

# Do you really need SOCIAL MEDIA?



Carolyn Dean  
Wellsites Director

There is a lot of talk about social media marketing for business. Some dental practices are jumping on the social media bandwagon while others have an intuitive hunch that there is something to online word-of-mouth marketing using social media, but they're just not sure yet what it is.



The statistics speak for themselves and are staggering. In July 2013, Facebook had 13 million Australian users and YouTube had 11 million. A recent survey in the USA found that 92% of orthodontists used Facebook, followed by 72% of general dentists and 70% of paediatric dentists.

## Why you need to think about Social Media now:

1. Create a credible and real image – show that there are real people behind the dentistry, and you are on top of all the latest techniques and research.
2. Using social media helps boost your website traffic – include links in posts to your website. If people are interested in your services they will click through to discover more about your practice.
3. Social media improves your SEO rankings – using relevant keywords and tags.
4. You can have fun – get creative with your social media accounts, make dentistry more familiar and approachable to patients.
5. Keep up with your competitors - it is the future of marketing. Get on top of social media before your competitors do to attract the potential patients searching online.

Forward-thinking practices are beginning to understand the significance of being visible on social media.

## Social Media Strategies

With social media, dentists can easily share their knowledge and become a real person, not just a name and a logo. Regardless of where your practice is in its social media marketing evolution—just starting out, or already an expert—here are some strategies that will help.

### Strategy #1: Attract New Patients through Visibility

Marketing has changed. Today, marketing is about engaging with

communities and delivering products and services with stories that spread. Increased top-of-mind awareness with existing patients leads to more referrals.

Word-of-mouth advertising has been around forever—but today the widespread use, ease and scalability of social media tools has meant that word of mouth has moved online

Studies show that a very low percentage of your existing patients actually know (or think about) the scope of services that you offer. Publishing content and educating current patients about a wide variety of related topics through your blog and social media directly leads to increased knowledge, awareness, referral potential, and greater case acceptance.

### Strategy #2: Increasing Patient Loyalty through Culture

In the old days, most practices believed that their brand primarily centered on a logo and static website. Not anymore. Successful practice brands are about online connections, likable brand transparency, and dynamic content.

But they also pick up on a very powerful message—that you listen, that you care, that you're open/honest, and that you treat people, not teeth. The perception is that you're leading edge in everything you do—including your dental services.

Promotions, offers, contests, check-ins and deals create interest and viral buzz—people enjoy sharing them! Contests and giveaways can range from extremely simple and inexpensive to more complex and costly. Either way, when compared to traditional marketing (magazine ads, direct mail, billboards, etc.), these types of promotions provide great value and traction.

### Strategy #3: Practice Growth & A Mindset Change

By embracing social media marketing strategies effectively in a dental practice you can attract more clients. By thinking about your clients in this way through social media, a dental practice develops mindset—an attitude about doing business and marketing that's independent of tools.

Social media storytelling reinforces through text and visuals (photos and video), that what you're doing matters. And while we don't mean to oversell this benefit, we've seen these outward manifestations of in-practice cultures not only strengthen patient relationships and increase business, but also positively impact team dynamics as well.

The dental practices that most successfully use social media marketing are the ones committed to business on a deeply personal level. They are the practices that consider revenue increases both in terms of traditional, short-term ROI and as a natural, long-term outgrowth of better serving people.

## Which Social Media Networks should my dental practice to be on?

Each social media network has its various advantages and disadvantages. The main thing is to be present where your target market is. You need to decide where is most appropriate for your practice, and where you can effectively execute your social media marketing strategy.

These are the top social media networks:

### Facebook

Facebook acts as an excellent supplement to your practice's website, encouraging constant interaction with patients. Tell the story of your company, intrigue your viewers and reach the millions online.

### Google+

Google+ is the network that is constantly growing and highly rates with businesses. It allows you to connect more deeply with current patients, while also attracting new ones.

### Twitter

Twitter is a great social media tool for enhancing your PR and building your 'brand'. You can enhance your 'know', 'like' and 'trust' factor through simply tweeting regularly and sharing with your followers. Share the day-to-day happenings or tweet relevant links and news.

### LinkedIn

LinkedIn has the highest business focus out of all social media

networks, and serves as an excellent tool to create exposure among an educated and professional audience.

### Pinterest

Pinterest allows you to share images with a network. 'Pinning' refers to posting a photo to a board, and you can create different boards for various topics or themes.

### Instagram

Instagram can be used to enhance your online marketing efforts.

### Blogging

Businesses that regularly blog get more online visitors than those that don't. A critical tool for online marketing.

## Free Social Media Starter Pack

Want to know more about the using top social media networks? We have put together a social media kit to help you get started.

This contains

- Social Media Guide – tips and tricks for Facebook, Google +, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram and blogging
- Social Media Tracking Spreadsheet

**AADFA Members - Download your free social media starter pack at [www.wellsites.com.au](http://www.wellsites.com.au)**



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