

# Social Media Engagement: Metrics That Matter

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## The “How’s,” “What’s,” and “Why’s” of Successful Dialogue

Successful social media efforts are a sum of many parts and are themselves a vital part of an overall strategic marketing and communications program. As such, tracking key performance indicators related to “reach” alone is not sufficient.

The number of visitors to your channels who consume content and the number of followers tell only one part of the story. While it is encouraging to see these indicators grow, monitoring and cultivating those engagement-oriented KPIs is essential.

*Engagement: “How users interact and participate with your social media channels and content published on these platforms.”*

Engagement is vital internally and externally within one’s workforce as it relates to acquiring and retaining a solid patient base and community. In fact, global workplace research giant Gallup has defined three different [types](#) of employee engagement:

- The engaged – Those who approach their responsibilities and workplaces with zest and enthusiasm. They behave as “owners” themselves, driving performance and progress.
- The not engaged – Those who are not attached in a psychological sense to their duties and organizations. While they may be *present* and putting in the time, they are not *passionate*, energetic, or connected to their work and the broader team.
- The actively disengaged – Those who are acting on their unhappiness or lack of satisfaction with their job and/or organization. They tend to be the cancers that can infect and damage the work that their engaged colleagues are putting in to move the organization forward.

Engagement matters both within one’s organization and when resonating with those beyond the organization. As [reported](#) by Gallup, those groups with higher engagement levels were more likely than their less engaged counterparts to have:

- Greater productivity and sales
- Comparably favourable profitability
- Significantly less quality “defects”
- Higher loyalty among patrons/consumers
- Fewer “safety incidents”
- Comparatively favourable associate turnover
- Less absenteeism among teams

We can apply this research to our practices’ communications strategies. There are certain KPIs that are specifically tied to engagement in the social space. We have highlighted some of the most important below. Also, by monitoring these metrics, you can get a sense as to if your community is:

- Largely engaged and highly satisfied with partnering with your practice, dentists, associates, and staff
- Going through the motions, satisfied enough to show up for appointments but not necessarily actively referring your services to other individuals or their followers online
- Potentially hostile, may be dissatisfied and sharing that lack of satisfaction both in the “offline” world as well as online – where their negative comments, reviews, and so on can spread like wildfire

And, just as conveyed by the Gallup research on workplaces, the level and nature of engagement in the social sphere can have implications for key performance indicators associated with your practice – such as productivity, profitability, and employee morale. With so much potentially riding on your practice and relationships in the digital universe, it is essential first to identify and track the social media engagement-centric measurements. These KPIs include:

- Reactions
- Comments
- Shares
- Likes
- Saves
- Clicks
- Direct Messages

One can then assess, by account, the “engagement rate” by tallying up the total number of these indicators (likes and so on) and then dividing them by the total followers. Then, multiply this figure by 100 to come up with an “average” engagement rate. You can even take a deeper dive into specific strategies or periods in which new initiatives were undertaken to see how they resonate with your community. Simply assess for engagement measurements related to the strategy or isolated to a given quarter or another period.

There are benchmarks for engagement rates specific to certain channels. For example, [Hootsuite](#) has listed engagement rate benchmarks for Instagram across five industries, including healthcare and wellness. Given the nature of the services provided, it is not surprising that the healthcare measurement outpaces the other listed sectors (education, finance, government, and leisure) – at 2.24%.

## More than meets the eye

Of course, social engagement KPIs can vary in terms of their “weight” or importance. Their importance can also vary depending on your practice’s specific goals or needs. In an [expansive analysis](#) of 86 studies that scrutinized 14 platforms and 17 countries, researchers at Amsterdam’s Vrije University School of Business and Economics found that:

- The most effective content to stimulate social engagement is *emotional* in nature. For instance, your practice might craft and publish posts featuring actual patients who have undergone extraordinary transformations in the appearance of their smiles and their lives. Here, let your work and the patients themselves “do the talking” to convey the impact of dentistry and smile makeovers.
- Likewise, the researchers found that the most effective content to stimulate *sales* focused on providing *meaningful informational content*. If engagement seems robust online, yet revenue targets remain out of reach; it may be smart to assess patterns among your most engaged followers. If you notice that the same questions or interests in specific topics and services arise time and time again, do your most loyal advocates a solid. Craft posts that answer these frequently asked questions about teeth whitening, cosmetic aligners, or other popular treatments and products.
- One good way to remember the above distinction in strategies based on practice needs and objectives is to:

Focus on the *how* when working to *engage* with patients, partners, and advocates – Really think through your tone and how things are presented and stated when trying to appeal authentically to members of your community.

Focus on the *what* when working to build profitability and related KPIs – Really think through the type and nature of content that you want to present to educate and build trust with your patient base and the broader community.

Let the wealth of data and insights associated with your social media presence be your guide. Use the patterns and metrics related to this presence to build the trust, credibility, and loyalty that gets patients in the door and drives accurate results and transformations within your practice.

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**About the Author**



Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of [Ekwa Marketing](#), has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dentists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren. You may also schedule a session at your convenience with the Senior Director of Marketing – Lila, by clicking <https://www.ekwa.com/msm/> or simply send a text to 313-777-8494.