

Finding Time: The Practice of Practice Marketing Management

10 ESSENTIAL THINGS ENDODONTISTS NEED TO DO TO GROW THEIR PRACTICE

An Endodontist's job doesn't end when the last patient leaves. A thriving endodontic practice begins with patient care but is driven by well-defined business and profitability goals that feed an active marketing and referral network. **How do successful endodontists find time to do both?**

The answer is simple. They don't. Successful endodontists have a well-trained staff who carry out the goals of the business plan with marketing efforts that strengthen the brand, referral quality, and patient service standards. It is not easy to find a go-to marketing person who is strategic, flexible, and trustworthy. Great practice marketing begins with good practice planning, which often can be done by a staff member who is properly trained. Below are a few ideas that will guide Endodontists on how to build and grow their marketing efforts today. These topics will be showcased in Endo Marketing Group's EMG Academy online courses being released December 2020. Many times, endodontists find they have a person on staff that would be a perfect fit for this role. A few courses from the EMG Academy and an organized self-starter will deliver a smooth path to implement an effective practice marketing plan.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

.01 Delegate, Designate & Commit: Many endodontists intend to market their practice but they don't know where to start. Endodontists are busy with patient care and the day-to-day demands of running a business. The marketing part of the business tends to fall to the bottom of an endless to-do list. This is unfortunate because the investment of time and money put into marketing provide immediate ROI and ensures the longevity of an (often) family-owned business. Where to begin? Delegate, Designate and Commit.

- **Delegate** the marketing duties to someone in the office. This person should not be the Office Manager. An ideal employee to handle the marketing management process would be a part time assistant that wants to take on additional responsibility in the office (and perhaps increase responsibility and job duties to become a full-time employee).
- **Designate** a specific block of time where your marketing representative will focus solely on marketing your practice. Ensure your marketing function has at least 15-20 dedicated hours of focused attention for implementation, growth, and continuous improvement.
- **Commit** to your business. In the first 12 months this should be reviewed monthly with the Office Manager and your marketing employee who should handle all reporting and follow up accordingly. Committing to this is the only way you will be consistent and successful in marketing your practice.

.02 Measure, Measure, Measure: To get the most out of marketing dollars spent, budget effectively and measure the ROI gained from the expenditure. The best unit of measure to determine the efficiency of marketing efforts is Patient Flow (number of patients per referrer). This must be measured monthly and annually. Rank referring offices annually and review the ranking monthly. Your marketing representative can be trained on effective methods to prioritize and categorize the marketing budget to maximize coverage and return based on patient flow and referral ranking.

.03 Strategic Marketing Planning: A solid understanding of patient flow and referral rankings allows a marketing representative to establish SMART strategic marketing goals that are based on facts not feelings. Who are the priorities? Where should the marketing dollars be spent? Many Endodontists focus only on “A” referrers. This is not always the best path to profitability. Attention to your B and C referrers will have a greater impact on increasing patient flow. B & C referrers should be the priority for attention and spending. This will feed the overall marketing plan with outreach, follow up, and tracking that’s strategic, scheduled, and evaluated for effectiveness. Adjustments are expected; developing targeted office relationship campaigns is an ongoing evolution of trial and error. That’s why one well-trained marketing representative is an important part of an endodontic business plan.

.04 Grow Your Referral Network: Promoting the practice directly to patients is important. But equally important is promoting the practice to your local dental community. This includes dentists that may be current referrers and those not yet on the list. These efforts can be complemented with virtual events using a video conferencing platform for outreach. Or YouTube videos that may be helpful to other dentists. These are extremely efficient (low budget, high impact) ways to provide regular outreach, create an engaged referral network, and generate social media content. GentleWave is a point of differentiation when used in educational and promotional efforts to establish expertise. There are many ways to leverage and utilize this unique position as a specialist in your market, for patients and for referring dentists.

.05 Be Present. And Be E-Present: A friendly voice when a patient calls is standard practice. In 2020 it is vital for dental specialists to extend this friendly voice to the virtual space, to reinforce the online presence and online reputation. Now more than ever, people use online sources to aid in their healthcare decisions. People look for you and look at you. What does

your e-brand say about your practice? What's your e-reputation? Google Reviews, SEO (Search Engine Optimization), Social Media. These are all pieces of the e-marketing puzzle that need to be prioritized and the marketing point person will handle these vehicles. Social Media is a very inexpensive yet extremely effective way to educate the general public and referring offices. Regular posts to your social media will reinforce your brand as an expert in your field. Google Reviews are vital to establish your online reputation and assist in the SEO. With regular marketing effort, these e-vehicles can be working for you, all day every day.

.06 An Active Communication Presence: An active marketing presence goes a long way. It is a huge competitive advantage to have an engaged referral network. Achieving this requires a proactive consistent insight-driven outreach. Use your unique position as a dental specialist to proactively communicate with your referral network. Some ways you can accomplish this are:

- Engage your social media followers with regular, interesting and useful social media posts. Offering your followers relevant and helpful information will strengthen your reputation as a specialist in your community.
- Establish a proactive outreach schedule. The most efficient way to develop an engaged referral network is using creative and regular office outreach events like “Social-Distance Office Lunches” to build a sense of community.

.07 Reinforce the Why of Referrals: Remind them why they refer to you. Referrers don't send their patients to you because you're the best Endodontist. They refer to you because they know, like and trust you. Dentists refer to the relationship, not the clinician. This is probably why we had an immediate and significant increase in patient flow after educating dentists on the benefits of the GentleWave. Our GentleWave events create the fastest and largest ROI compared to all of our other marketing campaigns.

.08 Your People Are Your Brand: General dentists follow a B2C (Business-to-Consumer) marketing strategy; Endodontists follow a B2B (Business-to-Business) marketing strategy. One of the main differences between the two strategies is that B2B strategies typically have a sales force. This shocks Endodontists to hear this. However, realize that an active endodontic practice does employ its own sales force: In-office staff, assistants, office manager and even the Endodontist are all part of the sales force. The truly successful offices have everyone involved in reinforcing the brand and engaging their referring network.

.09 Make It Easy: Print material is vital. Make sure your office has a stash of ready-made referral packets on hand at all times. This simple, yet often overlooked strategy, makes it easy for referring offices to refer to you. Personally take the packets to current and potential referring offices or send via USPS. What's in a packet? Referral cards, business cards, insurance card, GentleWave tri-fold brochure, doctor bio, and small promo items. No need to spend a lot of money. Big and bulky referral packets are more likely to get thrown in the trash.

.10 Tighten Up Referral Leakage: Referral leakage is when a dentist refers to a specific Endodontist but the patient goes to another office. Give referring dentists and their staff the tools to explain why they're referring to you. Create a situation where the referring dentists do such a great job making the referral that there is no other option. How? Use the GentleWave tri-fold brochure with your office's contact information printed on it. This will give the dentist an opportunity and the tools to explain the benefits of the GentleWave root canal. Your office is the best option for patients. Period.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS PLEASE REACH OUT TO:

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