A new wave of digital engagement

Rita Zamora details how to scan your way to new patients with marketing QR codes

**What is a QR code?**
A QR code is a two-dimensional barcode that can be scanned by a smartphone or QR code reader. It contains data that can be linked to a website, product information, or other types of content. QR codes are used in various industries to provide additional information, interact with customers, and streamline processes.

**How can a dental practice use QR codes?**
1. **Boost your Facebook Business Page activity:** By posting signage around the office with a QR code linking to your Facebook Page, you can quickly and easily “like” your practice and then post a rave review of the practice on your wall.
2. **Place a large QR code sign in your window:** If you have a storefront practice, this sign can be sure to garner attention of passersby.
3. **Put an intriguing headline and special offer:** QR codes in your ads are sure to make your patients’ potential new patients to Google the faster easy to fill out mobile-friendly appointment page. The faster and easier you make it for people to schedule the better.
4. **Are you seeing the appeal yet?** QR codes make marketing more engaging, interesting and incredibly quick. With the continued rise in smartphone use, we are sure to see more of this particular type of marketing.

**Generating QR codes**
When you are ready to generate QR codes for your practice, visit www.qr kode.kaywa.com. Kaywa is a popular non-commercial site that is known to be one of the simplest to use. Also a Google search of “How to generate QR Codes” will provide you with an abundance of additional options.

**QR Codes: what not to do**
Although generating and then scanning your QR codes are relatively simple, as with anything there are mistakes that can be made. Mashable, a top technology news blog recently released an article by Matthias Galizia that lists the five biggest mistakes of any QR code marketing campaign and the list warns:

1. **Don’t forget to test the code:** While you may be proud of your visually stunning QR code, if it doesn’t function properly, the only thing it will result in is the frustration of your patients or potential new patients.
2. **Don’t make the code a multi-step process:** When someone scans a QR code, they expect it to take them to the intended content immediately. Don’t bog your code down by making patients jump through hoops to get to where you want them.
3. **Don’t direct your code to a website:** A mobile device can’t access the QR code. One of the points of incorporating QR codes into your marketing is so your efforts can be one of the simplest to use.
4. **Don’t put QR codes in locations that don’t have a signal:** Putting a code where a smartphone isn’t functioning is like putting a QR code on a deserted island. For example, in a subway or elevator where internet access isn’t available.
5. **Don’t forget the incentive:** The codes themselves can be easily and inexpensively created on a number of QR code builder websites and then tracked to keep track of the effectiveness of any particular QR code campaign. The low cost, ease of use, and analytics make it a useful tool for dental practices.

**Dental practices can use QR codes for everything from marketing to making access to information more convenient for patients**

**Sources:**
www.olswang.com/convergence2011/

**About the author:**
Rita Zamora is an international social media marketing consultant and speaker. She and her team actively use social media to market various businesses. Rita was the first social media manager at the British Dental Practice Managers Association. Learn more at www.DentallRelationshipsMarketing.com or email rita@ritazamora.com.