



Maxing Out Your Opportunities

Here are 5 growth levers every podiatry practice should be using now.

BY SHAUN ZAKEN

Most growth advice tells you to spend more. More ads, more mailers, more everything. The problem is many practices haven't fully activated the growth opportunities already sitting inside their business. Before you increase your budget, it's worth asking a simpler question: Are you maximizing what you already have?

What's changed in 2026 isn't just patient behavior. It's speed. Patients are finding providers faster through Google, reviews, and AI-driven search results that often answer their questions before they ever visit a website. At the same time, it has never been easier for practices to consistently create content, communicate with patients, and stay visible without adding meaningful overhead.

The advantage is no longer who has the best ideas. It's who actually executes.

Below are five core growth levers, organized from the easiest to activate to the more operational. Start with one or two, build consistency, and layer from there. Once these fundamentals are in place, additional marketing spend becomes far more effective.

Growth Lever 1: Own Your Digital Front Door

More patients are finding your practice through online search results, your Google Business Profile, and your reviews, often before they ever visit your website. In fact, nearly half of all searches have local intent, and more than 70% of patients use online reviews as a first step when choosing a

provider. This initial impression plays a significant role in whether a patient chooses you as their new podiatrist.

Start by tightening what patients already see. Add 5–10 new photos to your Google Business Profile this month that show your team, your office, and what patients can expect when they visit. Generate at least five new reviews and consider posting one to two updates each month on your Google Business Profile. These could be a quick tip on heel pain, a seasonal foot care reminder, or a short explanation of a condition you treat frequently. These are simple

ty. Content like “Common causes of heel pain in [your town]” or “What to do after a winter ankle injury in [your area]” resonates with patients and strengthens how search engines and AI interpret your relevance.

Growth Lever 2: Reinforce Your Value Inside the Office

One of the most overlooked growth opportunities happens inside your own practice. Patients often only know you for the condition they came in to treat. Believe it or not, if someone visits for a wart, they may

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additions that can often be completed in under an hour and signal that your practice is active, current, and engaged.

You've heard it before: Reviews should not be left to chance. Ask every patient at checkout if they'll submit a review, follow up via email and/or text, and make this part of your staff workflow. Patients are far more likely to trust a practice with a steady flow of recent reviews than one with outdated or inconsistent feedback. Search engines also prioritize listings with consistent, recent activity, which directly impacts your visibility.

Your presence should extend beyond your profile. Adding short blog posts or simple videos that answer common patient questions reinforces what you treat and whom you help. Try to lean into your local communi-

ty. That gap in awareness limits growth.

You can address this with simple, low-effort changes. Add posters in exam rooms that highlight your key services. Use waiting room materials to reinforce broader expertise. Make it clear what you treat every day, whether it's heel pain, sports injuries, or diabetic foot care. This is not about selling; it's about awareness.

If you have a TV in your waiting room, use it. A simple loop of slides or short videos explaining common conditions and advanced treatment options (laser therapy, custom orthotics, etc.) can spark exam room conversations and lead to additional services over time. This can be especially effective if you or your staff

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are less comfortable with upselling your services. It does not need to be sophisticated to be effective. Remember, patients can't ask about services they don't know you offer.

Growth Lever 3: Stay Visible Between Visits

Patients typically don't think about a podiatrist until they need one. Growth comes from staying visible before that moment.

A single, consistent, regular touchpoint can make a meaningful difference. This could be a short eNewsletter, a seasonal email, or a simple educational update. Strong healthcare

haven't been seen in 6-to-18 months or longer, never followed up, or simply drifted out of care.

Start by pulling a report from your EMR of inactive patients, sorted by last visit date. Focus first on the conditions you want to treat more frequently and that generate the most value for your practice. This is often the fastest path to meaningful growth.

A simple approach works. One personalized hardcopy letter paired with a series of emails or texts that highlight a clear reason to return is often enough to generate results.

AI can also help accelerate this process by generating messaging frameworks that can be adapted appropriately across channels.

you which levers are actually working. Over time, those insights should guide your decisions. Lean into what is producing results and refine or discontinue what isn't.

It's All About Execution

This is what separates practices today. You don't need to be the most sophisticated. You just need to be the most consistent.

In speaking with podiatrists across the country, one pattern shows up consistently in 2026. Many are curious and actively seeking ways to grow. They ask thoughtful questions and explore new ideas. But far fewer take the next step and implement meaningful change.

Running a practice is demanding. But when something isn't working, whether it's patient volume, retention, or visibility, it will not improve on its own. It needs to be addressed directly.

Keep your emails simple, relevant, and focused on education rather than promotion.

email campaigns can see open rates approaching or exceeding 50%, making this one of the most efficient marketing tools at your disposal.

The key is consistency. Consider sending one email per month, or start with every other month if that feels more attainable. Keep it simple, relevant, and focused on education rather than promotion. You can also repurpose this content on your website and social media channels to extend its value.

If writing is a barrier, AI can help you get started quickly. A prompt like "Write a short, friendly email explaining when someone should see a podiatrist for heel pain" can generate a strong draft, which you can refine with your voice, insight, and specifics about your practice. Just remember that email communication must remain HIPAA compliant and should not include condition-specific references tied to individual patients.

Visibility creates familiarity. Familiarity drives patient decisions.

Growth Lever 4: Reactivate the Patients You Already Have

Once your visibility and messaging are aligned, the next opportunity is reactivation. Most practices have a meaningful number of patients who

In many cases, even modest response rates can translate into meaningful increases in patient volume and revenue with relatively little effort.

Growth Lever 5: Turn Your EMR Data Into a Growth Strategy

Your EMR should not just tell you whom to contact. It should inform how you position your entire practice.

It already shows you your most common conditions, your most valuable patient types, and where your opportunities lie. The question is whether you are using that information to guide your messaging.

Instead of trying to market all your services and the conditions you treat, consider focusing on two or three conditions you want to be known for. Then align everything around them. Your website content, blog topics, videos, reviews, emails, and in-office materials should consistently reinforce those areas. This is where many practices miss the opportunity. They have the data, but they don't use it to shape their positioning.

Just as important, make it a habit to ask every new patient how they found your practice. Whether it was a Google search, a review, a referral, or a piece of communication you sent, that feedback is critical. It tells

What This Means for Your Practice

If your schedule isn't as full as you'd like it to be, the answer may not be more marketing spend. It could be better execution of what already works. Showing up where patients are already looking. Staying visible between visits. Reinforcing your value inside your own practice. Reconnecting with patients who already know you. And using your data to guide your strategy.

Start with one or two of these levers this month and see how this new rhythm feels. You don't need to do everything at once. You just need to start. Because in today's environment, growth doesn't necessarily come from having the best plan. It comes from taking action, consistently. **PM**



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