



FRED JOYAL



Dental Marketing: Successful Strategies for Right Now

The right messaging, methods, and budget to attract new patients during an economic downturn.

Are you wondering when you should start marketing again, what you should say, and how much you should spend? We talked to four of the top marketing experts in the dental industry to get the answers.



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Dental Marketing: What to do First

When dentistry came to a sudden halt in March, many practice owners made the decision to stop all marketing.

Now is the time to re-start if you haven't already.

What Services Do You Want to Increase?

Everyone wants more new patients. But not every patient brings the same revenue. One of the first steps for successful marketing is to identify the type of patient you want to attract.

Then think about the dental problem they want to solve. Does your ideal patient need to replace a missing tooth? Straighten crooked teeth? Eliminate a toothache? Boost his or her immune system? Get rid of coffee stains and have a beautiful, bright smile? Once you think about it from the patient's point of view, you can create messaging that will resonate.

Create Positive, Human Interest Content

"We want to give the right message," said Gerritt Cora, Vice President of Progressive Dental. "It has to be positive with a lot of human interest. We focus on how they will feel once they have the smile they want."

For example, your advertising might feature grandparents laughing with their grandchildren via Facetime, a business executive in her 40s confidently leading an online business meeting, or a group of friends hosting a virtual happy hour.

“Marketing is about how you want people to feel,” said Grace Rizza, CEO of Identity Dental Marketing. “You want to make sure you have the right tone, that you’re not dark and scary. If you’re scared, then that’s the emotion you’ll transfer to your patients. If you’re excited and confident about taking care of them, then that’s what they’ll remember.”

Include Patient Safety Messaging

This is a difficult time for many people and they're having to make changes in every part of their lives in order to keep themselves and others healthy.



Many people may be hesitant to go to a doctor's office or a dental office because they are nervous about whether it's safe. Fortunately, that's a challenge that dentists can overcome.

"We're going through and updating all of our clients' landing pages and websites to include messaging about meeting and exceeding infection control standards, highlighting what each practice is doing, and communicating that to the community," said Rizza.

"Talk about how you're making it an extraordinary experience from your safety protocols to your technology to your next-level PPE," recommended Cora.

Emphasize that Oral Health Promotes Overall Health

"Add to that safety message that it's never been more important to have a strong immune system," recommended Fred Joyal, a marketing consultant, speaker, and author of "Everything is Marketing: The Ultimate Strategy for Dental Practice Growth" and "Becoming Remarkable: Creating a Dental Practice Everyone Talks About."

"The cornerstone of a strong immune system is your oral health. You do not want your mouth to be your weakest link."

Highlight Convenient Teledentistry Appointments

It's easier than ever to implement teledentistry appointments in your practice, and patients like the convenience it offers.

"What's better than a 10-minute phone call when you've got the time?" said Joyal. Plus, it's cost-effective for the dentist. It gives the dentist a chance to understand the patient's main objective and allocate the right amount of time for an in-office visit. Best of all, it builds a relationship with the patient.

"People buy from you because they like you," said Joyal. "You'll get a lot more people who are willing to take 10 minutes to talk to you and then move forward."

For information about several teledentistry services, review the information in the Additional Resources section at the bottom of this guide.

Start Generating New Patients

"I always talk about generating new patients in three steps," said Ian McNickle, Co-Founder of WEO Media and the author of "Mastering Practice Growth."

“**Step 1** is to generate traffic through your website, SEO, PPC ads, social media posts, online reviews and reputation and direct-to-consumer marketing like dental mailers.

Step 2 is to convert traffic into leads via phone calls, live chats, or online appointment requests.

Step 3 is to convert those into appointments. This is critical to track and analyze so you know exactly how many calls the team answered, how many booked, and what could have been handled better.”

Identify Where Your Ideal Patients Will See Your Message

The first secret to dental marketing is to advertise where your ideal patients will see you.

