

The **7** **Keys**

**to Effective Social
Media Marketing**
for Dental Practices

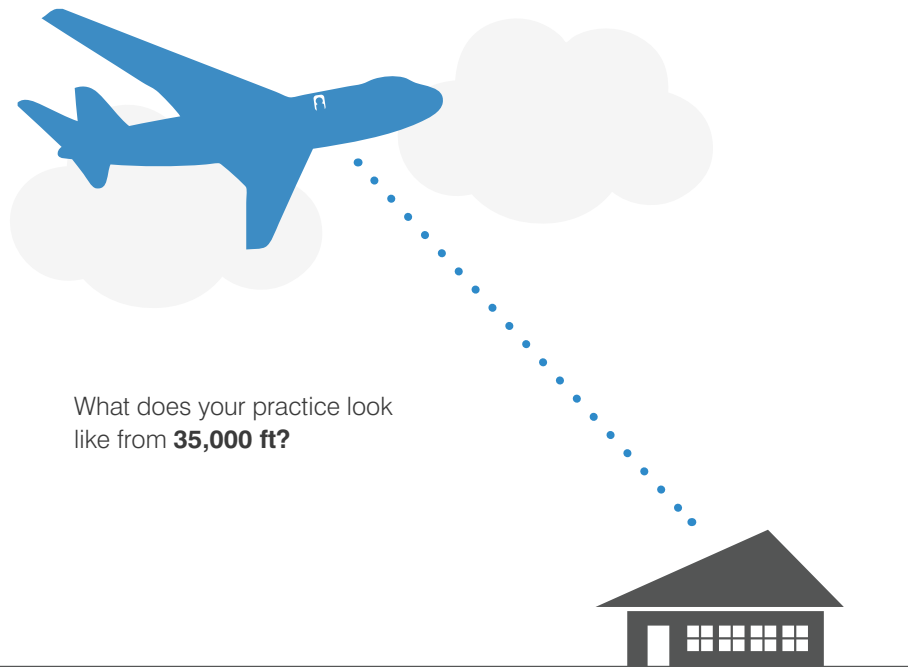
by **Jack Hadley**, founding partner at

MySocialPractice

Introduction

Congratulations! The fact that you're reading this first sentence says that your dental practice is progressive and visionary. You understand the value of storytelling, of reaching out, being accessible, sharing, friendship, discovery, humility and service. And although you may not yet be sure how social media can help market your practice, you trust your instincts. We admire that—especially when it takes such a leap of faith.

Social media marketing in a dental practice takes patience and persistence. The rewards are often not readily apparent. Yet your gut tells you it's the right thing to do. Your sensibilities reinforce the notion that strengthened relationships with patients and prospective patients makes a difference, grows your practice, makes you more profitable, enhances the careers of every team member, and changes the world in small ways.



What does your practice look like from **35,000 ft?**

Have you been in a plane lately? The world looks different from 35,000 feet. Do you ever consider the 35,000 foot view of your dental practice?

Yes, you spend a lot of micro time inside people's mouths. But what are you really selling? What kind of business would you have if you removed dentistry altogether? Sound crazy? Relationship marketing through social media tools helps your practice stop focusing on what you make (dentistry), and focus on what you *make possible*. Consider what you're really selling—comfort, health, appearance, confidence, and trust. You're treating people, not teeth.

What kind of new patients do you want to bring through your door? What kinds of patients do you want to retain? Keepers? Those who love and appreciate what you do? Dental social media marketing allows you to talk WITH these kinds of patients and prospective patients, not AT them. The engagement you create using social media will set you apart from the fray and allow you to create powerful one-to-one connections where you can tell your practice story and create high perceived value for your practice.

We're often asked, "What's the ROI of social media marketing in a dental practice, and can it be measured?" In a word, absolutely. We'll show you how. Watch for the full version release of our book, "The Definitive Step-By-Step Action Plan For Effectively Using Social Media To Grow A Thriving Dental Practice", available soon. In the meantime, get things in place by executing on the seven keys outlined in this booklet.

You can do this. Onward!

