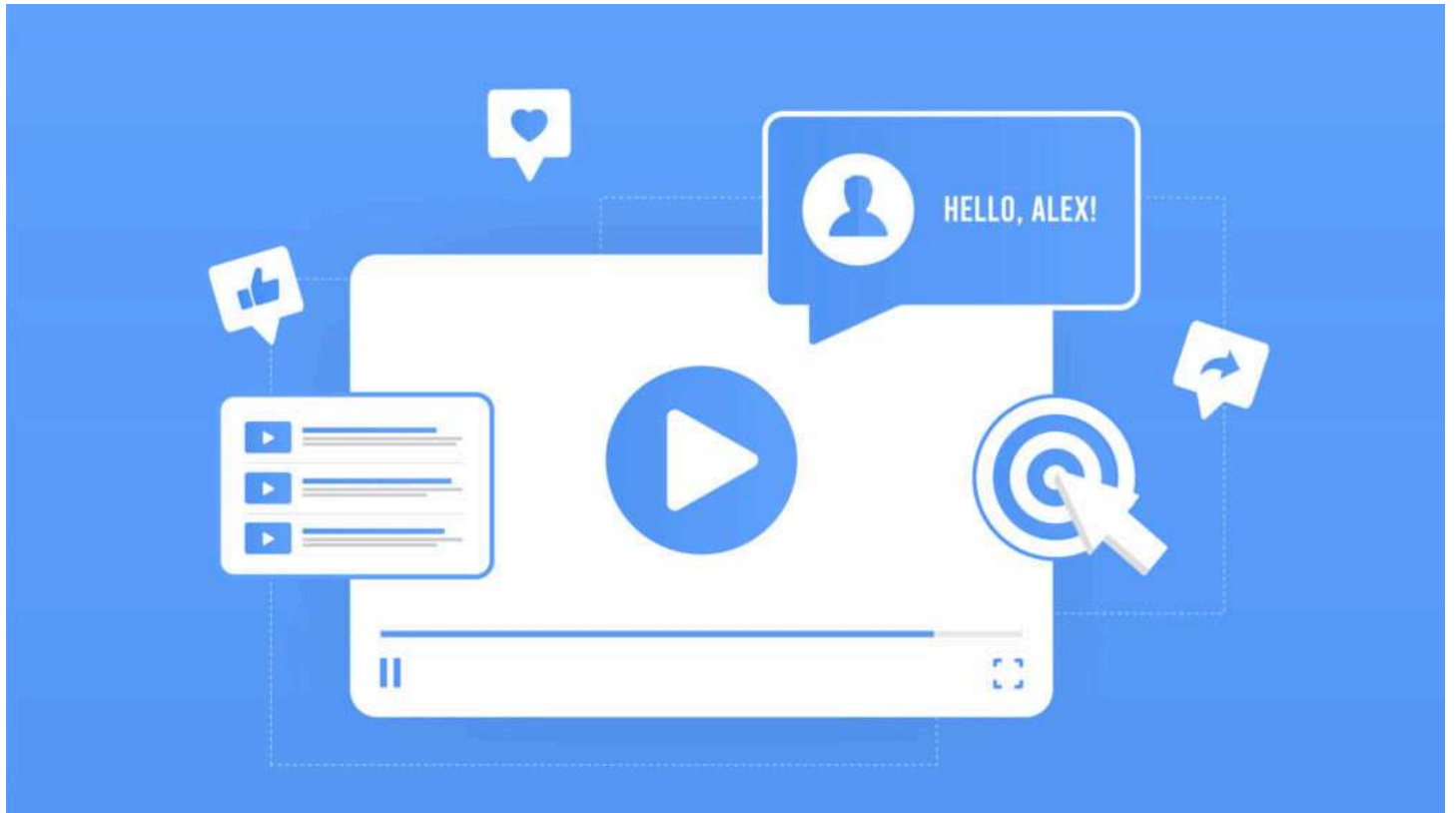


Crafting Content and Connections: The Nature and Power of Hyper-personalization

07/08/2024 by Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing



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Ah, that personal touch! When was the last time you received a nice note instead of a credit card offer? You likely remember this treasured piece of mail because now it is so rare. Those handwritten notes are undoubtedly lovely, though. Your patients likely feel the same. It's the little things that make them feel like the unique person they are, not a number or just another set of teeth and gums; they have big power. But, we have also entered into an era of **hyper-personalization**. So, what is it, exactly? And how can you harness it effectively and in a cost-effective, minimally resource-intensive manner?

Hyper-personalization, defined

First, let's look at traditional marketing approaches. Previously, a flyer might be sent out to all your patients or prospects within a certain radius or postal code. Or, an email promo

would be blasted out to anyone within your database, regardless of whether it really applied to them and their situation or not. The idea was to blanket with the content and then see what sticks.

Over time, approaches matured, driven by results that fell short of goals and shifts in consumer behaviours and communications platforms. Instead of flooding inboxes with the same generic content, medical practices and other businesses began to limit certain content or promotional materials to specific demographics. These shifts may have accounted for changing demos in general or a strategic focus on targeting specific types of quality patients as a practice looked not necessarily to acquire more patients but rather to achieve a higher degree of loyalty and retention.

Today, **personalization has been accelerated**. We can garner more significant insights into our patients/our “ideal” healthcare consumers. These insights can then be used to identify “targets” for certain communications that will have a higher likelihood of resonating with those targeted patients or members of your community. Additionally, content may be crafted to better suit each unique recipient by accounting for the “trail” of personal preferences and consumer-oriented behaviours that each patient leaves behind in the digital universe. So, there is a higher likelihood that your carefully and thoughtfully crafted communications will come off as engaging, memorable, meaningful, clever, or even funny (as appropriate) to the target of your hyper-personalization.