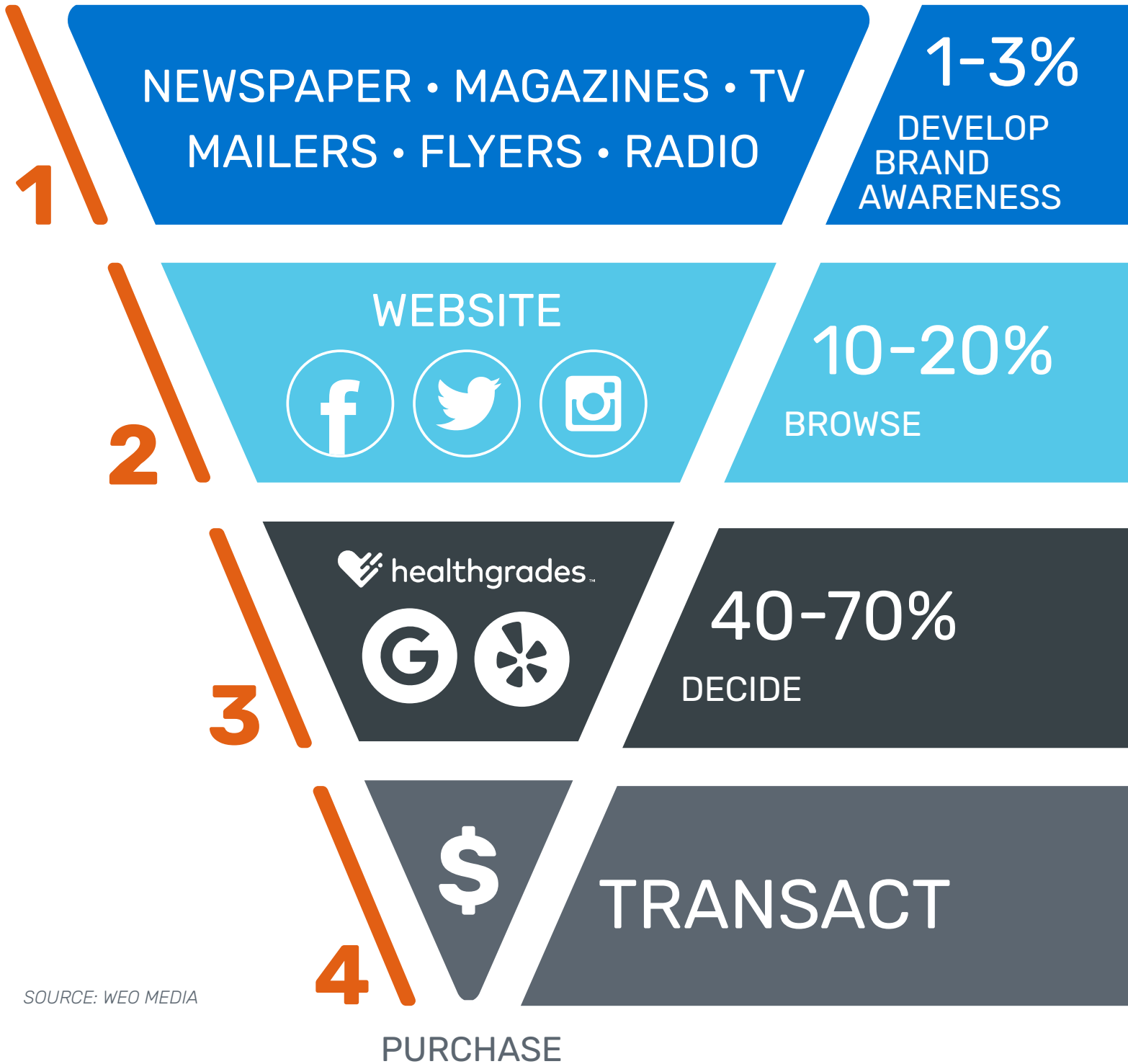
This is a great time to brainstorm with your team about people's habits. For example, if you're a pediatric dentist, then advertising on Pinterest might be a great way to get seen by parents with young children. If you want to attract older, affluent patients who may need dental implants, then newspapers and television news channels might be a great solution.