1 Platform

Various social media tools will always come and go. Your practice's social media marketing strategy shouldn't be dependent on any one account or network over which you have little control.

Don't get me wrong. Networks and tools like Facebook are important. We spend a lot of time helping our clients be more effective using them. But the more important objective, in the long run, is to build your OWN platform.



Dental social media marketing is anchored by your “social hub”—your blogsite.

In the illustration shown, the tools in the spokes are often referred to as “outposts”. Outposts are places designed for conversations. They're places to make friends. They're places to show interest in others. They're places where you earn patient trust and make connections. They're typically not places where you sell dentistry. They point back to a transaction point—your social hub/blogsite.

When you create the accounts you need and organize them into a platform—then do small things over time—you build a framework... a system... a structure... a mindset and habits that support bigger marketing opportunities. If you wait until you need a social media platform to start creating one, you're too late.

Now is the time. You have a loyal tribe of patient advocates who are typically willing and able to help you and spread your practice story. With dental social media marketing, your practice doesn't have to be the only one holding a bullhorn.

Action Items:

1. Set up your required tools, and make decisions about which optional tools you'd like to try. Every one of them are free to set up:

Required:

- YouTube Channel
- Blogsite (we recommend Wordpress.com)
- Facebook Business Page
- Email Management (we recommend Mailchimp.com)

Optional:

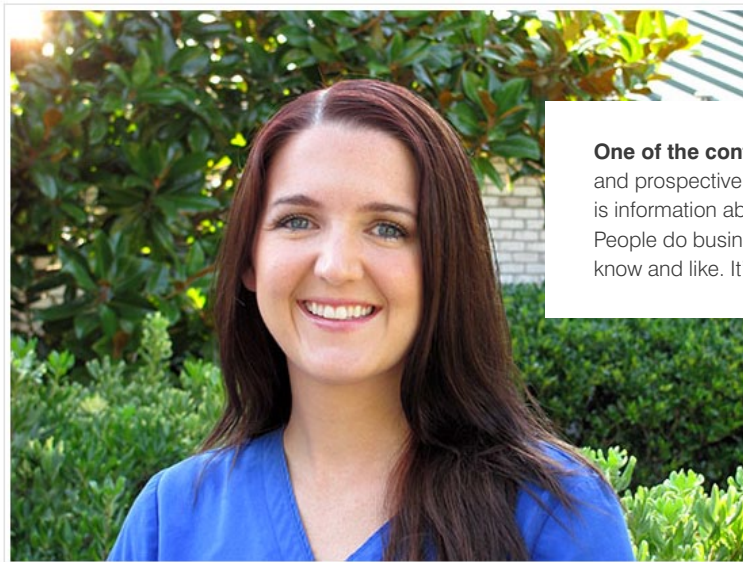
- Google+ (highly recommended)
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

2. Make a solemn commitment to build your platform through one goal... First, help every patient who walks through your door to subscribe to your blog.

2 Content

Don't try to sell dentistry every time you blog, update, or tweet! Of course, it's great to publish some content that supports great dental care. That's one of the reasons you're creating this permission-based, social media marketing strategy—to grow a thriving business. But keep in mind that the topics must be interesting and relevant, first.

Getting To Better Know Our Amazing Hygienist, Maegan Grover



One of the content topics patients and prospective patients like most is information about team members. People do business with people they know and like. It's human nature.

WE RECENTLY REALIZED that we've probably wrongly assumed that ALL you know Maegan as well as we do! That's probably not the case.

So, We Asked Maegan A Few Fun Questions

So, we asked Maegan a few questions to help you get to know her a little better. Those questions are found below—along with her answers. We hope you enjoy them!

Where are you originally from?

"I was originally born in Atlanta, Georgia but was raised in Panama City Beach, Florida."

Your blog posts and Facebook updates are simple storytelling.

Here's a good way to think about content...

Pretend there's a TV network called The Dr. Jones' Dentistry Network. The program director insists on running commercials 24/7. Examples of the commercials are, "25% Off Any Dental Service!", "Come On Down For A Smile Makeover!", "FREE Whitening For Life!", and "Why Dr. Jones Is The Greatest Dentist On Earth!".

