

# Make the Most of Your 2021 Dental Marketing



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## Marketing budgets can vary widely depending on the situation and competition.

Fred Joyal of FredJoyal.com says, *“A lot of doctors used to throw money at advertising, and it seemed to work just fine. Now, you need to know if you’re spending the right amount of money to get the right type of patients for your practice. Some media will work great and some isn’t a good fit for your area.”*

*“Sometimes you have to kiss some frogs before you find your prince,”* says dental business-to-business marketing expert, Jen Wallace of Patient Prism. *“But we know from experience that a billboard where your neighbors jump on an expressway to go to work will work well in a metro area. In rural areas, radio advertising may be your best shot at reaching a large geographic range of patients who are driving distances to see doctors. If you are opening a new suburban dental location, direct mail saturation is a tried-and-true strategy. And pay-per-click advertising is a must do to stand out on Google.”*

Robin Morrison of RLM Healthcare Marketing says, *“When you start up a new practice the marketing checklist can be long, but it boils down to determining your target audience, developing your website, creating social media and review pages, creating a new patient welcome packet, creating an external marketing plan using multiple media channels, creating an internal marketing plan to communicate with your patients and drive referrals, and coming up with a strategy for community involvement. You want to be seen and become known in your local community, so new dental locations benefit from press releases and advertorials published in the community’s news media.”*

## Social Media Marketing

Facebook and Instagram advertising can be very effective at reaching your target audience. You can set a maximum budget for each ad and the number of days you want it to run and then see the results.

*"People are spending more time than ever on Google and social media, so it's a great time to leverage those platforms to get your message across,"* says Grace Rizza with Identity Dental Marketing.

*"Video is very effective, very emotionally engaging,"* says Gerritt Cora with Progressive Dental Marketing. *"With proper multi-stage, automated communications, you can see social media engagement at a fraction of the cost of traditional media channels."*

And don't forget that a reliable revenue source is your current patient base. Dentists who stay in touch with their patients by sending emails and sharing updates on their social media maintain a connection that helps build relationships leading to case acceptance.



## Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Organic Reach

Your digital marketing agency should regularly add new content and monitor the performance of your website. Right now, you may want to add website pages or blog entries showcasing dental practice safety and the importance of oral health dentist for a healthy immune system. *“On the low end, solid SEO costs about \$500 to \$1,000 per month,”* says Ian McNickle with WEO Media.

*“To build your online reputation, add one or two blogs per month with keywords patients search on,”* says Patient Prism Content Manager Deb Bush. *“Add content that is newsworthy and appreciated by patients. Go deeper with information than the typical dental website to answer common dental questions. Link to sources of information and websites about the technology and materials you reference. Warmly invite readers to schedule a consultation... give them a reason to call your practice instead of another one... give them courage to make a change in their lives. Combine empathy, inspiration, and genuine care for others with your imparted technical information and keywords to win over patients. Do not underestimate the power of words to express your mission to help patients in your community lead healthier, happier lives.”*

The number one way that patients find you is through your website presence. If you stop paying for website hosting services, you will no longer come up in search results. *“If you do that, Google will de-index your website and it will eliminate your previous Google SEO ranking performance that you’ve built up over the years,”* says Ian McNickle with WEO Media.

*“Don’t unplug from your SEO,”* advises Fred Joyal. *“SEO is a steady build. If you stop, it will taper off in effectiveness and it will be a slow return. It’s the one artery that you don’t want to clamp off.”*

## Pay-Per-Click (PPC)

For many dental groups, PPC advertising is an essential element of their marketing and a large part of their marketing budget. The most popular PPC platforms are Google Ads and Facebook Ads.

When an online user is searching for a keyword term like “affordable dental implants” on Google, then companies that have bought that search term show up at the top. Dentists pay each time somebody clicks on their ad. The price fluctuates depending on how competitive the keyword is. PPC budgets can run from a few thousand dollars a month to \$20,000 a month, depending on the keyword that you’re bidding on. Pre-COVID, dental implants were among the most expensive keywords. During the COVID shutdown, emergency dentistry became pricey, but experts believe the cost should come back down once general dentistry resumes.

To make the most of your investment in PPC, work with a marketing agency with dental PPC expertise. Almost all PPC platforms use a bidding system. Your advertising agency will choose the amount they’re willing to pay for a click, which will factor into how many placements your ad campaigns get. Then you monitor the results to accountably improve your ad campaigns.

Google Ads, Facebook Ads, and Instagram Ads assign a quality score based on factors like keyword relevance and landing page quality that can affect how much you pay for each click. Ads that perform well are given a higher score and more impressions at a cheaper price than ads with low relevance. *“Creating a landing page that provides deeper, search-engine-optimized information is critical to maximizing your PPC dollars,”* says Deb Bush.





## Broadcast Advertising

*"More people than ever are at home, so there's a built-in captive audience. In many mid-markets, doctors and dental service organizations can get into broadcast TV for less than \$10,000 a month,"* says Gerrit Cora. Radio advertising, like TV advertising, broadcasts over a large geographic range and can be cost effective in rural areas where patients drive long distances to see a doctor. Radio talk shows that discuss oral health and dental treatments can be highly effective in generating engagement. Many dental practices stream professionally made stock videos and custom videos from in their reception room to inform patients about oral health, services of the dental practice, and more. Done right, these can be engaging, convincing, and entertaining without being overly salesy.