If you're not sure where your ideal patients are spending their time, then ask your current patients who meet the desired profile.

A simple phone call to say hi to them and to let them know that you've been thinking about them could lead to you asking them, "You're one of our favorite patients and we would love to have more people just like you come into our office. We're making some decisions about where to advertise, and I was wondering if you could help me by telling me what you think would be helpful. For example, do you use Facebook?"

Lead Conversion Funnel

"The last decade has seen massive changes in how dentists reach potential patients," said McNickle. "It's no longer enough to simply have a good-looking website; it's got to be ranked high on Google and be supported by glowing online reviews, engaging videos, and relevant social media."



SOURCE: WEO MEDIA

Set Your Dental Marketing Budget

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

“ 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,” said Fred Joyal.

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,” said Grace Rizza with Identity Dental Marketing.

“Video is very effective, very emotionally engaging,” added 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.”

Pay-Per-Click (PPC): 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.

Television: More people than ever are at home, so there’s a built-in captive audience. “In many mid-markets, doctors can get into broadcast TV for less than \$10,000 a month,” said Cora .

SEO: SEO stands for search engine optimization. Your digital marketing agency should be regularly adding new content and monitoring the performance of your website. Right now, you may want to add a new website page or blog entry showcasing dental practice safety. “On the low end, solid SEO costs about \$500 to \$1,000 per month,” said Ian McNickle with WEO Media.

Direct Mail: Postcards and other pieces of direct mail can be effective, too. Costs can vary, but an average price point is \$1,200 for every 1,000 recipients.



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.

Free Marketing Ideas

There are many different types of marketing. If you have a limited budget right now, start with ideas that don't cost a lot. Facebook, Yelp, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube and email are all easy ways to connect with people.

Here are some ideas:

- Publish social media posts of the dentist announcing your reopening.
- Publish social media posts detailing special offers or extended hours.
- Publish social media posts showcasing your team.
- Reconnect with your referral sources.
- Email your patient base.
- 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 highlighting how you helped them smile, made them feel safe, or worked with them to make their care affordable and share it on your website and social media sites 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.

Measure Marketing Effectiveness

The key to knowing where to invest your marketing budget is to know what's generating the results you want.

You want to be able to track how much you're spending, how many leads you're generating, how many patients you're scheduling, and how much revenue you're collecting.

Here are some of the metrics to measure:

- Number of new patient calls
- Number of new patient calls converted
- Appointment show rate
- Revenue per patient
- Cost per lead

"Look at your own numbers. If your Google analytics show you an increase in traffic and your call tracking shows an increase in calls, but your new patient appointments aren't going up, then you have a conversion problem," said Grace Rizza with Identity Dental Marketing.

Studies show that 50% of potential new patient calls don't end in a booked appointment – and that was before COVID-19.

“*If you're going to spend even one dollar on advertising, you need to be tracking that," said Gerritt Cora of Progressive Dental. "You need to be monitoring the leads that are coming in. Having the right tracking and analytics is key."*

"It's not enough to have the calls coming in. Your team needs to know what to say to get those callers to actually book the appointment," said Fred Joyal of FredJoyal.com. "Patient Prism records the inbound new patient phone calls, identifies the people that end the call without booking an appointment, and sends an alert back to the dental practice to coach the team on what to say to call back – and win back – that missed opportunity. And they do all of that in just 30 minutes."

It's not enough to know that there is a problem. You also need to be able to teach your team how to fix it. That is what will increase your return on investment without having to increase your marketing budget.

Avoid These Dental Marketing Mistakes

Every dental practice and DSO faces the same challenge: how to balance all of the demands on the practice when there has been very little revenue for several weeks.

Even when money is tight, avoid making these dental marketing mistakes.



