



Startup Dental Practice

Marketing Checklist

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET YOUR
DENTAL PRACTICE MARKETING OFF THE GROUND



PRIME
DENTAL MARKETING
(512) 872-3300

Startup Dental Practice: Marketing Checklist



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Section 1: Brand Identity



✓ Creating a brand identity for your dental practice is absolutely crucial if you want your practice to grow and prosper in the future.

A brand identity allows patients to readily identify your practice.

It involves creating and presenting your practice in a professional, consistent manner that permeates everything involved in your practice – from marketing collateral to your online presence to your office furnishings and more.

Brand identity isn't just for large corporations – it's the vehicle that allows your practice, no matter how large or small, to set itself apart from all the rest.

Practice Name

Coming up with the right practice name is a vital part of establishing your practice.

Remember that your practice name is often the first impression that you'll present to patients, and it will play an important role in your future marketing efforts.

Including your surname as part of your business name is one option.

If you know that you will be the sole dentist in your practice, or that your children will someday inherit the practice this might be a good choice.

Just remember, if you ever plan to sell or expand to multiple practices this could complicate things.

If you're planning on staying in the same community, you may want to create a name that indicates your location.

If you have a specialty – such as pediatric dentistry, for example – you may want “children,” “kids,” or “family” to be part of your business name.

Choose one or more practice naming options:

- include your surname
- indicate your location
- include your specialty

Logo

Design a logo that is memorable, unique and eye-catching. It should be in some way related to your business name and connect to your target audience – i.e., the patients you want to attract to your practice.

Don't make the mistake of including too many design elements – keep it simple and elegant.

Also, remember that a logo should be suitable for a variety of different uses, including your website, marketing materials, business cards, business signage, etc.

Typeface

Deciding on the right font (or typeface) for your business is crucial.

First and foremost: your typeface should be easy to read. Use the same font style consistently on different printed material, signage and online websites and social media accounts.

This consistency will help identify your brand and make it easier for your customers to readily connect your message with your practice.

Color Scheme

Whether developing a color scheme for your logo, marketing collateral, signage, or your reception area, there are two words to keep in mind: color matters!

There is no doubt that color has a definite psychological impact on people, and you want to make sure that the colors you choose for your practice communicate the right message and create the appropriate mood for your patients.

Generally speaking, you should select colors that are not boring, but also colors that don't overstimulate.

Red may not be the best color for your practice since it can make people feel anxious; yellow is cheerful but can cause people to feel tense if it's overused; blue and green have a calming affect but may be too boring; orange is a fun color if used in moderation; pink is often associated with young people; and purple is more of a sophisticated tone.

Use your own judgement and good taste, and remember that too much color can be overwhelming.

Style

You can develop a “style” for your business based on a number of factors, such as your specialty (picking fun, kid-like colors and images if you’re a pediatric dentist, for example) or your area (adopting a Southwestern style if your practice is in the Southwest, for example).

You should also consider your target audience when deciding on a style.

If you want to attract an older clientele, you may select more traditional office furnishings and a more sophisticated logo.

Similarly, a dentist interested in attracting younger patients with families may design his office and marketing materials with a more contemporary feel.

Whatever style you decide on for your practice, you should make sure that it is used consistently throughout your online presence, your marketing collateral, logo, signage, office décor, etc.

Deciding on what your brand will be is a complex process for most business owners, but particularly for first-timers who simply may not think of all the potential pros and cons of each choice.

Hiring a dental marketing firm with vast experience helping 100s of practices can give you guidance on what would be your best bets for success.

Our startup packages include branding consultations and a highly skilled professional design team to bring your brand identity to life across all mediums.

Contact us if you have any questions or need help.
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Section 2: Physical Assets



Physical assets include those items that are more traditionally connected to marketing efforts, as opposed to online promotional activity or digital assets.

Your physical marketing assets – from business cards to stationery to signage – are all a reflection of your brand identity and play an important role in the marketing of your practice.

Business Cards

Although business cards may not seem like an important marketing tool, they really are.

Above all else, your business card should include all the contact information that your patients will need:

- your name and
- the name of your practice,
- your phone number,
- physical address, and
- website address.

The card should:

- include your logo and
- match the color scheme and style that you've developed for your practice.

And, most important of all, the information included on your card needs to be:

- easy to read,
 - so pick a font size that doesn't require a magnifying glass!
-

Stationery

Similar to business cards, stationery can be a valuable marketing tool for your practice.

Your stationery should include your name and the name of your practice, as well as your address and contact information.

Include your logo and be consistent with the style and color scheme you've developed for your practice.

Be sure to select a high-quality paper stock, and consider adding other "extras" for a truly professional touch – such as an embossed logo, for example.

Signs/Posters

When designing signage for your practice, try to stay with the color scheme and font style you've selected for your other marketing materials.

Signage should always be hung in obvious locations and should be easy to read.

