The importance of the USP

With more and more practices offering a huge variety of treatments, it is vital your practice can offer potential patients something a little bit different. You need to find your practice’s USP, urges Dr Solanki.

A unique selling point (USP) is a marketing concept that defines a product's competitive advantage, and can often sway a potential patient into choosing one practice over another. A simple, attractive USP is one way to make your practice shine through, and its goal is to create an undeniable reason for the patient to choose you.

No two practices are the same. Even if you have identical equipment, techniques, and even identical chairs in the waiting room, there will be elements that differ between you, and the surgery down the road. The key is to track down what makes your practice different and maintain it – this is your USP. It may be new technology that is not available anywhere else, or a fantastic team who are able to offer something to maintain their loyalty. Increase their interest in your services?

When considering a USP for your practice, it is vital not to alienate existing patients, so make sure you ask your current patients what they find positive about the surgery. Ask customers to sign a visitor book and comment about their experience or even gather customer testimonials. The word-of-mouth approach to marketing is incredibly effective and you will get an excellent insight into what patients find to be the best features, and services, of your practice. After all, if you provide something specific that they find attractive, it stands to reason that other patients may be looking for the same service!

That said, you are marketing with a view to encourage interest from new patients, in the areas that you want to be doing more work in, so you will need to research these markets thoroughly as well. Find out what is important to your target audience. It may be your ability to offer tailored treatment plans for nervous patients, for others it may be the use of the most cutting edge technologies, and for some it may be as simple as being able to enjoy a decent cup of coffee and an up-to-date magazine whilst in the waiting room.

Market yourself well

Once you have decided upon your USP, it is important to market it correctly. You know the client base you are aiming for, so some simple research into how they would choose to have their procedure carried out at your surgery for a reason after all. Flash-in-the-pan marketing can work in the short term, but in order to sustain any longevity it is important to focus on a USP that is not going to change regularly.

Your patients may be excited to hear that your receptionist made it through to hoot camp on The X Factor, but this is not a USP that will withstand the test of time. Patients want to be confident that they will find a familiar and welcoming environment on consultation, treatment, aftercare and even their yearly check-ups. Madonna may be able to reinvent herself every year with impunity, but your USP needs to remain stable.

The final key thing to remember is that it is vital to maintain your marketing plan; patients chose to have their procedure carried out at your surgery for a reason after all. The internet when seeking a dentist, so advertising your services on an appropriate website may be the way forward. However, if you are targeting the older generation, publicising your services in the local press may be more profitable.

Promote your USP

Organising events to publicise your USP is a useful tool as well. If you are going to focus on your practice’s USP, it is important to market it correctly. You know the client base you are aiming for, so some simple research into how they would choose to have their procedure carried out at your surgery for a reason after all. Flash-in-the-pan marketing can work in the short term, but in order to sustain any longevity it is important to focus on a USP that is not going to change regularly.

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