

10 Things Dermatologists Should Not Do with Marketing in 2017

10 Things You Should Not Do With Marketing in 2017

Marketing in 2017 comes with a new set of problems, pitfalls, technologies, innovations, strategies, and opportunities.

It also comes with plenty of chances to mess it all up.

Marketing, your best tool to make a good impression, is far too important to mess up. Watch yourself, and avoid these ghastly marketing mistakes.

1. Failing to identify your target audience.

Identifying your target audience is the first step in any type of marketing endeavor. Tragically, it's also easy to overlook. Don't make this mistake. Study your audience, and much of your marketing will take care of itself. You will notice demographic and behavioral patterns of those that schedule certain treatments over others. You need to know who is paying for what, or more importantly, what type of person is paying for what.

2. Not having a strategy at all.

Yes, it happens. Sadly, many practices have no clear strategy at all, much less for digital marketing. For those that do, before you ever pick a tactic to try, form a strategy to rely on, as you'll soon discover not every tactic is fit for your needs in 2017. Do you want to balance your case load with medical and cosmetic? Do you want to expand to new locations? Have you built new office space but can't fill it with patients as quickly as you'd like? Let these type of questions drive every strategy.

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3. Forgetting about mobile.

Mobilegeddon may have happened back in 2015, but we're still living in the wake of its impact. If you aren't functioning with a mobile-first strategy, you are alienating more than half of your potential audience. Mobile optimization is a key ingredient both for conversions and content, so keep it at the front of your mind when forming your marketing strategy.

4. Relying on out-of-date marketing mediums.

What will be considered out-of-date in 2017? You're traditional marketing tactics and mediums: print, billboards, radio, and television advertisements. These are becoming more expensive and less effective with each day. Why less effective? Because it's difficult to actually know if it's effective. These traditional methods are nearly impossible to analyze and optimize because you can't gather data around who actually sees the ads and who responds. This lack of measurability will make these methods obsolete as business owners become more savvy in their sales and marketing.

5. Not doing any conversion optimization.

There was an era in digital marketing when it was okay *not* to do conversion optimization. That time is far gone. Failure to conduct regular and careful split testing is a recipe for decline. Don't let your marketing teams be afraid of it. Yes, it requires some technical chops and an eye for analytics, but most modern software eliminates the need for in-depth knowledge. Make sure you're at least optimizing your website and social media. These tools can be powerful for converting strangers to patients, but they must be optimized and updated.

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6. Trying every marketing tactic in the book.

Since there are a few hundred thousand tactics available for your choosing, you're marketing team can get bogged down fast. The best method for avoiding tactic overwhelm is to 1) figure out what your audience wants, 2) identify where they are geographically and where they spend their time online, and 3) adopt a strategy to reach them. With this kind of laser focus, many tactics will fall to the wayside.

7. Using every social media platform available.

A close cousin of the "trying every marketing tactic" mistake is "using every social media platform." It's obviously important to have a social media strategy. But when you try to blanket the social media universe with your brand presence, you're going to fall short. Why? Because you have so much marketing resources and not all social media channels make sense for Dermatology businesses. A better approach? Pick the top 2-3 platforms where your audience hangs out, and give these all your attention. For medical practices, Facebook must be one of your 3, as it represents the demographics that make the decisions about their and their family's doctors.

8. Neglecting content marketing.

Content marketing denotes the strategy of using free "value-add" online content to enhance your brand loyalty and attract new patients. It should form the skeleton of any digital marketing strategy. Using content aggressively, strategically, appropriately, and expertly will take your marketing where you want it to go.

When creating quality content, each practice needs to ask themselves the following questions,

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- what would my ideal client find most helpful AND interesting?
- what can we offer that few other dermatologists can offer in terms of information, statistics, treatments in our area, etc?
- how essential is the information to our patients day to day existence?

9. Having no marketing budget.

If you get stingy with your marketing budget, one of two things will happen. First, you invest your budget in cheap marketing agencies and come to expect no results. Second, you have no budget, so you do no marketing, and your competitors take all your patients. Either way, you run the distinct risk of hurting your reputation or having doctors leave your practice to go somewhere else. Instead of short-circuiting your business with no marketing budget, we recommend at least budgeting for Google AdWords campaigns, Facebook Campaigns, and effective website optimization services--and a good agency of course.

10. Not Understanding How HIPPA Compliance Applies to Re-targeting Advertisements.

This is what makes marketing a medical practice dramatically different from other businesses. Not only do your marketing claims need to be truthful and ethical, but you have government regulations to consider as you apply your digital marketing strategy. Do you know the kinds of websites where you can "re-display" an advertisement to a patient? You don't want to miss the benefits of re-targeting, but if you don't know this one it can be a killer.

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Conclusion

Thankfully, each of the mistakes listed above can be overcome. But it would be better not to make them in the first place.

You won't have a flawless year of marketing, but it can be better. Let's see where you'll go.

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