When it comes to posters, you can feel free to be a bit more creative.

Although posters should obviously be informative for the patient, there are a variety of ways to get your message across without being too technical.

And including images of beautiful smiles is always a plus.

Be sure to include your logo, the name of your practice, and your contact information.

While you do have a bit more flexibility with posters than you do with some other marketing material, the general color scheme should either match or be complementary to the one you've developed for your practice.

Mailers

Although an email campaign is usually a less costly way to reach your current patients, direct mailers are still an effective means to reach out to potential new patients and expand your patient base.

When designing a mailer, the most important thing to keep in mind is the headline.

Most people will simply throw out direct mail advertising if it doesn't include an attention-grabbing headline and graphic. Keep it short (less than 8 words, if possible), on one line, and in a font size that is easy to read.

Include a large graphic that gets your message across to potential clients. Finally, include a call-to-action, and an expiration date for the offer.

And, as always, include your logo and contact information on the mailer.

Outside Signage

When it comes to outside signage, there's one rule that applies above all else: keep it simple and include the word "Dentist" or "Dental" in the first line.

Remember that people typically read a sign as they're driving, so the shorter and more obvious, the better.

Use a light-colored background and darker lettering, which has been shown to be easier to read than the opposite. Include your practice name, phone number, address and website (assuming you have the space to do so).

Remember that placement of outside signage is crucial. In fact, an easy-to-read sign in the right location can be a remarkably effective way of attracting new patients!

Care Package Materials

Dental giveaways can be a great way to market your practice and encourage your patients to maintain a good oral health regimen at the same time!

Consider adding your logo and contact information to items such as denture boxes, retainer cases, dental floss, dental-shaped key tags, sugar-free breath mints, tooth-shaped notepads, travel toothbrushes, or toothbrush holders.

When it comes to marketing, what may seem like a mundane, every-day part of your business can be turned into an opportunity to spread the word about your practice!

Printed marketing materials carry your brand identity into the physical world and require a different knowledge and skill set than digital marketing assets.

An understanding of dimensions, color bleeds, and formatting among other things are necessary for professional physical assets.

To ensure cohesiveness and consistent messaging, our full service dental marketing company can create these physical assets to increase the strength and appeal of your practice's brand.

Contact us if you have any questions or need help. (512) 872-3300

Section 3: Website



Having an effective website that is appealing and easy for patients to navigate through is central for any successful dental practice.

In fact, your website should be considered the most important digital asset you have.

Your website should reflect your brand identity, but even more than that – your site should be carefully thought through from the very beginning to serve your current patients, attract new potential patients, and allow room for the growth of your practice in the future.

Domain Name

Deciding on the best domain name for your practice might seem overwhelming, but there are some simple guidelines that will make it easier to narrow down the possibilities.

- Stick with your brand – In other words, create a domain name that matches or is close to the name of your practice.
- Keep it short – A shorter name is easier to type in on a keyboard and easier to remember.
- Use the .com extension – It's the most popular by far, and using something else (like .org, for example), may lead people to think that your practice is something other than a business (like a non-profit, for example, if you use the .org extension).
- If the domain name is available, consider using a location with "dentist" or a similar word associated with the dental profession. These keywords will make your site easy to find online i.e. mytowndental.com.
- Remember spelling and punctuation – Make the domain name easy to spell and avoid including punctuation like dashes, which can make the name harder to remember.

Domain Registration

Although there are countless online services through which you can register your domain name (usually for a very small fee), it's typically easier to register your domain through one of the larger registrar companies like GoDaddy or Netfirms.

Be sure to register the domain for more than 1 year and select "Auto-Renew" so you don't accidentally lose your domain.

Website Design

The design of your site should not only match your brand, it should also be easy to use for current, new or returning patients.

When creating your site, consider all of the following features:

- Mobile friendly – Be sure that your site is accessible through smart phones and other mobile devices. Be sure your mobile site has click-to-call functionality.
- List of services offered – Include a detailed list of all the services you offer patients. The services should be under a separate navigation item on the site, making it easier for clients to find and access. Each service page should have 500 or more words about that dental service.
- List of example sites liked – for design purposes peruse other dental sites and make a list of sites that you like and specific features of those sites that appeal to you.
- Doctor/staff bios – A brief introduction to you and your staff is a great icebreaker for new patients. Bios should include educational backgrounds as well as work experience.
- Doctor/staff photos – A picture really is worth a thousand words. Showing the smiling faces of you and your staff is a great way to let visitors to your site identify with you more quickly than they otherwise would.

- Building/Office photos – Since you’ve worked hard on extending your brand to your office décor, what better way to show it off than on your website! Seeing photos of state-of-the-art dental equipment, along with an attractive reception area, is a good way to make potential patients feel more at ease during their first visit.
 - Mission statement/slogan(s) – Let visitors to your site know the philosophy behind your practice by including your mission statement/slogan displayed prominently on your home page.
-

Website Coding

Website code (HTML, CSS, Javascript, etc) is what brings the design to life and handles everything from how the site is laid out, how the text reads, the fonts used, and where images display.