Ratings for the network plummet because NOBODY wants to watch self-absorbed programming that only runs commercials trying to sell stuff. The program director is fired.

The new program director is passionate about dentistry and recognizes there are many related topics that are interesting, informative, useful, fun, and relevant. Many of them point indirectly to dental services too. And of course, she knows that she must include a little bit of smart advertising. Ratings soar.

As you begin brainstorming topics you'd like to post and talk about, for every dental service-related topic, see if you can come up with three non dental topics that your patients and prospective patients will enjoy and find useful.

Action Item:

Create a 3-month content plan. First, consider the dental-specific topics you're excited about. Write short paragraphs explaining why! Don't get bogged down in the technical details—just tell your patients what you think. Honesty and transparency go a long way.

For your non-dental topics, pick things that you or team members are passionate about. They don't need to directly—or indirectly—tie back to dentistry. Did you just finish a great book? Are you training for your first triathlon? These posts don't need to be long. Be simple. Be direct. Be you.

3 Participation

Social media isn't something you "have". It's something you "do".

Would you walk into a cocktail party, climb up on the bar with a megaphone and start trying to sell your stuff? Of course not—unless you're just a clueless jerk. Unfortunately, when it comes to social media, that's exactly what some practices do.

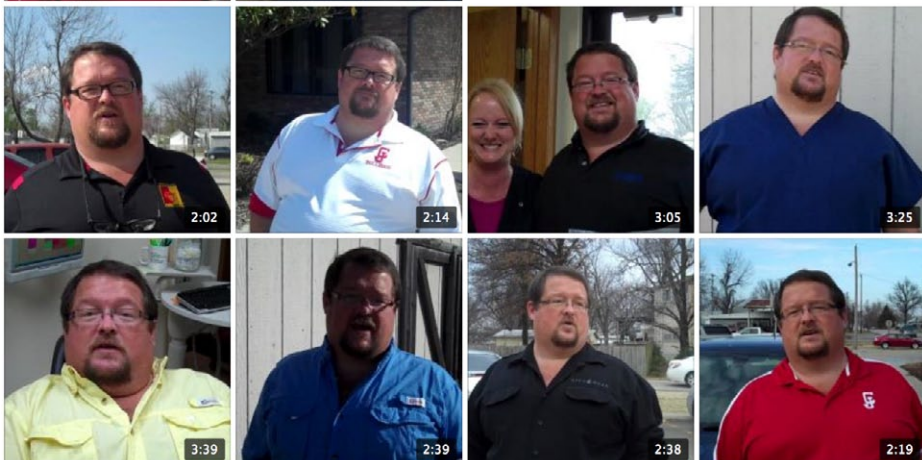
Instead, you'd probably look around the party for interesting people that you'd like to get to know. Then, after briefly introducing yourself, you'd ask about the other person. You'd show interest in what they do and who they are. You'd find a "connective point". That's how meaningful relationships begin face to face—and, it's exactly the same with social media.

Dentistry is a relationship-based business. That's one of the big reasons why social media marketing in your practice can be so effective. You've heard the adage, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

There's no better example of this than our client and friend, Dr. Robert D. Herron Jr. in Columbus, KS. Dr. Herron creates a personal video directed to his patients nearly every business day, effectively integrating personal content with dental-related content to connect with and strengthen his relationships with patients. Dr. Herron knows the meaning of the word "participation" when it comes to social media marketing.



Dr. Herron creates a personal video directed to his patients nearly every business day!



Action Item:

Start effectively using Facebook. Set a goal to invite five patients (or three, or even one) each day to Like your Facebook page while in your practice. Role play with team members on the best ways to approach and ask patients. If you need more ideas, visit our website, www.MySocialPractice.com, where there are also a number of downloadable eBooks with Facebook ideas.

4 In-Practice Support

Involving your team helps ensure your success.

If you're like most practices one of your big advantages in gaining early traction with your social media efforts is obvious—so obvious in fact that you may not even be thinking about it. Your team!