Not Communicating with Current Patients

While marketing frequently focuses on attracting new patients, the most reliable revenue source is your current patient base.

“Dentists that stayed in touch with their patients by sending emails, sharing updates on their social media channels, and talking with patients who had their dental work disrupted during the past few months will be in better position than the ones who haven’t been in touch,” said Rizza .



Turning off your Website

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,” said Ian McNickle with WEO Media.



Reducing SEO Services

SEO is short for Search Engine Optimization, which is the process of adding new content and optimizing your website so you’ll show up more prominently when somebody is searching for the services you offer.

“Don’t unplug from your SEO,” advised 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.”



Not Mobile-Optimized

Let's face it: The majority of people are searching for services on their 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 are at the top of the page, and that you have click-to-call enabled.



Assuming Patients Can't Afford Treatment

The past few months did not impact everyone the same way. Many people, especially in white-collar jobs, continued to work. A lot of people received stimulus money and that's having a positive impact in some states. Seniors who were on fixed incomes already were not impacted financially. In fact, some people may have more money to spend right now because they've canceled vacations and trips.

"The aging population has been quarantined for weeks and is ready to break out," said Gerritt ora of Progressive Dental. "We know that Proceed Financing is funding a lot of loans. If you can position yourself to perform niche dental – ortho, implants, full-arch cases – then you can dominate the market right now."

Thinking You'll Be Backlogged with Work



Some dentists mistakenly assume they will have so much pent-up demand from current patients of record that they don't need to do any marketing now.

"Marketing is vital because we're marketing for what we want to happen 3 to 6 months out," said Grace Rizza of Identity Dental Marketing. "This is a chance to build your brand recognition and shape your patient base for the future."

Not Having a Clear Vision



"The biggest mistake would be losing your team and not having a clear vision on where you're going and where you want to be," said Rizza. "If you've got the best marketing in the world but your team is unhappy, then your practice won't be able to grow."

Next Steps to Reactivate Your Marketing

Dentists have had to figure out a lot of things on their own during the past few months. Fortunately, there are many resources available to help you create a marketing plan that will achieve your goals.

Reach out to your marketing agency for help or take advantage of information shared by the experts who contributed their knowledge in this guide.

“Marketing is an investment, not an expense when it’s done properly,” explained Rizza. “You need to be able to try things and test things and then rework them. The key is to figure out what works for you and brings the right type of patients for your practice.”

Our Contributors

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Additional Resources



DENTAL MARKETING GUIDE

Dental Office Marketing 101

Advertise where patients spend their time.

[DOWNLOAD EBOOK >>](#)

Dental Marketing: The Ultimate Guide to Grow Your Office or Group Practice:
www.PatientPrism.com/Dental-Marketing



DENTAL PRACTICE GUIDE

Comeback Strategies for Dentists

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DENTAL PRACTICE GUIDE

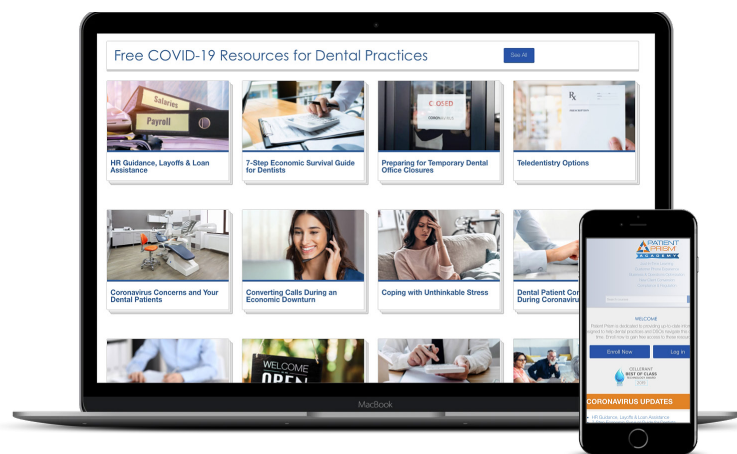
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