

Turning Marketing Challenges Into Opportunities

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As the New Year approaches, it's time to review your marketing strategies and think about new ways to get your phone ringing. Some of the best ways to accomplish that include turning challenging situations to your advantage.

Advertisement saturation

Challenge: Internet users are bombarded with so many ads that they pay little attention

Opportunity: Most advertisements are low-quality, so it's not hard to make yours stand out



If you want people to keep coming back to your practice, you look

beyond just what you are offering and consider the entire patient experience. Similarly, one of the most important factors that website designers consider is the user experience. That same focus on creating a positive experience is extending to advertising, as digital platforms become more sophisticated. Some of the best techniques to implement include:

- Targeted advertising – Most platforms allow you to target viewers based on their location, demographics, interests, and other criteria. Make use of these features to not only filter out people unlikely to become patients, but also tailor your materials to a select audience.
- Retargeting – This is one of the most powerful techniques in digital advertising. It allows you to display advertisements to people who have already visited your website. Well implemented retargeting helps convert leads by providing additional information, reminders, and special offers relevant to what the person already viewed.
- Adding value – The lines between promotion and product are increasingly blurred. Advertising simply asks people to take action, such as scheduling an appointment or buying a product. From the viewer's perspective, it's one-sided, asking without offering anything in return. Today, people want more than just advertisements. For example, content marketing offers education, influencers entertain their audience, and good social media posts are engaging.

The rise of corporate healthcare

Challenge: Healthcare is big business, so the small practice is overshadowed by mega-competitors

Opportunity: The personal touch of a small medical practice is a valuable part of your USP (unique selling proposition)

If you own your practice, you are in the minority. [Less than one-third](#) of American doctors are self-employed, and that number continues shrinking annually. Unfortunately, the trend of consolidation and corporatization of healthcare isn't expected to change.

In a field dominated by big companies with big marketing budgets, it can be especially challenging to grow a private practice. However, this situation also gives small practices a distinct advantage in appealing to patients.

Although people have a greater interest in health and wellness than ever before, they tend to have a low opinion of providers. Some of the most common complaints include claims that modern medical offices are impersonal, people are rushed and treated like numbers, they don't get to see the same doctor every time... In short, corporatization and automation are detracting from the personal aspect of healthcare, and patients miss it.

As a private practice, you almost certainly provide a level of customer service, individual attention, and consistency that is increasingly rare. Make sure your marketing and branding strategies reflect this. The biggest practice might have the advantage when it comes to the marketing budget, but the smallest one has the edge in personalized care.

The importance of external mentions and listings

Challenge: A great website isn't enough; people and search algorithms are placing more importance on external mentions and listings

Opportunity: Diligent attention to acquiring citations and maintaining online profiles can give you a powerful, widespread digital presence

Google's algorithm uses inbound links, citations, and online mentions (along with many other factors) to evaluate your website's authority. Therefore, current best practices in medical marketing include adding your practice to various online directories and review sites. You also need to keep basic information such as name, address, and phone number consistent across the internet, and update your profile if anything changes.

Unless you use a third-party service or software to automate the task, it can be daunting to keep up with all the online listings. You might be hoping this will diminish in importance as search engine algorithms evolve. However, that doesn't seem likely. Furthermore, it's not just algorithms looking for authority indicators. Internet users are perpetually looking for faster and more efficient ways to get things done.

Simultaneously, they are increasingly wary of misinformation and misleading advertising. People tend to have their go-to trusted resources. An advertisement, no matter how well-crafted, probably won't convince people that you can be trusted with their health. However, high placement on Google, good comments on Facebook, listings on WebMD and Healthgrades, and 4.5 stars on Yelp might.

Conclusion

Technology, trends, and internet user behavior change quickly. Marketing a medical practice in this ever-changing landscape is challenging. However, those challenges become opportunities when you stay at the forefront of the latest trends, and therefore, a step ahead of your competitors.

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 doctors, 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.