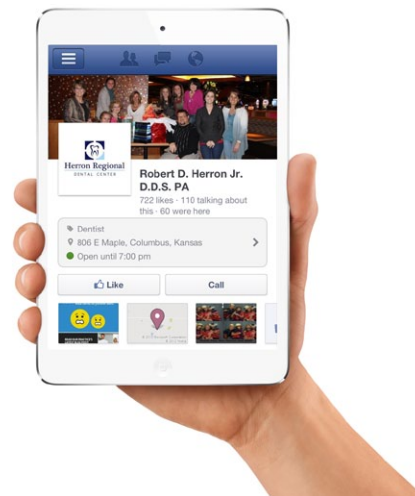
Team members have close relationships with your patients. Team members live and work in your community. Team members love your practice. Team members understand your practice culture. Team members have friends, family members, gym buddies, their church congregation, online social networks, and neighbors who are all prospective new patients. Team members are one of the keys to getting the early word out about your social media platform.

Early on, there aren't enough people inside your practice's social networks to create much of any viral effect. Shares, blog comments, Facebook likes, retweets, etc. can be fairly few and far between. During the earliest weeks and months, you must build your platform from the outside in. And the best place to start is with your team.

It's also important to have some simple, printed handout materials, posters, buttons, etc. to spark conversations and create interest inside your practice. It's also important to have easy, accessible ways (such as an in-practice iPad) for people to subscribe, Like, share, and comment.



Team members love “ice breakers” including buttons, handouts, posters, etc. A roving iPad helps patients easily subscribe to your blog and Like your Facebook page.



Action Items:

- 1. Role play with team members** to practice the most comfortable ways to encourage patients to subscribe to your blog and Like you on Facebook.
- 2. Make it fun, and consider goals and incentives for your team.** Take everyone to dinner when you reach certain goals for Facebook Likes. Be creative!
- 3. Have a talented team member or designer create and print handouts.** Dental practices are unique because you see people face to face! Take advantage of those captive audience opportunities!

5 Passion



Pinebrook Dental Group
Well, in case you haven't heard – and if you call our office & we are a little short-handed this week – this just might be a small part of the reason why!...

I got a little "surprise" trip to the heart cath lab at the U of U Friday night... What we all thought was just a "bout" with my gall bladder turned out to be a heart attack... 95% blockage of my right coronary artery! Who'd have thunk?! So ...See More

Like · Comment · Share · September 11, 2012

10 people like this.

View all 41 comments

Steven Buchanan Stay on course, Mike! Sincerely hope your recovery continues to progress smoothly!
September 11, 2012 at 4:57pm · Like · 1

Elizabeth Marin Thompson Thinking of you & yr family. Get well soon
September 11, 2012 at 7:17pm · Like · 1

Marci Brown Morse We are praying for you as well!!! Life is precious make sure you take time to recover. Debbie says get better.
September 11, 2012 at 8:45pm · Like · 1

Margo Fenton Holy Mackerel, so glad you didn't ignore it!!
September 11, 2012 at 9:33pm · Like · 1

Margaret Olson So sorry Dr Mike. Get well soon!
September 12, 2012 at 7:44am via mobile · Like · 2

Elaine F S Antunes Godspeed !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
September 12, 2012 at 11:59am · Like · 1

Album: Timeline Photos
Shared with: Custom

[View Larger](#)
[Download](#)
[Report/Remove Tag](#)

Our client and friend, Dr. Michael Knight, shared his visit to the ER, resulting in an outpouring of love and support from his patients.

Social media helps you share your practice culture and your passion for what you do.

Information alone rarely motivates anybody to do much of anything. That's because there's no emotion or passion tied to it. It's not human. In your dental social media marketing efforts, are you connecting with your patients and prospective patients on an emotional, personal level?

Don't get us wrong... When we say "personal level" we're not saying you need to tell everyone in the world that you had a Reuben sandwich for lunch and it gave you heartburn. What we are saying is that people like doing business with people they know and like on a personal level—and being warm, transparent, humble, and imperfect are traits that human beings like in other human beings.

