



TAKE THE LEAD.

Internet Marketing Strategies for Success

SEVEN DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR 2015

By Gregg Nell



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The new year always brings forth new resolutions and new goals. For individuals, this usually means spending more time in the gym, eating fewer sweets, prioritizing family, etc. For those in the vein industry, this can mean renovating facilities, adding staff, maybe focusing on improved patient care.

Take 2015 a step further and make a few business goals – really try to grow your patient base in a new way. Even small practices in niche sub-specialties, like vein care, can benefit from having a solid digital marketing plan. And if it doesn't seem like an important priority, consider that 66 percent of medical practices are increasing their digital marketing spend.

We've pulled together a list of digital marketing solutions that will ensure you won't have to play catch up in 2016. Choose one, or work your way through the list, for your best year of digital marketing yet.

1. GET ON BOARD WITH GOOGLE PLUS

Last year, Google Plus had an average of 540 million monthly users, making it the second most popular social network behind Facebook. And it's only getting bigger. In a lot of ways, Google Plus is different from other social networks but equally important, especially when it comes to business. Think of Google Plus as your "in" with the boss (aka Google).

Anything you post on Google Plus automatically gets indexed by Google – a huge benefit for businesses and websites that are smaller and maybe don't get "seen" by Google's bots as often. Google Plus also has better group/community options than most social sites. For example, you might join a community about health innovation to connect with likeminded professionals in the industry.

2. CLEAN UP YOUR LOCAL LISTINGS

A local listing is a fancy term for "mentions of your medical practice online" – this could be your name, your practice, phone number, address, hours of operation, etc. Even businesses that don't have a

website can have local listings, and there might be a dozen listings out there for your practice that you don't even know about.

A few places you might find a local listing include Google Maps, Yellow Pages, CitySearch, an insurance company's directory, etc. There are dozens of factors that determine your rank within the search engines, but having multiple local listings definitely helps your cause.

That said, it's equally as important that your various listings exactly match and have the same up-to-date information. 2014 Google research found that half of mobile users are most likely to visit a business after conducting a local search. Which means, if your listings can't be found, or they're not accurate, you're missing out.

3. GIVE PPC A CHANCE

Pay per Click or PPC is one of the more elusive facets of digital marketing for those new to the game. There are two primary types.

Paid Search is a way of advertising within search engines. For example, if John Doe searches for "vein care in the Chicago suburbs" on Yahoo, Paid Search can help your vein practice appear in one of the coveted "ad spots" at the top of the search results.

Similar to Paid Search is **Paid Social**. For example, you tell Facebook what demographic you're trying to reach, they find Facebook users in that the specified demographic, then serve your ads to those users. Both Paid Search and Paid Social allow you to meet potential patients where they already are online.

4. LAUNCH A NEWSLETTER

Having a monthly, or even quarterly, newsletter can be a great way to stay in touch with past patients and grow your patient base. You can include office news (baby announcements, renovations, etc.), patient success stories, new service offerings, special promotions and more. Add two or three links that take readers back to your website.

Most importantly, make it visually appealing. Services such as Mail Chimp and Constant Contact offer simple, templated options. If the idea of pulling together a regular newsletter seems too daunting, pick the brains of our digital marketing staff.

5. EXPLORE CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing was a hot buzzword in 2014, and companies will continue to pump money into this initiative in 2015 as well. Content marketing can vary from posting blogs on your website to working with a local publisher on a “sponsored content” or “advertorial” campaign, and everything in between.

The word “blog” can sometimes turn people off, especially those in the vein industry who are used to a more formal, research-based style of writing. However, blogs can be a powerful way to position yourself, and/or your medical practice as an industry leader (both to your colleagues and patients).

According to data from Demand Metric, content marketing can cost around 60 percent less than traditional marketing and generates about three times as many leads. **The added bonus** – updating your website with quality content on a regular basis has SEO benefits as well.

6. UP YOUR FACEBOOK GAME

You made a Facebook page, you update it once a month, and you call it good. In the eyes of your followers, not so much. This year, commit to your Facebook presence. Post at least twice a week,

respond to comments, play around with paid social. Not sure what to post? Before and after photos are a great option for vein procedures.

Play around with adding “tabs” to your page, maybe for positive patient feedback, testimonials, special deals, etc. Also take time to look at your Facebook analytics, called Insights, to learn more about your followers and better tailor your content to that audience.

7. COMMIT TO INVESTING IN DIGITAL STRATEGY

In other words ... all of the above. It’s easy to think that locally-based, niche practices to rely solely on word-of-mouth to attract new patients. And sure, that has been a tried and true marketing strategy for years. However, with so many players in the game it’s easy for your practice to get lost in the noise.

Whether it’s a paid search campaign, a website update or working with a firm that can manage your social media channels, commit to your digital strategy in 2015. **VTN**

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