While it might be tempting to use a DIY website builder, we generally discourage these as the code is usually clunky, limiting, slows down the site and can have detrimental effects on search engine visibility.

We recommend you work with a professional website design team that knows the dental industry well.

Website Hosting

Hosting is where your website code and images are stored and served to the public.

Be sure to choose a host that is US based and is using fast, up-to-date servers.

Website Security

Hackers and spammers are a constant threat.

Securing your website from evil-doers needs to be handed at the host and website maintenance level.

Ensuring that your site’s hosting, platform, and plugins are all up-to-date.

Website Maintenance

The maintenance of your website involves not only updating information as necessary, but also backups, software updates, optimizing the speed of the site, repairing broken items during routine updates, and other tasks that need to be performed on a regular basis.

A well-equipped, reputable website design company should provide these services for you.

The purpose of your website is to be the hub for your online marketing and turn visitors into action-takers.

We design websites that combine form, function, and your branding into a beautiful converting asset for your business.

Our web design team has the ability to balance art with science to make your practice stand out from the competition and convert visitors into patients. Contact us if you have any questions or need help.

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Section 4: Digital Assets



The term “digital assets” refers to content that is owned by you or your practice and published online. This includes online profiles and digital files such as videos, photos and other images, and text files.

Online Profiles/Accounts:

Google

The most important online profile for your practice is Google.

As the world’s most popular search engine, it shouldn’t be a shock that you need to have a presence there.

What you may not know is that you need to claim and verify your listing in order to control the information shown.

Currently, Google My Business is how you can manage your listing for Google Search and to show up on Google Maps both of which are incredibly important for new patients to find you and leave a review about your excellent service after their appointments.

YouTube

Video content is an excellent format for marketing your practice online.

YouTube is great tool for this, particularly if the video you produce is related to a topic that is of great interest to current and potential patients.

Even if you don’t have any videos to publish on YouTube right now, having a branded channel with your contact information in the description and a link to your website is worth having for basic search engine optimization.

Facebook

Social media marketing is booming, and with good reason: it works!

Maintain a Facebook page for your practice, and engage your followers with short, interesting answers to common dental questions; appealing graphics; and links to blogs on dental topics.

Instagram

Posting images on Instagram can also be an effective marketing tool.

Beautiful smiles are always a great choice, as well as popular dental products your practice offers and “before-and-after” shots.

Yelp

Many people look online to find how different businesses are rated, and this is particularly true for dentists.

Yelp is one of the most popular sites for this purpose. You can create a free profile on Yelp, fill out all your important business information, and invite your patients to leave reviews.

Twitter

Twitter is still one of the most commonly used social media avenues.

For that reason, it can be an excellent way to market your practice.

Profiles include website links, so among your standardized business information, be sure to add your website address which can help your ranking on search engines.

Use Twitter to connect with other dental professionals, health organizations, and patients alike.

Pinterest

With 150 million active users (85% female), at the very least you should setup a Pinterest business profile and make sure your practice’s address, phone number, and website link are included.

If you choose to use Pinterest to help market your practice, whether organically or advertising with promoted pins, be sure to include high quality images that are relevant and of interest to your patients.

Make it your goal to inform and educate patients, while promoting your brand at the same time.

Bing

Although Bing is still not nearly as popular as Google, this search engine continues to hold its weight with every passing year.

For that reason, it's a good idea to add and claim your practice's listing on Bing.

Often used as supplement to Google Ads, you may consider purchasing pay-per-click ads on Bing to help attract more new patients.

SuperPages

In this day and age, most people turn to the Internet to locate a business.

SuperPages is one of the earliest online directories, and having a listing here has some SEO benefit.

Make sure your practice is included in SuperPages so existing and new customers can find you!

Yellow Pages

Yellow Pages online, or YP as they like to be called now, is another commonly used business directory that shouldn't be overlooked. Best of all – a listing is free!

Create, claim, and verify ownership of your practice's YP listing for SEO benefits, getting found when anyone searches for a local dentist on the site, and managing your patient reviews.

Other Minor Web Directories

While the directories mentioned above are the most important, over time you'll want to claim your listing on as many of the minor directory websites as possible.

There are 100s of smaller sites such as CitySearch, InsiderPages, and FourSquare.

Listings on these minor directories with your important business information and a link to your website can add up and have search engine exposure benefits.

It's hard to make a significant impact online without digital assets. Investing the time and budget into securing these things for your business can put you ahead of the competition and persuade potential patients that you're the local authority they can trust with their dental needs for years to come.

Don't want to hassle with it? We have startup packages that take care of the hassle for you and optimize your brand's online visibility to attract more new patients.

Contact us if you have any questions or need help.
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