Would you be comfortable sharing a visit you had to the hospital ER? Our client and friend, Dr. Michael Knight, was comfortable sharing and it resulted in an outpouring of love and support from his patient base.

Leverage your team members' passions too! Every person who works in your practice has quirks, and quirks are great things when you lay them out there in thoughtful, interesting ways. And by the way, just because we've used the word "quirk" doesn't necessarily mean that everything has to be "quirky". Everyday things can work well too! Team members' simple, everyday interests, hobbies, challenges, and victories are all storytelling opportunities.

Action Item:

Meet with your team monthly to identify three personal, emotional topics for blog posts. Look at the things you and your team are passionate about. Marathons? Cooking? Some ideas could be more utilitarian like a review for a "like-minded" local business (cross promotion opportunities?), or your version of a community calendar. Let your patients and prospective patients know that you consider them friends, and share common experiences that are interesting or useful.

6 Giving

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” - Winston Churchill

Is your practice a giving practice? Dental social media marketing isn't just about marketing. Your practice's social media platform provides a systematic, purposeful, easy way to not only better connect with your patients, but to also share and enlist others in giving.

Do a few things every year for your community. Use your platform to spread the word before, during, and afterwards. Could your team help build a home for somebody in your community through Habitat For Humanity? Could you whiten patients' teeth and donate the proceeds to a local children's charity through Smiles For Life? Could you donate a smile makeover to someone deserving? When was the last time you simply had a patient appreciation party? Be imaginative. It always comes back.

One of our awesome clients, Dr. Banas in Ocean Springs, Mississippi recently did something amazing for someone. As you look at the story to the left, it's important to remember that Dr. Banas and team did NOT do this for publicity. They did it out of the goodness of their hearts. In fact, they were shocked at the publicity it created. All they did was post a photo to their Facebook wall that featured Austin as the hero.



Ocean Springs Dental
For the bully who tried to mess up Austin with a fist, we are laughing at you....Austin is the hero! — with Lorrie Caillouette, Lori Ann Dees, Lea Weizer and Edward Banas at Ocean Springs Dental.
Like · Comment · Share · October 24, 2012

Teryn Hadley Jensen, Jacqueline Morris and 5,834 others like this.
128 shares

View previous comments 56 of 177

Jinny Hancock Freeman I am so proud that there are wonderful people like this dentist who step up to offer such a wonderful service to a stranger!
October 24, 2012 at 8:13pm via mobile · Like · 3

Evelyn Davis Blackwell Great picture of a happy boy with a happy smile!!
October 24, 2012 at 8:14pm · Like

Mary B Byrd Such a beautiful smile Congratulations Ocean Springs Dental. You are awesome.
October 24, 2012 at 8:15pm · Like · 6

Bonnie Rose He sure is .God Bless you little buddy!
October 24, 2012 at 8:16pm · Like

Amy McCardle Spradley Keeping you in thoughts & prayers, Austin! To the dentist – Awesome! May God bless you! 😊
October 24, 2012 at 8:18pm · Like · 3

Ben Havard God bless you both
October 24, 2012 at 8:25pm · Like

Mitchell Hughes Awesome Doc, way 2 step up and help young lad out. I just dropped 15 grand replacing a few a drunk took out when I took his keys away
October 24, 2012 at 8:27pm via mobile · Like · 1

Carol Paden as a florida dental hygienist...glad to see a wonderful smile with wonderful dentistry...and a great dentist who takes the time to make a kid happy in office after a trauma....rare thanks doc...bright spot in our profession... you make us all look good with your kindness...
October 24, 2012 at 8:31pm · Like · 6

Album: Timeline Photos
Shared with: Public

View Larger
Download
Report/Remove Tag

Austin was attacked by a bully. Dr. Banas and team heard about it and helped the family at no cost. After describing Austin as a “hero” on their Facebook page, there were thousands of Likes, comments, and shares supporting Austin.

The heartfelt service was performed with no expectation of return. But the story spread tremendously because their social media platform was in place.

Action Item:

Watch for opportunities to serve others in your community. Everyone has teeth—and there are lots of people you can help who are struggling. Any time you're blessed with an opportunity to serve others you come closer to becoming a social business.

