising,
publicity, newsletters or mail. When your prospect thinks about his problem, he sees that you offer material on the subject. Then he calls or e-mails your office and requests your information. You respond by sending your materials, as promised. In many cases, this puts your marketing message into his hands before he calls other dentists.

MARKETING MYTH #15: "My quarterly newsletter will prove to be an effective marketing tool." Not even close! In today's over-advertised society, you're fortunate indeed if you can create an impression in your prospect's mind. If you hope to make your impression stick, you should send your newsletter at least monthly. The more often you mail to prospects or referral sources on your mailing list, the more new patients you will likely attract. The frequency with which you deliver your newsletter is much more important than its size.

MARKETING MYTH #16: "By lowering my fees, I'll gain a strong competitive position." Not true. When you lower your fees, (1) you undermine your credibility because prospects wonder why your services are no longer worth what you once charged, (2) you attract clients who know the price of everything and the value of nothing (people who are loyal to the dollar are never loyal to you!), and (3) you lose money because it is usually impossible to achieve the volume of cases you need to make up for the profits you lose. Instead of lowering your fees, raise them -- because it's easier to justify why you charge so much than to explain why you charge so little.

MARKETING MYTH #17: "If I invest enough dollars in marketing, I will eventually get the results I want." Not necessarily. Your results depend on the marketing method you use. If you don't get favorable results from a small investment, you won't likely get better results from a larger investment. The key element is the strategy you select, not the amount of money you invest.

MARKETING MYTH #18: "To attract new patients, I should promote my services." No! When you promote your services, you take on the role of a salesperson, which undermines your credibility. This is called selling-based marketing. Instead, promote your knowledge using Education-Based Marketing™. This allows you to attract new patients, increase referrals, strengthen client loyalty and build your image as an authority without selling. Education-Based Marketing™ gives prospects what they want, information and advice -- and it removes what they don't want, a sales pitch.

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.