If Traditional Marketing Is Dead - Is Social Media Next?

Rita Zamora looks at how not to lose your following

Social Media, told delegates that social media is not an option, it’s a requirement. Dr. Timimi has been quoted as saying, “This is not marketing; this is the right thing to do.”

Revisit your mindset

When the leaders in healthcare social media say that social media is not a marketing tool, what does this mean for your practice and your social media strategy? It may mean that we all need to revisit our mindset. It’s time to see social media more like communication tools and communities rather than marketing tools. Social media communities are two-way communication channels, not just one way channels to push out marketing messages. Right?

If you have treated your Facebook and Twitter communities more like marketing and sales tools, the good news is you can change your strategies if needed. Learn to be thoughtful about how often and what you post or tweet. Note I have always recommended, and still do, conservative amounts of light and positive content - show your human side and a bit of personality - yet that should never mean abandoning your core values.

Lastly, a reminder to all of us that we have a choice on how many annoying images, rants, or disturbing or useless material we view on social media. We can choose to follow and view content that should never mean abandoning what we wish to see, read, and fill our minds with.

Like radio, television and email, our behaviors have been held hostage to marketing and advertising. For this reason, it’s easy to understand the bombardment of unwanted messaging. What’s worse it’s messaging that we as consumers choose to receive.

Has social media marketing died?

Years ago author and social media guru Gary Vaynerchuk said, “Once the marketers infiltrate Facebook, they will ruin it.” Many of us held hope that Facebook, unlike other media, would be different. Turns out it’s not. Just like radio, television and email, our beloved Facebook is getting ruined with the bombardment of unwanted messaging.

Is social media marketing dead? Since the beginning of media, consumers have been held hostage to marketing and advertising. Before the invention of the DVR and subscription radio, we were forced to listen to paid adverts in order to enjoy the benefit of viewing or listening to what we actually wanted to hear and see. For this reason, it’s easy to forget we have choices on what we opt to read and see on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

So, what does this mean for your practice? Note that fans that dislike the topics or frequency of your posts can easily un-like or hide you. While the ads in Facebook sidebars - and occasionally in newsfeeds - exist regardless, your followers still have total control over the majority of what they read and see on Facebook. This is why it’s so important for your Facebook community manager to be conscientious about what and how often they post.

An unfortunate trend occurring on Facebook is the alarming number of businesses that are resorting to messaging that completely abandons their branding and core values. An example of this in dentistry is a high end aesthetic practice in one of the most exclusive areas of the world posting juvenile photos and a never-ending amount of nonsense “fun facts”. Now more than ever, it’s crucial to watch your content mix.

Rather we should look to industry leaders like the Mayo Clinic, one of the top hospitals in the US and regarded as pioneers in healthcare social media. The Mayo Clinic has never lost sight of their core values and they continue to succeed on Facebook. With over 125,000 fans, they have avoided the trap of over-posting and never have they resorted to posting things incongruent with their brand and values. In return Mayo Clinic enjoys a lively, high quality social community.

In fact this year at the World Health Care Congress, Dr. Farris Timimi, cardiologist and Medical Director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Advanced Health said, “This is not marketing; this is the right thing to do.”

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Lastly, a reminder to all of us that we have a choice on how many annoying images, rants, or disturbing or useless material we view on Facebook. Likewise we have a choice to decide who we want to follow on Twitter. If all you are seeing in your social media newsfeeds is rubbish and ridiculous content, then it’s time for you to reevaluate who you are following. Remember: what we read, see, listen to, and most importantly, the people we interact with in social media is our choice. These media channels can be extremely beneficial and loaded with rich, valuable content—or they can be rubbish. It is completely our choice what we wish to see, read, and fill our minds with.

Be mindful about what you choose to post and view on Facebook and Twitter. I choose to protect my psyche, enhance my intelligence, and grow relationships with people I respect and enjoy— in real life and on Facebook. You and your practice can either contribute to the beneficial rich content being shared on social networks (and help social media thrive) or you can contribute to the noise at risk of being shut off. Which will you choose? Are you aware of where you both consume and post on social media?

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About the author

Rita Zamora is an international social media marketing consultant and speaker. She and her team 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 of the British Dental Practice Managers Association. Learn more at www.DentalRelationshipMarketing.com or email rita@ritazamora.com.