Brainstorm charitable events that your team believes will appeal to your patients. Use your dental social media marketing platform to create buzz before, during, and afterwards. This includes blog posts, promotions, contests, Facebook posts, tweets, videos, in-practice printed materials, check-ins, etc.

7 Consistency/Patience

Celebrate EVERY social media marketing victory—no matter how small.

You may be surprised to learn that a recent study of dental practice pages on Facebook showed 82% have less than 100 Likes, and only 2% have more than 500 Likes. Measuring success seems so foreign with new marketing because we tend to only hear about the big viral successes in social media. Stories about YouTube videos that “go viral”, garner millions of views and propel a personality or business into stardom overnight. That’s not real life—nor is it a good strategy for your social media marketing. It’s like planning for retirement based on the hope that you’ll win the lottery.

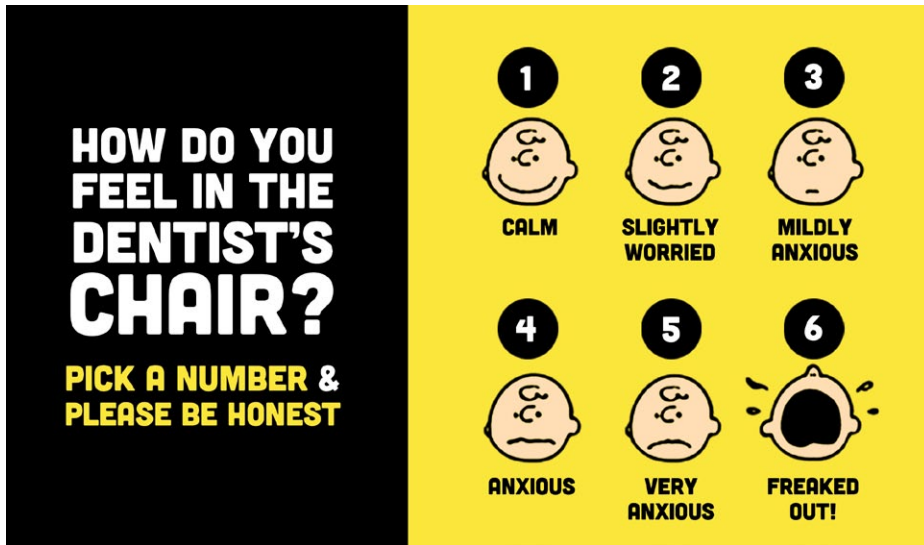
The great news is that you don’t need your efforts to go viral to realize remarkable benefits. One Like on Facebook is a victory. One comment on your blog is cause for celebration. Every retweet matters.

Here’s why... Don’t forget that prior to starting down this road, you had nothing. No connections. No conversations. One is a 100% increase. And remember, you’ve not only connected with one valued person, but you’ve also started earning permission to connect with his or her trusted, highly scalable network(s).

Practices that are consistent and patient see success.

Action Items:

- 1. Never purchase fans, followers, or Likes.** It’s of no value and compromises your strategy. Just embrace your tribe—one patient at a time.
- 2. Make sure your settings are set such that you’re pinged when people comment, post or message you.** It’s REALLY important that you respond, thank and acknowledge people EVERY time they reach out. The assumption will be that if you’re consistent and reliable here, you care about consistency and reliability in everything you do.



Ashley Ulmer DDS
Be honest... how do you really feel?
Like · Comment · Share · December 11, 2012

Aubrie Zumini For a cleaning, I'd say "1." For a filling, I'd say "4" or "5."
December 11, 2012 at 11:23am via mobile · Like

Hannah Fall Probably 1 for a regular cleaning & 3-4 for a filling 😊
December 11, 2012 at 2:28pm · Like

Dawn Mixey I always feel calm when it's YOUR chair!!!
December 11, 2012 at 9:20pm · Like

Ashley Ulmer DDS Thanks for your comments Aubrie, Amy, Hannah, Alex, and Dawn! If you ever feel anything beyond #1 in our dental chair, make sure to ask us about NuCalm. It's an all-natural way to calm you down. It's pretty amazing. Read about it on our blog: <http://www.ashleyulmerddsblog.com/nucalm/>. And Alex, we'll make sure we don't give you the "angry face"! haha!