The competitive edge

There are numerous potential benefits to taking a good, hard look at how you personalize the external communications that your office generates. Depending on your starting point, you may need to elevate your existing personalization strategies, taking them to the next level to give yourself an edge over the dental practices or groups in your market. The return on investment can be pretty significant and allow you to:

- Finally make the equivalent in the dental world of the “sale” – getting the reader, viewer, or listener to take action, to respond to your “ask,” whatever that may be – whether signing up for a free smile consultation, calling your office to book an initial appointment, or providing their contact information or survey responses as tied to a seasonal promotion or strategic outreach efforts.
- Go beyond the “skin deep” level with your patients – There is considerable value in retaining quality patients who will continue to visit you and also sing your praises to other valuable potential patients – family members, friends, and work colleagues.

Personalization immediately gives you a greater understanding of the patient sitting across from you as a *person* with distinctive desires, dislikes, tendencies, habits, behaviours, etc. In turn, you can accelerate and instill the all-important process of trust-building. Hyper-personalization efforts generally strive to carve out deep and meaningful connections and relationships.

- As we have noted in previous blog posts, there is an art to *engagement*, especially in the [digital space](#). With hyper-personalized content by your side, you almost have a shortcut to a more engaged and motivated patient. This type of healthcare consumer is also more involved in their treatment processes and general oral health. When your content reaches or touches the patient at an emotional or heartfelt level, they are more willing and comfortable with reaching out with questions that could ultimately lead to a consultation or service. They are also more willing to engage with you on any additional “asks,” such as calls to action to refer your team to members of their teams or their families. You may also notice better collective responses to surveys or other forms of analytics that may be used to develop and refine hyper-personalized content in the first place.

