

Top 5 Social Media Basics for Podiatrists

Is social media worth your time and effort if you're trying to market your podiatry practice? Well, let's consider some numbers. A recent study done by Experian Marketing Services shows that, in the U.S., internet users spend 16 minutes of every online hour using social media sites. This represents 27 percent of the total time spent on personal computers. Social networking actually beat out shopping, email use, and entertainment.

But what does this mean for you as a doctor?

When done right, social media can be an integral part of your practice's online marketing efforts. Once you've got the basics down, you can really finesse your efforts on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest and other social outlets—so what are these basics?

Social Media Fundamentals

Are you confused about the fundamentals of social media for podiatrists—or could you be doing more? It's time to make a change. To get going, our social media team suggests that you:

1. **Do some groundwork.** Take a look at what your competition is doing. Are they active on Facebook? Or do they tend to Tweet more? If they seem to be getting good results—lots of comments, likes, and shares—on a particular social media site, start there. You can learn a lot from what others in your space are doing successfully, and build from there.
2. **Set yourself up for success.** Begin by ensuring that every bit of information you enter into your profile is correct, especially your name, address, and phone number. Make sure your description is interesting and well-written, and then pick a professional, high-quality profile picture. Nothing will scare potential patients away more than a mistake-ridden profile with a grainy picture of you.
3. **Build a following.** This takes time. And, like any white hat SEO strategy, it's going to take some work. Before you post anything, be sure that there are no mistakes in your posts and that it's something you would actually be comfortable saying to a patient. Links should be helpful to those seeking your services, and everything you post should be relevant to your area of practice, mistake-free, and shareable.
4. **Set Goals.** Now that you've picked the best site or sites for your medical practice, it's time to set goals. These goals can be increasing your referral traffic by a specific percentage, or getting new patients through your social media marketing efforts.

5. **Monitor Your Accounts.** To see if you are achieving your goals, check on your accounts often. Use analytics to see if people are visiting your site via social media accounts, and review your accounts to see if you are getting good feedback, such as likes and comments on your posts.

The last piece of advice is the most important with social media—you need to actually be SOCIAL! Don't just use automated tools to push content out to your social outlets or just post links back to your website. Get out there and interact with other users and other businesses! Respond to your posts. Get your staff and their friends and family engaged in sharing and commenting on your content. If you're not willing to take the time to "be social" and interact, then you're just wasting your time!

Need somebody to take the burden of social media off your plate? Talk to the Virtual Marketing Directors at Top Practices. They are ready and waiting to help you out!