10 WAYS TO ATTRACT NEW PATIENTS AND KEEP THE ONES YOU HAVE
Patients move. They change health plans. Some have a bad experience. For these reasons and more, patients disconnect from healthcare practices, and when they do, another practice has an opportunity to connect with them.

Attracting those patients to your practice requires strategic marketing. Like any consumer service, you win new “customers” for your practice when your connection with them is better than that of other practices. Effective marketing to current patients provides additional benefits that keep those patients coming back.

Some practices, especially the larger ones, have become highly skilled at marketing, giving them a competitive advantage. Yet the marketing tactics that work best are available to any practice, regardless of size. Thanks to the power of online connections, strengthening your position with prospects and patients doesn’t require expensive advertising. All it takes is focus and a bit of time. The right tools can greatly reduce your effort.

The following are 10 proven healthcare marketing techniques which help practices like yours win new patients and keep the ones they have. You don’t need to tackle them all at once, but the more of these techniques you master, the more your practice will grow and thrive.

**GETTING PATIENTS TO CONNECT WITH YOU**

Most people think of marketing as outreach, but it’s only a piece of an overall strategy. Successful marketing begins by focusing on all the ways patients can reach you. You can, and should, make a positive impression when prospective patients initiate any online connection.
#1: BOOST YOUR REPUTATION IN ONLINE REVIEWS

## ATTRACTING NEW PATIENTS

- Very high value. People listen to the experience of their peers, and are more comfortable when they read positive remarks or feedback.

## RETAINING PATIENTS

- More value than you might suspect. People who publicly "endorse" services usually feel more connected with them.

92 percent of people read online reviews when searching for a local business. 68 percent of them say they trust businesses that have positive reviews. Only 13 percent trust businesses with 1 or 2 star ratings.

### 68% OF CONSUMERS SAY POSITIVE REVIEWS MAKE THEM TRUST A LOCAL BUSINESS MORE.

In searching for care providers, most patients visit Google, Yelp or Healthgrades. While there are other healthcare review platforms, these three attract the most visitors, and in order to develop a solid online reputation, you'll want to focus on them.

Start by consistently looking for reviews of your practice. You can’t do anything about reviews if you don’t see them. Whether patients have positive or negative comments, every review is an opportunity to sharpen your reputation.

Every time you find a review about your practice, post a response. This shows prospects who read the review that you take feedback seriously. If the review is negative, respond kindly with an explanation and say you hope to see the reviewer again. When you get a positive review, thank the patient for the feedback.

Finally, encourage all of your patients to post reviews. It will tip the balance toward the positive. Yelp says 80 percent of its reviews are 3 stars or higher, which means most people post reviews to share good to great experiences. Think about it: If the majority of your patients didn’t like you, you wouldn’t have a practice.

### 80% OF YELP REVIEWS ARE 3 STARS OR HIGHER – MORE PEOPLE PRAISE THAN COMPLAIN.

#2: STAY CONNECTED WITH PATIENTS THROUGH COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

## ATTRACTING NEW PATIENTS

- High value. Busy people want to do business with those they can contact easily.

## RETAINING PATIENTS

- Very high value. Being able to contact you in their preferred way increases patients' satisfaction.

If patients can only contact you by phone, you have a great opportunity to become more available. When patients can also connect with you by email or text, many will do so more freely. 60 percent of customers choose how to contact businesses according to what they’re doing at the moment.
Allowing patients to choose how to reach you can lead to more appointments and deeper relationships.

60% OF CUSTOMERS CHOOSE HOW TO CONTACT BUSINESSES ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY’RE DOING AT THE MOMENT.

Start by putting one person in charge of all online channels to ensure quick responses. Then, each time you communicate with your patients, remind them of their various contact options. Be sure to ask each patient how they prefer to be contacted, and stick with their preference(s) when reaching out.

#3: MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

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<th>ATTRACTING NEW PATIENTS</th>
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<td>Increasingly important. Patients who are immersed in social media prefer to engage with others on their turf.</td>
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<th>RETAINING PATIENTS</th>
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<td>Highly valuable. Social media is made for ongoing connection and engagement.</td>
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Social media plays a central role in many patients’ daily lives. People now say it influences their purchase decisions almost as much as television does. To make this work for your practice, engage with patients on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube—by far the most popular platforms.

If you can, have one person manage all platforms for consistency. This will help ensure content stays fresh and relevant to further engage with patients. On Facebook, discuss treatment options or trends related to your practice. You can do the same on Twitter. On YouTube, post videos about your practice and patient testimonials. These videos can help boost your online reputation as well. In all cases, remember to promptly respond to any feedback, whether negative or positive.