*"Internal video marketing can be highly effective,"* says Deb Bush. *"Just like the content on your website, it's ideal to have a well-balanced stream of oral health tips, before and after gallery inspirations, informative lessons on dental procedures, promotions with calls to action, and soft messages that demonstrate you genuinely care about your patients and their concerns. You will want varied content of relevance to patients that does not repeat within 20 minutes. Your loop can have 40 or more minutes of content, so patients are likely to see different parts of the loop on different visits. Internal 'broadcast' marketing is a great way to provide consistent messaging and a consistent patient experience across all dental practice locations within in a dental service organization."*

## Direct Mail

Postcards and other pieces of direct mail can be effective, too. This has been especially effective to jump start the patient base of a new practice location. Costs can vary, but an average price point is \$1,200 for every 1,000 custom pieces printed. The USPS has expert advice to get you started on saturating the neighborhoods surrounding you. An optimally messaged mailer or oversize postcard -- printed in bulk and delivered via bulk mail, has helped many Patient Prism clients attract patients for their new DSO locations.



## Outdoor Advertising

Billboards and signage can catch the eye of commuters. In March, one dentist in Tampa, FL updated the messaging on five billboards from advertising dental implants to advertising emergency dental care. He told Patient Prism CEO Amol Nirgdukar that his April 2020 revenue was 95% of his April 2019 revenue. He is alert for patient demands changing again in the future, but those emergency patients have become loyal patients who are grateful for the personalized, compassionate care they received. And there is a lesson in that, too. Your brand reputation is more than your message. It's in your follow through with exceptional service and a wonderful patient experience.

Switching to emergency dentistry worked quickly in Phase One of the pandemic, but that is historically unique. Consistency is important in billboard advertising to create indelible impressions. If your billboard is working well for you, don't change your graphics and message. Patient Prism tracks the leads coming from your billboard so you will know in six months how effective this type of advertising has been for you. Market penetration with billboards typically requires long adherence in the same advertising direction. It's difficult for people to wait six months to evaluate results, but one of the mistakes businesses make is changing their ads before penetration occurs. Want to advertise a different niche service, for example, focus on implants rather than emergency dentistry? Maintain elements of the branding "look" you have already established and keep that big phone number in the same lower right corner. Then, hang in there with that fresh ad for a long time.

## Periodic Marketing Tune-Up Tips

Most of these tune-up steps are low cost or free but should be implemented regularly.

- Publish social media posts detailing special offers or extended hours.
- Publish social media posts showcasing your team.
- Email your patient base with updates and personalized well wishes.
- Update your website and Google Map Listing.
- Create messaging that will resonate such as, "Is your smile helping or hurting your chance for a new job?"
- Ask your happy patients to tape a quick video testimonial you can share on your website and social media once they sign a short video consent form.
- Ask your happy patients to take a quick photo and post it on their social media sites, with a shout-out to your practice.
- Ask your happy patients to write a Google review about your service.



### **Are you optimized for mobile devices?**

Some dental practices are still behind the times when it comes to optimizing their website for mobile devices. The majority of people are searching for services on their smart phone, iPad, or other mobile device. Or they may see your ad on Facebook and click it, which will take them to a landing page on your website. You need the content that they see to be easy to read on the mobile device. You also want to make sure key information like your phone number is at the top of the page, and that you have click-to-call enabled. These are things your website designer can do for you. The money you spend on PPC ads will not be maximized if the ad does not go to a landing page optimized for mobile devices.

### **And don't forget your phone system.**

The first impression you make on the phone is critical. And your on-hold messaging can ease the pain of waiting. Some of the most successful dental practices have soothing and upbeat on-hold recordings about the mission of the dental practice and the excellence of today's dental procedures. But going on hold is never your goal. It is live pick up and immediate conversation that aims to please that will win over patients.

*"It's important to slow down, spend time with the caller, get centered and acknowledge their concerns. Do everything in your power to win that new patient over and make them feel they called just the right place,"* says Robin Morrison.

And that's where Patient Prism is making monumental differences in the new patient acquisition and conversion. Successful dental teams use Patient Prism to track and analyze new patient calls, identify and schedule high-value patients, receive alerts and expert call coaching to win back missed new patient opportunities, train team members, and receive real-time intelligence to improve their staffing, patient experience, and practice marketing.

Some DSOs are combining Patient Prism with call center services for optimal lead conversion by experts. Here's where you can learn more about this. [\[add link to resources\]](#)

## Start Now.

Patient Prism holds five utility patents issued by the USPTO and is the only call tracking company that leverages artificial intelligence and human call coaching validation to deliver patients directly to your dental practice.

Successful practices use Patient Prism to track and analyze new patient calls, identify and schedule high-value patients, receive alerts and expert call coaching to win back missed new patient opportunities, train team members, and receive real-time intelligence to improve their staffing, patient experience, and practice marketing.



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