



# Joining a Supergroup Has Many Benefits—Marketing May Not Be One of Them

One-size does *not* fit all.

BY SHAUN ZAKEN

The emergence of podiatric supergroups has become a notable trend around the country, and it's easy to understand why. The appeal of consolidating resources and minimizing the daily headaches of running a practice in exchange for more time with patients is undeniable. However, as podiatrists weigh the benefits of signing over many of their practice responsibilities to a supergroup, it's important to consider what they may be giving up from a marketing perspective. Why? Because *one-size does not fit all when it comes to marketing a podiatry practice*. In fact, a more custom, localized approach delivers more value for podiatrists—and most businesses in general.

It's worth acknowledging that not all supergroups are the same, nor are many of them very forthcoming about their marketing programs, at least to a non-member. However, one can question whether it's even possible for the marketing needs of individual podiatrists within a group of 50-200+ locations to all be met

at the same time without a professional agency managing and anticipating them. Hopefully this article will enlighten podiatrists and help them make more informed decisions about their marketing efforts, while empowering supergroup members to ask more questions, request performance data, and hold their marketers accountable for strategic work performed on their behalf.

members of a supergroup, because the focus is often on the whole rather than the individual parts.

And yet practically every podiatrist seems to have a different response: "I want to be known as the Wart King!"... "To age down our average patient"... "More sports medicine"... "Push my technology—Swift and Shockwave!"... "Since our competitor is known for 'X', we want to

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## **Not Every Podiatrist Has the Same Goals**

Every podiatrist wants to fix more feet and ankles and grow their practice, but understanding one's specific goals can be especially valuable. Think, "What is your ideal patient profile, and what types of conditions would you like to treat more of?" Questions like these may be a bit antithetical for

do 'Y.'" These are just a few examples of the unique goals a podiatrist may hope to achieve in the months or years ahead. Alternatively, it's unlikely a podiatrist would ever respond with "I don't care; you decide." Or "I just want to make more money."

Naturally, a marketer's approach to each of these goals can differ dra-

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# MARKETING YOUR PRACTICE

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matically from one practice to the next. In fact, each of these details should be considered when contemplating the layout and design of a practice's website, the focus of their email marketing materials, specific Google Ad campaigns, and the content of social media posts and blogs, to name just a few. A dedicated marketing agency should approach each client as an individual.

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these details, however, it's one less thing you need to worry about, but can still count on.

While personality and individuality can be especially beneficial in marketing, it's worth noting supergroups likely benefit from the opposite: brand awareness and name recognition on a national scale. Which is more valuable is for each podiatrist to decide.

Additionally, doctors should know when a podiatry practice joins a supergroup, they may or may not have the option to retain their individual website. In fact, some supergroups prefer to lead with their brand and transform each location's website to a more templated corporate design. In those instances, instead of representing your unique online persona, you may find your new website listed as "Name of Supergroup—Your City", meaning the brand name takes precedence over your individual location(s).

Simply put, in modern marketing, data is king, so anyone paying for marketing solutions should expect to receive reports that measure performance and return on investment—especially for easily quantifiable ser-

vice, including website performance, Google Ad campaign success, and Email Marketing results. These efforts in particular require ongoing maintenance to prove most effective. Ask yourself if you know how your website is performing, or when you receive a negative review. Are you monitoring whether a lead generation form falls out of sync, or if a new competitor in your market is driving up the price of Google adwords? If you don't personally know the answers to these questions, make sure your marketer does.

In addition to helping marketers be more accountable, consistent reporting can be used to identify trends, refine strategies, and adapt to changes in the market. These reports should be customized for each practice's unique goals and circumstances as well. No matter whom a podiatrist pays for marketing services, their results should be clear and easily accessible.

## The Best of Both Worlds

There's no question, supergroups offer tremendous value to practitioners, keeping them apprised of technological advances, managing accounts receivable, and providing additional scheduling support, to name a few, but when it comes to local practice marketing, the most effective strategies may require more attention to detail than most supergroups provide. By working with a marketing agency, however, to create consistent, individualized messaging, podiatrists—even those within supergroups—can stand out in a crowded field. After all, bigger may be better in many respects, but marketing may not be one of them. **PM**



**Shaun Zaken** is the President and owner of Blue Orchid Marketing, Inc, a leader in podiatry marketing services for over 20 years. Blue Orchid Marketing specializes in providing top marketing solutions that actually work and help your practice grow, including Email & SMS Marketing, Social Media, SEO, Websites, Local Listings, Reputation Management, Print Newsletters and Postcards. Shaun can be reached at [Shaun@BlueOrchidMarketing.com](mailto:Shaun@BlueOrchidMarketing.com) or 203-746-5901. Learn more about B.O.M. at [BlueOrchidMarketing.com](http://BlueOrchidMarketing.com)

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you're spending a portion of your budget on marketing with a supergroup each month, it would behoove you to speak up and request any specifics that may help your location(s) grow. And if you don't know or have the bandwidth to do so yourself, you may want to consider working with a podiatry-focused marketing agency to help you anticipate these needs and put together a specific plan of action.

## Don't Forget What Makes You Unique

The importance of personality—for an individual and their practice—in marketing must not be overlooked, as it helps establish connection and builds brand loyalty in a local market. That may mean the difference between a generic podiatrist and a podiatrist who is also a breast cancer survivor... an Iron Man athlete... a state podiatric medical association president... to name a few. A dedicated podiatry marketing agency should constantly be asking what's new in your practice—whether it's introducing a new associate, a new laser, or even a new pet mascot in the office—for the purpose of sharing these updates with patients and prospects. These details help humanize a prac-

**Location-Specific Marketing Results Should Be More Accessible**

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