Hyper-personalization in action

The Canadian Marketing Association’s “Perspectives” articles showcase timely topics, tips, and trends of relevance to their members and, by extension, clientele. Recently, the [CMA highlighted](#) hyper-personalization in five steps or forms. In summary:

- **Explore those technologies that have tremendously elevated the notion of “data-driven” insights and business intelligence.** With so many potential free or nominal-fee tools at one’s fingertips, the savvy practice manager can seamlessly and realistically (read: within budget) secure a truly insightful understanding of each patient at the consumer behavioural, preferential, and health care utilization/patterns level. This capability furthermore facilitates that all-important “targeting” or segmentation. Patients are no longer viewed as a singular mass grouping but rather within “segments” with varied demographics, psychologies, and interactions with and backgrounds in dentistry, which can then lead to content that is made with each specific segment in mind. There is no “one-size-fits-all” or “cookie-cutter” content here!
- **Dip your toes into AI.** Of course, there is no shortage of misconceptions and misinformation associated with AI. But know this: By definition, [artificial intelligence-backed solutions](#) are highly intuitive. They are designed to learn more and continuously “improve” based on ongoing user interactions and feedback. In turn,

with the passage of time and the more information that is “fed to the machine,” so to speak, the greater the insights garnered. These insights drive the seamless and efficient delivery of experiences personalized to those users that the AI solution now understands so well, based on the aforementioned digital breadcrumbs.

- **Think in terms of “scale-ability.”** Yes, you can opt to take a deeper dive into your patient base by identifying and targeting content to specific segments. However, you can truly go into “hyper” mode and take personalization to the next level by crafting and delivering content that resonates with the few or even the individual. Such one-on-one targeting is designed to provide uber-relevant messaging that accounts for the targeted patient’s or consumer’s “time” and “place.” This is where features like [geotargeting](#) can come into play; however, be sure to consider potential pitfalls associated with [intrusiveness](#). Be selective in the tools you use and, more importantly, *how* you leverage them.
- **Just as the platforms and channels can be leveraged, ensure the actual “what” or substantive elements of your communications are also correctly personalized, targeted, and, as CMA puts it, “optimized.”** Instead of shoehorning consumers with the same old static content that may be seen on a website or social platform, view the content as more of a shape-shifting, flexible, and moving force. It should be readily adapted to “meet” the patient wherever they may be in the digital space or life, and here again, this content is derived from the info or analytics collected to discern evolving consumer attributes and behaviours. For instance, for new parents, everything from educational content to promotional materials could be packaged to provide helpful tips on preparing for a baby’s first dental visit or incentives such as a family dental first-aid kit for scheduling that first check-up.
- **While the research indicates that there are [generational nuances](#) when it comes to preferred content channels, the CMA emphasizes an “omnichannel” presence.** Think of this: If personalization is all about really getting into the patient’s nitty-gritty *personal* and unique aspects, then why would you limit yourself to one type of platform or channel? Think of the opposite of targeting in this respect. It is OK to blanket across channels and “touchpoints” as long as the communication itself is personalized and not generic, uninspired, and otherwise trying to shoehorn a diverse base of patients into one tone, style, type of content, or “pet” topics. By being open to many channels, you can create **seamless and curated experiences and touchpoints** with your practice across the entire healthcare journey online and offline.

Pro tip:

Consider the power of re-capturing a patient's attention with simple reminder pop-ups. Here again, it is essential to refrain from being pushy. The friendly reminder may prompt the user to finish submitting an online appointment booking or to finish uploading pictures of their smiles for a virtual smile design. With our jam-packed schedules and hectic lives, it is so easy to get side-tracked from these tasks and obligations. The mindful reminder may be just the "nudge" that a patient needs to commit and to be "converted" to your practice – thus fulfilling that all-important "ask" or call to action.

We call you to act on the dizzying array of potential data-driven solutions. **Do not suffer from paralysis by analysis.** With a niche in medical marketing communications, we partner with dental practices daily who are struggling to demystify this process. We would be happy to help your team navigate and simplify the potential complexities of this dynamic opportunity to differentiate in your market and industry.

About the Author



Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of [Ekwa Marketing](https://www.ekwa.com), 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.