

Social Media: A Virtual “Word-of-Mouth” The new way to market your practice

The digital age has rapidly transformed the world of business and commerce, with social media at the core of this change. Sites such as [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) have revolutionized the way businesses market their goods and services, allowing for direct interaction with consumers. Social media marketing, the concept of promoting websites, businesses, and causes through social media channels, enables business owners to communicate instantly with users, providing the potential to reach far more consumers than ever possible through traditional means. Consumer awareness is promoted through peer-centered, virtual “word-of-mouth”, which creates a greater trust and a higher chance of eventual conversion than commercial advertising.



Businesses in every industry are using social media marketing to gain exposure, promote their products and services, establish industry expertise, enhance customer loyalty and attract new customers. Even if you are not using social media to attract more patients, your competition is.

Social media is not only effective when it is done right, it is decidedly cost effective. Your practice can create a free account on Facebook and Twitter and through minimal cost, run a marketing campaign that will reach and engage your target audience.

[Yelp!](#) is another form of social media that has gained popularity. If you haven't heard of Yelp!, make sure they've heard of you. This is a form of social media that allows consumers to find and review local businesses online. It's driven by location and consumer feedback. Set up a business account with Yelp! and watch your practice popularity grow thru patient feedback and referral.

Any practice can benefit from tapping into the power of social media marketing. A few tips to get you started:

- 1 Ease into it.** There are a lot of sites out there so start with the social media marketing tools that you are most comfortable with. Focus your initial efforts on establishing a presence on one or two of the most popular sites such as Facebook and Twitter and concentrate on succeeding there first. You can link your social media accounts to save time on posting multiple profiles.
- 2 Delegate!** Find a web-savvy employee in your practice who can build you a profile in no time. Put a few guidelines in place about appropriate postings and overseeing their progress and you will be up and running in no time. Make sure your profile gives a full description of your practice, including hours, location, services, staff and most importantly your website and contact information.
- 3 Create your community.** Creating a Facebook page or Twitter profile doesn't come with an automatic following. You have to promote yourself and work to create your initial fan base. Start with your existing relationships, including staff, friends, family and patients. You will be surprised how thrilled they are to get connected. With increased activity, your following will grow naturally.
- 4 Provide value.** The goal of social media is to build personal relationships with people that set you apart and create loyal customers. If all of your posts are self-serving promotions, you will quickly lose attention and your following. On the other hand, offering optometric tips and advice establishes you as an expert and creates value for your network, providing a reason for users to follow and interact with you.

Get connected with The Social Media Experts

You can find many more valuable tips on how to use social media and the web to improve the exposure of your practice by visiting EyeCarePro online at www.eyecarepro.net. Check out their newsletter, blog and education center for packed-full advice on social media for optometric practices.

EyeCarePro, a PEN-approved vendor, is the leading provider of optometric website and online marketing development, offering significant PEN Member discounts. For more information call 1-866-886-4442, contact danielr@eyecarepro.net or, of course, you may find them on Facebook!

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