If you are reading this, you’ve either invested or have considered investing in one of the greatest technologies in the dental profession — chairside CAD/CAM dentistry. Any hesitation is probably based on one or more issues, including the return on investment (ROI), the quality of the final result and the question of how your patients will learn about or react to it — and will they see the benefits?

Suffice it to say, unless you tell your patients (and the patients of other practices) which unique services or attributes your office provides, no one else will.

While the CAD/CAM companies each provide some methods and materials through patient marketing kits to communicate to your community your newly added services, it is important that you consider all options to maximize awareness and realize your ROI sooner rather than later. So how do you inform your patients about what this means to them?

One result of implementing chairside CAD/CAM dentistry is one of the greatest customer service benefits you can offer your patients: dentistry on their schedule and under your control. In fact, this technology can elevate the quality of your dentistry, and you shouldn’t hesitate to tell others about it.

Moreover, the easiest and fastest way to get your current and future patient base to know about your new investment is setting up a Facebook or a Pinterest account and taking advantage of these free marketing tools.

Here is a remarkable statistic published online by USA Today’s Technology Live website in October 2010. As of that date, there were 6.8 billion people in the world, 1.96 billion Internet users and 517 million Facebook users.

As Byron Acohido, author of the piece noted: “Put another way: about seven percent of the world’s humans are on Facebook.” Just over a year later, Facebook notes on its statistics page that there are now 800 million active users of the social media network.

How many of those Facebook users need dentistry and how many are accessing dental providers via smartphones? Consider this: Facebook’s statistics page says there are 350 million users who actively interact with Facebook via their smartphones. Therefore, it’s a safe bet you want your new technology, reputation and your entire practice online and mobile.

Digital sign in reception room

If you couple your practice’s social media with patient smartphones and then add patient-engaging digital signage to your reception area, you create an important marketing and education opportunity.
With Dental Clinic’s eAssistant you now have a chance to market your practice via a digital sign/message board within the reception/waiting room in your office. Digital Clinic has created a technology that will allow dentists to put an interactive and informative “digital sign” within their reception area, but at the same time allow the interaction with any social media network the practice is utilizing.

This breakthrough technology allows real-time Facebook feeds to be displayed within the reception room, giving patients the opportunity to communicate with the practice.

This is the first of its kind and if you want to market your same-day restorative services and other digital technologies to the masses, there is no better way than increasing your “likes” on Facebook and spreading the word via the “social media express”.

Leveraging social media in this way will give patients a virtual bulletin board on which to post reviews and pictures, as well as give them a way to learn about procedures and new technology such as the E4D Dentist System™ (D4D Technologies). The best outcome for a practice maximizing social media is to get patients to refer family and friends, while minimizing your investment.

Get your patients to be walking and talking billboards for you. The already amazing news for dentists looking to take advantage of the social media trend is that many patients are already quite familiar and confident with Facebook. In fact, people are on Facebook one out of every seven minutes on the Internet, and Facebook has now passed Google as the most widely used marketing method for local suppliers.

_It’s not just Facebook_

It’s also important to note that Facebook isn’t the only social media platform that can be leveraged for digital signage content. Twitter and the new Pinterest easily fit into the same mold as a convenient way to let patients publicly interact with one another on a digital sign via their smartphones. A dentist has only a small window of time with his or her patients and that time usually is only two times every year. Therefore, trying to engage your patients while they’re waiting for you is only logical.

A digital sign gives you an opportunity to talk about your practice on a personal level and creates a more intimate environment. The overall goal is to relax a patient as he or she waits, with entertainment and education ultimately cutting the perceived wait time but also providing information on the unique aspects of your practice.

As a small business owner, you should consider what digital signage content to present to your patients, while remembering to add engaging, attention-grabbing elements to your digital signage. This may be no further than Digital Clinic’s eAssistant.

With the integration of video clips demonstrating that same-day-dentistry is available (via D4D) and live Facebook feeds, your patients will be amazed at how tech savvy your practice is, and these patients will spread the word for you!

_Jason J. Krause, MBA, is an accomplished social media speaker and is nationally recognized as a social media consultant. In his current role as vice president of Digital Clinic he is building a new company based upon digital patient engagement technology and social media integration. His passion and expertise is in dental outreach, and he has served in more than 30 events in more than 10 states. These events propelled him to cofound with Bill Busch, DMD, MAGD, the dental nonprofit TeamSmile (www.teamsmile.org). Krause and Busch have been working together in creating a new outreach program that makes volunteering easy and fun. This program has been in eight major cities and has worked with the NFL, MLB, PGA, NBA and NHL. You may contact Krause at jason.krause@digitalclinic.com. Please visit www.digitalclinic.com for more information as well._