



Practice Marketing Thoughts for 2026

Effective marketing isn't an expense;
today, it's a vital investment!

BY JOHN V. GUILIANA, DPM, MS

In today's extremely competitive landscape, it's crucial for podiatry practices to understand how to market their practice for differentiation. High-cost marketing does not always translate into high yield. Similarly, low-cost marketing can produce substantial return on its investment. The key to a successful marketing strategy involves "balance".

Let's Start with Social Media and Your Website

There are several common denominators to a successful marketing strategy. For example, today's consumers want authenticity in social media content, so consider taking your audience "behind the scenes" by using creative (perhaps even humorous) photos and videos of you and your staff that showcase your personalities and culture. Keep it professional, but don't worry about "bloopers" and imperfections! People not only accept them, they actually embrace them.

Be conscious of short attention spans. Whether you're on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube, your videos and written content should take no more than 60 seconds to engage with. The content can offer foot health tips, Q&A's, or even highlight

patient testimonials.

Next, take a critical look at your website. When was the last time you updated it? Is your website mobile-friendly? Today, that's essential! Can visitors easily book appointments online? Does the site offer

you more than by just frustrating the visitor. If the site takes too long to load, Google will penalize you in their rankings. You're aiming for load time of under two seconds!

Focus your website content on what interests your patients most.

**It's far more expensive to recruit new patients
than it is to keep your current ones.**

registration forms that are simple, easy to access, and HIPAA compliant? Does your site have an FAQ section? It's important to consider your website as the gateway to new patient flow.

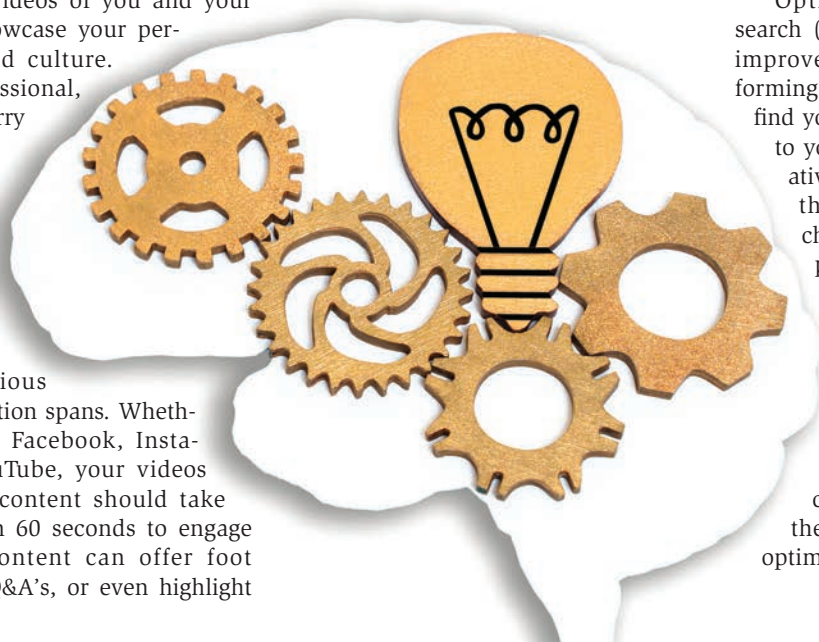
Your site's "load time" can hurt

Common foot problems that you treat, FAQs, explanations of procedures that you perform, etc. are usually all winning content.

SEO and GEO ...The Engines Behind It All

Optimizing your website for search (Search Engine Optimization) improves the odds that those performing related online searches will find your practice and click through to your website. But GEO (Generative Engine Optimization) takes that to the next level! GEO changes the rules because your prospective patients aren't starting their search with a list of links anymore. They are starting it in a conversation with ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, or Google's AI. Your practice's visibility in AI search will define your competitiveness throughout the next decade. These search optimization strategies usually re-

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quire the help of experts in the field. Don't skimp on them!

But What About Other Marketing Strategies?

It's far more expensive to recruit new patients than it is to keep your current ones. By improving your communication with current patients and providing the best experience possible, you can make a lasting impression and a high-powered vocal referral source.

Start by evaluating your patient engagement and re-engagement strategies. Do you use automated patient reminders to reduce no shows? What action steps does your practice take when a patient misses their appointment? Are your patients reminded of key check-in points such as one-year orthotic or diabetic shoe follow-up? Missing these checkpoints compromises care as well as revenue. Consider them an integral part of your marketing plan.

Much like investing in website experts, consider investing in software

You can use email to send out marketing materials like newsletters, upcoming events, or foot health tips.

that automates this process for you. Klara (www.klara.com) and Remind-erly (www.reminderly.com) are just two examples of software that can automate your patient engagement activities and allow patients to communicate with your office seamlessly. Bonsai (www.bonsaihealth.com) is an AI-powered platform built to keep your schedule full, especially at those important checkpoints that patients often miss. This software allows you to customize reminder campaigns built upon your recall protocols—i.e., 70-day at-risk foot care appointment, one-year orthotic check, or any missed appointment, for that matter—and queries your database for patients who missed their appointments and do not have a future appointment. It then automates customized, relevant campaign messages to the patients with a link to schedule an appoint-

ment. The ROI of platforms like this is usually substantial.

Email marketing is another great way to communicate with your patients. You can use email to send out marketing materials like newsletters, upcoming events, or foot health tips. When your patients opt into email newsletters, it gives you

Medical practices with high patient satisfaction attract more patients and therefore, more revenue.

another way to keep communicating with them even if they don't need to visit your office right now. Email marketing systems like Constant Contact and MailChimp also allow you to target your audience so you only send emails to people who can use the information you're promoting.

Marketing Is Not Just External

Your reception room shouldn't be looked at as just a holding area for patients. It can also serve as an inter-

nal marketing center. One of the most effective tools for reception room communication and marketing is digital signage or TVs. Instead of relying on outdated posters or brochures, digital signage provides real-time messages and delivers engaging information to patients. Whether it's foot health tips, new procedures you perform, products you carry, practice updates, or seasonal campaigns, digital signage gets seen and remembered.

Your reception room is also the perfect place to answer common questions before patients even ask. You can use digital signage to explain the basics of insurance, your billing processes, and what to expect during a visit. Digital signage has the added benefit of reducing perceived wait times. Anything that can make that time feel shorter can help improve patient satisfaction.

Lastly... Patient Satisfaction Surveys Are Essentially Marketing Tools!

Medical practices with high patient satisfaction attract more patients and therefore, more revenue. Even in today's high-tech world, word of mouth remains powerful. Personal recommenda-

tions are sometimes more effective at influencing decisions than other forms of marketing. Social media and online reviews have changed the speed of how word of mouth spreads, making it even more important that your patients have a great experience.

Consider deploying the positive responses you get in your patient satisfaction surveys toward your marketing strategy. Get creative and think of ways you can leverage them. Perhaps some of the comments can be used for campaign ideas, website content, or posts on social media.

Remember, the importance of a comprehensive marketing plan isn't just focused on drawing more patients to your practice. It's about selling yourself in a very competitive market through a balanced and multifaceted plan. Test different methods and their ROI. And never look at effective marketing as an expense. Today, it's a vital investment! PM



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