There are over 29 million people using Facebook in the UK alone. Even Google has confirmed Facebook’s skyrocketing popularity. Google’s current AdPlanner statistics show Facebook as the UK’s most visited site of the Internet. Is your practice properly positioned to be found where millions of people now spend their time?

Whether your practice is actively marketing on Facebook or you are just getting started, there is advice unique to social marketing that will benefit you. First and foremost, have a plan. Most of us wouldn’t hop into a car or on a train without a destination in mind, however many practices create Facebook Business Pages without forethought. A Facebook marketing plan can help you and your team to be organised, consistent, and most importantly effective. Here are four major plan components to keep in mind.

1. Who – Who will be responsible for managing your Facebook efforts? This person will monitor, interact and post on behalf of your practice. Managers of Facebook Business Pages are called “Administrators”. Pages can have multiple administrators, however be advised that administrators have the ability to delete other administrators and can delete the page entirely as well. Be sure to have trust in those who administrate your page. As practices invest more in Facebook and Facebook pages become more valuable, knowing how to keep these social assets safe will become more crucial.

2. What - What will your practice post about? In other words, what will you say to your followers? Even if your practice focus is on sedation dentistry, cosmetics, dental implants, six-month smiles or periodontal disease, you will need to consider additional content to patients about Facebook. This conversation can accelerate the growth of testimonials and “likes” which results in amplified word of mouth and greatly benefits your practice.

3. Why - Why should people care about your posts? Is there a social, emotional or educational value to your content? People are more likely to engage with content that is meaningful to them. For example, sharing tips on oral health or highlighting the benefits of a specific treatment can connect with your audience on a deeper level.

4. When - When should you post? Consistency is key! Posting too frequently or too infrequently can have negative impacts on engagement. It’s important to find the right balance that resonates with your audience.

Social marketing on Facebook – what is your plan?

Rita Zamora discusses social marketing
your followers with dentistry non-stop: you will benefit more from posting a combination of information, including “social” topics.

The “socialness” of Facebook is where many practices have difficulty. Some dentists immediately push back the concept of non-dental posts by saying they wish to remain private or keep their personal interests to themselves.

However, there are definite ways to be social and personable without losing privacy. One of the largest benefits you can reap in social marketing is making human connections—a result of sharing a bit of your authentic self. For example, consider the following non-dental topics practices could post about:

• What hobbies do the doctor or team members participate in?
• What do you do for fun outside of the office?
• Are there organisations you donate to, support, or volunteer for?
• Do you have a patient appreciation day, open house, or practice anniversary event upcoming?

In addition, brainstorm with your team. The best new ideas are often produced at brainstorming sessions. Spend a few minutes at each staff meeting to discuss creative Facebook posts. Remember to document the ideas to easily reference in the future. Documenting the teams ideas will help ensure you’ll never run out of fresh content to post.

3. **When** – When will your practice participate on Facebook? Will you check-in “whenever you have time” or will you schedule specific days of the week to respond to comments, interact, and post? Like many other aspects of managing a successful practice, consistency is key. Plan to dedicate time certain days of the week to your social marketing. Documenting the ideas to easily reference in the future.

4. **How** – How will you inform your patients about your practice Page? Will you use traditional methods or will you rely on social media to promote your Facebook community? Social media is not the place to push advertising messages or overtly sell. Set intentions to build relationships and create community. Ultimately, the purpose of any Facebook marketing initiative should be to genuinely connect with others.

Schedule a Facebook plan meeting with your team. Create a basic plan as outlined above and determine who will be accountable. This plan will need to keep the effort and help you to successfully achieve your social marketing objectives.

### About the author

Rita Zamora is an international social media marketing consultant and speaker. She and her team actively co-manage dozens of dental practices’ social media programs. Her clients are located across the United States and internationally. She has been published in many professional publications. Rita is also Honorary Vice President to the British Dental Practice Managers Association. Learn more at www.DentalRelationshipMarketing.com or email rita@ritazamora.com.