What is the personal-ity of your Facebook Business Page? Is it friendly, fun, positive, cheerful, inspiring, serious, gross, depressing, or boring? Whether you set an intention for what you want your Page to deliver or not, at some point it will say a lot about you.

If one of your goals is to keep your practice name and face in front of patients and potential new patients, consider what most people want from Facebook. There is no dislike button for a reason. People are socializing, liking things, and sharing meaningful photos with friends, family, and colleagues. So, think twice the next time you want to post a nasty periodontal mouth photo, root canal video, or bare implant abutment. While we in the dental industry may find that fascinating, for the most part the general consumer does not.

Take a look at your Page right now. What sort of photos do people see when they visit? Do they see smiling faces, pictures of real people, and pleasant or interesting things to look at? If your Page is dominated by clinical information and photos of teeth, hopefully you are catering to a clinical audience. The good news is you can easily change your posting strategy and makeover your Page at any time.

If you are interested in making genuine connections with patients and potential new patients in social media, you will need to get comfortable sharing some personality. Why? According to Google research (zeronomontoloftruth.com) people are visiting on average ten traditional and online forms of information to learn about businesses in depth. Not only will potential new patients visit your website, they will also likely want to watch videos about you, read reviews, and see what Facebook has to show about you.

While social media is a newer communication tool, an important old rule of business still applies—people do business with people they like.

Moiz Mohammed Principal BDS(UK) Extensive experience in restorative dentistry with over 10 years of specialised postgraduate training on all cosmetic and reconstructive aspects of dentistry. He continues to lecture on Cosmetic dentistry and has completed the prestigious Dawson academy foundation course. Based in St Petersburg. He is a member of numerous organisations which focus on stable and functional aesthetic outcomes.

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A career path change and discovering my passion

My first experience of the Dawson academy was a BDA lecture in Birmingham, where I first met Ian Buckle and was impressed with both his knowledge and enthusiasm. I had studied previously under well respected speakers, Bill Comcowicz and Roy Higson, so my knowledge of occlusion was already at a respectable level.

The Dawson academy however brought something very new to my career progression. In 2009 I undertook the first set of four modules for the core curriculum and found that importantly all the fragmented pieces of knowledge that I had were able to come together so that I could finally start to implement the concepts of complete dentistry into the practice. The course offers a pragmatic and systematic approach from carrying out a comprehensive examination through to treatment planning and implementation. From 2010 onwards I have successfully completed a significant number of cases, from full mouth rehabilitations to complex implant work.

To change a career path is no easy task. Having worked for many years I struggled to apply the principles that I had learnt. Focusing on the approach of a systematic diagnosis and treatment plan I began to approach my treatment decision making in a different way. I used the three dimensional approaches taught by Dr Buckle and started to visualise and create plans in the diagnostic wax up phase myself rather than expect a technician to guess where the teeth should go and what they should look like. This alone improves clinical and diagnostic skills and coupled with the additional modules of anterior restoration and equilibration helps to make important treatment making decisions in the planning phase rather than start treatment with no concept of how it will conclude—an unfortunate error many of our profession have made and are still making.

At this transitional time, Dr Buckle is there to help. He encourages bringing models and helping with the treatment making decisions, while always insisting that the all the records are as accurate as possible. Poor records mean all further stages are compromised. Unlike many of the restorative gurus out there, Dr Buckle is always approachable.

This course has truly changed my practicing career and I am now doing the kind of dentistry I could only have imagined a few years before. I have since gone on to the advanced set of modules and slowly have gained the confidence to tackle complex and difficult cases.

The Philosophy of the Dawson approach really emanates from Peter Dawson himself, possibly the most important figure in the advancement of complete dentistry, and Ian Buckle, along with John Cranham, Glenn Dupont, Doreith Wilkinson and Andrew Cobb to name a few have brought this philosophy forward. They teach with a passion and desire to spread their knowledge as Peter Dawson would have wished when the academy was first set up.
get to know you via photos or links to the non-profit you support. Don’t get too personal, however. There are limits to what you can say about dentistry. Let others get to know, trust, and like you and your team by stretching a bit outside of your comfort zone. If you find your temptation to sell dentistry overwhelming, consider a Facebook ad. The goal of social media is not to sell, but to build a connection with your audience.

When it comes to making emotional connections with people, there is no greater opportunity than with your Facebook cover photo. One of the biggest visual additions of the 2012 Timeline redesign was that of the cover photo. The cover photo is the landscape at the top of your Facebook Business Page. It is the first and most powerful message you share about your practice. And it’s your best opportunity to immediately emotionally connect with visitors.

Facebook recommends you use your cover photo to tell a story about your practice. Note: let your cover photo tell your story literally and visually. Social media is all about photos. Some practices create graphics and add text details like the doctor’s name, practice name, or some of the same information that is already located in the ‘About’ section. It’s your best opportunity to immediately emotionally connect with visitors.

Most importantly, many practices are unaware of Facebook terms regarding cover photos. Below is an excerpt:

Section B of Facebook Pages Terms: Cover All covers are public. This means that anyone who visits your page will be able to see your cover. Covers can’t be deceptive, misleading, or infringe on anyone else’s copyright. You may not encourage people to upload your cover to their personal profiles.

Copyrights may not include:

i. price or purchase information, such as “$40 off” or “download it on socialmusic.com”;

ii. contact information such as a website address, email, mailing address, or information that should go in your page’s “about” section;

iii. references to Facebook features or actions, such as “like” or “share” or an arrow pointing from the cover photo to any of these features;

iv. calls to action, such as “get it now” or “tell your friends.”

Take advantage of the great opportunity to illustrate your practice story in a photograph that best represents your practice. Your cover photo might be a photo of your entire team, the dentists, your beautiful practice interior, or a montage of several photos. Brainstorm with your team and choose your photo as a group. Know that it is as easy as the click of a button to change out your cover photo.

Remember that photos of teeth, while great to showcase your dentistry, will likely not lead to human connections or stronger relationships. Don’t let opportunities to make connections with prospective new or existing patients slip away. Human connections lead to trust, and trust results in increased word of mouth, greater referrals, higher acceptance and strong loyalty. What does your Facebook Page say about you? Do you like what you see? 

About the author

Rita Zamora is an international social media marketing consultant and speaker. She and her team actively re-engineer the digital strategies 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@dentallama.com.

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