

Dos and Don'ts: Your Practice's Facebook Page

Facebook is the world's largest and most popular social network in the U.S., and it can be a great way to communicate with patients and promote your practice. Social media can influence health care decisions. Active and former patients can use various social media platforms and possibly even popular review sites to evaluate healthcare providers.

Here are tips to help you take control of your Business Page and use Facebook as a tool to enhance your customer service and marketing efforts.

DO: Plan your posts

A little planning goes a long way! Facebook allows for posts to be scheduled, so sketching out your month will make your social posts timely and your life easier. Look at what events or celebrations are happening during the month, and consider what time of year it is. Is it almost back-to-school time? Should your patients use their benefits before the end of the year? You may want to remind your patients of these upcoming events and encourage them to book an appointment. We have an easy template [here](#) you can adapt and use!

DON'T: Post too little or too much

There is no blanket answer to how often you should post—it's about the quality of your content and engagements that matter. Continuously posting what people engage with (like, share, comment on) is what your followers and Facebook like to see! Facebook provides a free analytics tool called Insights—take advantage of it! Within Insights you'll be able to determine what kind of posts perform the best, the best times to post and more.

DO: Make content creation easy

Good news: there are a number of dental-related outlets producing content ready-made for sharing by a practice like yours. Follow the [ADA's Facebook page](#) and share our content!

We also have articles, activities, video and more available for sharing. Most resources available on these sites are in English and Spanish:

- [MouthHealthy.org](#)
- [MouthHealthyKids.org](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [ADA News](#)

You love teeth, you love talking about teeth, but it's OK to veer off the oral health topics if you'd like. Show off your practice personality, highlight specials or honor a staff member. At its core, social media is about connecting people and it should be fun!

DON'T Post about patients

Patient privacy should never be compromised. Photos and/or messages posted to the practice's website or social media page, or the personal pages of team members, may violate privacy laws if the post identifies a patient or offers enough of an image or sufficient detail to identify a patient or staff member who has not authorized the disclosure. *Releases should always be obtained in writing.* The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and other privacy laws apply to your exchanges on social media. Be careful not to inadvertently establish a doctor-patient relationship through social media exchanges.

DO: Complete your Page setup

Make sure you completely set up your Facebook Page. It's important to include your website, email and phone number so potential patients can easily reach you. Profile photos and a cover image help establish your business personality. Learn more about Pages [here](#).

DON'T: Ignore comments

Carve out a little time each day to read and reply to comments. The road might not always be smooth, and you may see negative comments. Have a game plan to address both positive and negative comments. Whether it's a quick "like" or requesting they call with more information, this is a simple and visible way to make people feel valued. Plus, it lets you know about their thoughts and opinions.

There are instances where you may not want or need to respond to a comment. You may encounter a commenter who continues to engage after you address their comment or is being unreasonable or antagonistic. Should you choose to respond, simply thank the commenter for their business and feedback, and you can offer a phone number to call your office directly. After that, it is often best to leave those comments alone.

When commenting, remember that you are legally obligated to protect your patient's information, and the patient's posting does not waive their privacy-related rights.

For more tips and guidance, visit our Center for Professional Success:

<https://success.ada.org/en/practice-management/guidelines-for-practice-success/managing-marketing>