Experience Anxiety-Free Dental Care
www.ashleyulmerddsblog.com
NuCalm changes the way anxious patients feel about their appointments. It's real...See More

December 12, 2012 at 11:47am · Like

Deborah Hudgins Always a "1". You guys are the best.
December 12, 2012 at 7:35pm · Like

Claire Sparks I've never heard of Nucalm. I'll ask you about it at my appointment next Thursday.
December 13, 2012 at 10:54am · Like

Ashley Ulmer DDS Sounds good, Claire. I'll put a reminder on our schedule to visit with you about it.
December 13, 2012 at 11:05am · Like

Album: Ashley Ulmer DDS's Photos in Timeline Photos
Shared with: Public

[View Larger](#)
[Download](#)
[Report/Remove Tag](#)

Social media marketing takes place one conversation at a time. It's so effective because it's so focused.

Conclusion

Social media marketing in your dental practice is based on one-to-one relationships. Unlike traditional marketing, success is typically realized through connections with small numbers of patients and prospective patients, combined with great strategy, interesting content, and passion. Focus first on these meaningful connections and build from there.



A Patient Of The Week or Patient Of The Month Program is an easy way to connect with patients. It also prompts them to share the news with their own trusted, highly scalable social networks.



Dr. Del DDS

Meet Karen, Our "December Patient of the Month"! We chose Karen in recognition of Karen's dedication to our practice and traveling so far from home to see us! Karen holds the distance record all the way from South Carolina! Congratulations to Karen! — at Dr. Del DDS.

Like · Comment · Share · December 31, 2012

4 people like this.

Album: [Timeline Photos](#)

Shared with: Public

[View Fullscreen](#)

[Download](#)

[Report/Remove Tag](#)

Right NOW is your moment of truth. We have a challenge for you...

Are you ready to use dental social media marketing to make a difference in your practice?

We're going to make getting started super easy. No matter how busy you are right this minute—unless your practice is burning down—I want you to execute your first social media marketing tactic—creating a Patient Of The Month or Patient Of The Week program! Yep! Right now. Grab a pencil and piece of paper and answer the following three questions:

1. What little perk are you going to give your Patient Of The Month? If you're the financial decision maker I want you to decide in the next 60 seconds. It can be as simple as a gift card to a restaurant and two movie tickets. If you're not the financial decision maker, I want you to come up with three suggestions in the next three minutes. Write them down, then ask the financial decision maker to make a decision.

2. What criteria are you going to use to pick the winner? Don't make this complicated! Did you see how simple and general the things were in this booklet? Just execute! In fact, if you don't want to come up with criteria first, just pick someone you really like, then retrofit the criteria to the winner. Look at today's or tomorrow's schedule of patients who are coming in and pick one!

3. How are you going to spread the word? Use your social media platform you've created (or are in the process of creating). Start with a tiny, short blog post that includes a photo or video of your winner, and then include a few wall posts on your Facebook page!

You did it! You shipped something! Congrats! Now, keep going! Watch for the full version release of our book, "The Definitive Step-By-Step Action Plan For Effectively Using Social Media To Grow A Thriving Dental Practice", available soon.



Jack Hadley is a founding partner at My Social Practice. Jack has also developed the curriculum for, and teaches, a social media marketing course to MBA students at Brigham Young University's Marriott School of Management. An award-winning copywriter, and former ad agency Creative Director, Jack has a rich background in all aspects of the creative process and is frequently asked to address business and education groups about creativity, corporate messaging, and social media marketing.



My Social Practice helps dentists create more prosperous practices through effective social media marketing.

- An Easy, Integrated and Comprehensive Solution
- Remarkable Support That Ensures Your Success
- Smart Content That Strengthens Patient Relationships

MySocialPractice

(877) 316-7516

info@mysocialpractice.com

www.mysocialpractice.com