Encourage “Likes” and “Follows” with links on your website and in all patient outreach.
When patients praise your practice or refer others, ask if they would make a video referral. This can be as simple as a 30-second cell phone recording in the office. Having the video feature the patient’s own words makes it honest and believable. Post these videos to your website and YouTube for fresh content that reflects positively on your practice.

#4: POST PATIENT TESTIMONIAL VIDEOS

ATTRACTING NEW PATIENTS

Extremely high value. Reading positive reviews is great, but watching a person express satisfaction is even better.

RETAINING PATIENTS

Moderate value. It never hurts for patients to be reminded that others appreciate you, too.

#5: BRING IN PATIENTS THROUGH SELF-SCHEDULING AND DIGITAL CHECK-IN

ATTRACTING NEW PATIENTS

Increasingly important. Practices that offer online scheduling attract more new patients than practices that don’t.

RETAINING PATIENTS

Extremely high value. Aligns your practice with expectations.

Make it easier for patients to visit you through marketing automation tools. They are well-worth investigating for the convenience they bring to you and your patients.

- **Self-scheduling:** In a recent survey, 42 percent of patients said they have wanted to schedule appointments online, but it wasn’t an option. The survey also found 63 percent of new patients booked their first appointment online. Clearly, self-scheduling attracts new business.

63% OF NEW PATIENTS BOOK THEIR FIRST APPOINTMENT ONLINE.

To leverage this trend, look for a tool that lets patients use their preferred channel of communication, including mobile. Being accessible on the patient’s timeline, wherever they are, will garner more appointments. Be sure to include reminders of self-scheduling options in all forms of patient outreach.

- **Digital check-in:** Keep it simple so patients will use it. Provide a quick means to fill out demographics, and while you have their attention, present easy links to connect on social media and sign up for additional patient outreach methods.
PROACTIVE OUTREACH TO CONNECT WITH PATIENTS

ATTRACTING NEW PATIENTS

Occasional value. Patients may forward what they receive to friends or family.

RETAINING PATIENTS

Priceless. Outreach that patients value can build loyalty.

In addition to helping patients connect with you, you’ll want to regularly reach out to them. Automated tools can make this process efficient and consistent.

#6: REMIND PATIENTS ABOUT CHECKUPS

When patients don’t return for regular checkups, that’s money left on the table. How effectively does your practice get them back for follow-up? If you need to improve your patient recall rate, search for a tool that tracks visits and sends reminders at the right time through each patient’s preferred channel of communication.

#7: SURVEY EVERY PATIENT FOR SATISFACTION

When properly done, surveys can reveal much about what your practice does well and what it could do better. Look for a tool that follows up each patient visit with an online survey to learn how their experience was. Be sure to consistently monitor feedback, following up with the most positive responses to request video referrals or online reviews.

#8: EDUCATE PATIENTS WITH EFFECTIVE NEWSLETTERS

Patients who are focused on their health like to receive newsletters which are informative and relevant. The hardest part about issuing them is consistency. To make it easy, put together a content library and deliver it over time. A tool that helps you create, schedule, and send your newsletters will make it even easier.

#9: SEND A BIRTHDAY SMILE

Birthday greetings are a great way to make patients feel connected to your practice and build loyalty. Because patients are usually with family and friends at this time, your best wishes can spark referrals. Look for a tool that tracks birthdays and sends a timely greeting to every patient.

BECAUSE PATIENTS ARE USUALLY WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, A WARM BIRTHDAY GREETING ON THE BIG DAY CAN SPARK REFERRALS.

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NET PROMOTER SCORE

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) measures how willing customers are to recommend a product or service. A technology partner can help you understand how NPS can help you find patients who will recommend you and also help you know when to address issues and improve the patient experience.
#10: EMAIL PROMOTIONS
Use email promotions wisely, as anything viewed as spam can backfire. Make them useful. One example is flu-season emails which promote walk-in flu shots. This is another area where patient surveys can determine who you should target. An email marketing tool will make it easier to send the right promotions to the right patients with minimal effort.

THE NEED TO MARKET YOUR PRACTICE
If you want to grow your business by winning new patients and keeping your existing ones, you need to market your practice. Effective marketing is the best way to attract and keep patients more successfully than your competitors do. If you stay connected with your patients and are in front of them at the right place and time, you can make amazing gains in patient satisfaction and in achieving your business goals.


