THE SOCIAL CIRCLE

Tapping Into Your Most Coveted Referrals
WHY DO WE INVEST?

For many of us social media means checking our Facebook pages, uploading weekend photos to Instagram, or commenting on a friend’s status. But what about social media for a business, none the less a medical practice... what does that look like? In order to tap into the powerful impact social media can have on your practice it's important to first determine why you are using it in the first place.

Whether or not you are interested in spending actual dollars on social media, you are at the very least investing you time and if you are doing it right... investing quite a bit of time. There are a couple things to consider when diving into the social media world.

*By controlling the communication, we play an active role in their decision making process.*

5 OUT OF 6 MINUTES spent online are on social media.

This is a generation that is more likely to go online and seek out an answer from a stranger on a health care related question then ask an actual doctor. Playing an active role and support system for these patients where they are currently searching for it, keeps you relevant.

41% OF PEOPLE said social media would affect their choice of a specific doctor, hospital, or medical facility.

Social media can help scale both positive and negative word of mouth, which makes it an important channel for an individual or organization in the health care industry to focus on in order to attract and retain patients.
When developing your social circle, it's important to **REMEMBER THE 3 P’S**

1. **PLATFORM**
   Identify where your followers are and where they will interact.

2. **POST**
   Know what to post or what not to post.

3. **PEOPLE**
   Utilize current and built in fan bases.
For many, it’s difficult to navigate through the many social media platforms. While all can be useful, it’s important to focus on the ones that are most impactful for healthcare practices.

**FACEBOOK** for the foreseeable future will always act as “Home Base.” It remains the most popular site for those who only use one social media channel, and also has significant overlap with other patients that use multiple platforms. The biggest notable change for Facebook is with older adults: For the first time in Pew Research findings, more than half (56%) of Internet users ages 65 and older use Facebook. This represents 31% of all seniors.

An interesting thing to note also about Facebook is the upswing influence over buying purchases on its users. Last year, 68% of Americans using social networks said that none of those networks had an influence on their buying decisions. Now, 47% say Facebook has the greatest impact on purchase behavior (compared to just 24% in 2011). If you want to drive purchase behaviors within social networks, Facebook is the one and only game to play, statistically speaking.

**TWITTER** Generally appealing to a younger demographic, 22.6% of Twitter’s audience is 18-24. Less people frequently interact on Twitter than Facebook, but they still prevalently share information. 49% of Twitter’s monthly users also follow brands.

**SHORT ON TIME?**

Link your facebook and twitter accounts. Linking them will allow every Facebook post to go to Twitter AUTOMATICALLY. Remember your character limit though. Twitter prefers short, sweet and retweetable content.
**PLATFORM**

**YOUTUBE** Video content is king in terms of the level of engagement that can be achieved. So it should be of no surprise to hear that Youtube, **reaches MORE adults ages 18-34 than any SINGLE CABLE TV NETWORK.** In fact, It’s rated by millennials as the top place to watch content, ahead of digital and TV properties like Facebook and ESPN. Leverage your Youtube channel by gathering patient testimonials, and experiences in the office. Consider investing in custom videos about your procedures, for not only educational purposes, but also as a form of content marketing. By relaying information in the way that your patients like to view it, you help bridge gaps of miscommunication and intrigue.

**INSTAGRAM** Instagram is where you often find the millennial generation. It’s **most popular amongst 8-29 year olds** and continues to grow in users daily. Although Twitter and Facebook can be used to inundate followers with posts, Instagram is **heavily influential when showcasing personal experiences.** Encourage your patients to share and tag you in their Instagram posts about their visits, and watch the conversations start.
Now that you have a plan where to post, it’s important to think about the what. What type of content do consumers want from social platforms? This can be categorized into 4 segments of content.

**VISUAL:** 100 is the new 140 (characters I mean). There’s no secret formula to successfully engaging with your audience on social media, but applying ‘The 80/20 Rule’ should always be a big part of your social media strategy. It simply comes down to this: use just 20% of your content to promote your brand, and dedicate 80% to content that really interests your audience and engages them in conversations.

**VISCERAL** evokes emotion. It doesn’t matter who you are, or what you sell, your product features and benefits aren’t enough to create a passion-worthy stir. Disney isn’t about movies, it’s about magic. Apple isn’t about technology, it’s about innovation.

**VALUABLE:** The mechanics of social media, force practices to compete for attention versus your customers’ friends and family members. Your practice has to (at least to some degree) act like a person, not an entity.

**VIRAL:** I don’t know about your practices... but at our office there was intense debate over the color of this dress. There was actually over 7 million tweets about this dress. Did you weigh in? It’s important to keep up and participate with trends... your fans mostly like are too.
In order to master your social circle, it’s important to understand who you are speaking with and how engaged they are in your practice. Break down the “who” using the Pyramid of Influence.

**FANS / FOLLOWERS**
The lowest tier of your pyramid can be categorized into your current fans and followers; patients that at one point liked or followed your practice. Some may be engaged and interact with you while others may not. These patients are the largest segment of your circle and may even encompass your whole social circle.

**TIP TO GROW**
*Post often* (2-3 times a week) with a variety of different content personal to your practice and to fans/followers interests.
**PEOPLE**

**SUPER FANS:** These brand associates are seeking some sort of a brand perk and recognition in exchange for their endorsement.

**EMPLOYEES:** The most often overlooked part of the pyramid are employees. Tap into their existing knowledge, networks, and start giving real human voices to your practice. By increasing favorable brand association with patients and key influencers through credible, real-employee dialogue, we can bridge connections that we can't always initiate from “official” channels.

The last 2 tiers of the pyramid of influence may not be currently a part of your social circle, which is perfectly OK. These individuals are hard to find, and often must be sought out in order to be effective.

**SOCIAL PUBLISHERS** are enthusiasts looking for content and non-cash for what they call “social currency”. Because they seek and share a variety of content they come with a large group of followers, but on the other hand, have very little loyalty.

**SEMI-PRO CONTENT CREATORS:** Professional bloggers and enthusiasts that seek compensation to review/endorse your brand fall under this category. These individuals often come with a loyal following that engages frequently. By examining your local community, you may be able to spot some talent worth approaching.

**TIP TO GROW**

Offer discounted, or free procedures for employees and encourage them to share their experiences on social media.
LISTEN UP!

Social media is valuable only if we open ourselves to listening. Monitor conversations consumers have on social media and find opportunities to participate. It can also give you insights on the type of content that will interest your audience, and help identify industry influencers and brand advocates.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX!

Content that tries to sell doesn’t, content that tries to help does. Keeping your content engaging and fun will keep your practice top of mind.

FOCUS ON QUALITY VS QUANTITY

When it comes to followers, it’s about quality rather than quantity. The number of followers is insignificant compared to the comments, engagement and interactions with followers. Engagement with followers is key to building your brand identity and online presence, which can lead to follower growth. Rather than focusing your efforts on gaining followers, your social media strategy should include:

• Daily social media monitoring.
• Responding to followers' comments.
• Analyzing data about your audience.