



7 Social Media Marketing Tips to Help Grow your Practice

iprov



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Introduction

Social networks are fundamental to the modern world of marketing. Beyond connecting with family and friends, social media has become an essential resource for information including news, jobs, and learning about new products and services. As a healthcare organization trying to market its services to a broader audience, it is critical to establish a presence on these networks.

iProv is a digital marketing company that takes a comprehensive approach to promoting health organizations on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google my Business and many other social platforms. With our guidance, your Clinic can establish a positive, distinguished brand that attracts customers and engages with patients creating steps towards a lasting relationship.

Social media marketing services from iProv

iProv offers many services for your social media accounts. A few of them include:

Advertising on social media

The high traffic of social media platforms makes them ideal for digital ads. Our team designs, launches, and manages your social media advertisements while making sure to keep true to your 'brand'.

Establishing an active network presence

Posting content regularly on social media is one of the best ways to engage with your followers. We will help manage all posts, collect data on engagement, and constantly revamp strategy to make your presence more effective over time.

Social reputation management

By regularly soliciting online reviews and responding to customer comments, together we can build and maintain a positive brand for your health organization.

Forging network connections

Other leaders in the healthcare industry have established followings on social media. We identify those that are highly relevant to your company, share their posts, and link to them from your page to bring in new followers.

CHAPTER 1:

Building Your Brand

Before you begin marketing, you should consider your brand. The voice of your brand, as well as its look and feel, will influence your content.

Know your audience

Knowing your audience is key to designing your brand. It will help you get into the mind of your client and know what they are thinking and feeling. From here you can design content that meets their needs.

iProv uses a story-based method called Storybrand to create customer profiles. Here is how it works.

To begin, answer three basic questions about your clientele:

What do they want?

What are their problems?

What are their fears?

In the healthcare industry, the answers look similar to this:

What do they want? Good health.

What are their problems? Health issues.

What are their fears? Health issues worsening.

Provide answers to these questions that better align with your practice. For example, if you are a woman's clinic, then your customer persona would be a woman with concerns about women-specific health. If you are a counseling center focused on families, then your customers will come to you with concerns about the health of their family relationships and emotional needs.

Next, you should understand your role in helping the client. Think of yourself as a guide with two missions: to provide empathy and to provide a plan that helps solve their problems.

Ultimately, all communication should embody this relationship. It should also have a clear goal or "call to action" (CTA) that gives your client a direct path to services that meet their needs.

Know your competitors

Part of knowing your market is knowing your competitors and differentiating yourself from them. You should have a clear understanding of your competitors' strengths, weakness, and value of services.

Research how and what services your competitors provide, their pricing, and their communication style. Identify their strengths, and compare your own business practices to see if you can make positive changes, and provide more value to your customers. Then, identify their weakness to differentiate yourself in the market.

This will help you identify the advantages of your service. Use your advantages in your brand communication to attract customers.

Design your brand's personality

Designing your brand's personality is all about tone. After you have developed a client persona, consider the ideal style in which to communicate with that persona. This style of communication ranges from very formal to very casual. Which tone suits your business?

Generally, in healthcare, you would not communicate in an overly casual or humorous tone. Healthcare is often a serious topic, and people want to know they are in the hands of someone who takes their health seriously. However, although you might refrain from overly witty or humorous content, it does not mean your tone needs to be dry or unfriendly.

Choose the look of your brand

It is important to design consistent visual branding as well as voice and tone. Creating a logo and color scheme for your business will help customers recognize and remember you.

Once you have designed a brand look, apply it across your business in all methods of communication including online content. This will help customers to associate your branding with your company. They will think about you when they see your brand's imagery, style of communication, and logo.

Good branding means others will recognize your company, and associate it with a specific thought or feeling. For example, when you see the McDonald's golden arches, you may immediately think of a quick, simple meal that makes you hungry. When a client sees your logo, you want them to think of their health and feel secure knowing you care for them.

CHAPTER 2:

Community Engagement Pt. 1, Engaging with Patients

In this chapter, we'll go over the benefits and how-to of engaging with your community via social media.

The benefits of community engagement

Your goal as a healthcare provider when engaging with your community should be threefold: building credibility, reliability, and authority.

Build credibility

Being credible means you are seen as a trustworthy source of information. Your patients can turn to you, whether in an office visit or reading a blog post, to find relevant information and answers to meet their needs.

Think of the scenario of a patient in a time of distress. Maybe they are experiencing scary symptoms, and search the internet for answers. If you have established yourself in the community by consistently posting credible and helpful medical information, then they will turn to your site. Once there, they can find answers to their questions and an immediate path to medical help.

Be reliable

Reliability is about consistency and presence. Once you begin engaging your community through social media, you establish that they can rely on your help beyond the office. Posting regularly shows that you want to help patients find answers and information both in person and online.

Become an authority

Being an authority means establishing yourself among competitors. The internet is full of medical information, but you want your clients to turn to you when they need it. Although many articles highlight the same common medical issues or symptoms, a patient is more likely to trust a source they know and see as credible. This gives you an advantage. You act as the calm voice of reason, providing facts and explaining what to do in medical situations.

How to engage your community

The best strategy to social media community engagement is to post quality content frequently and to interact with your audience.

Here is how to do it:

Provide quality content

Many medical providers determine quality content to align with patient education, meaning you cover topics that interest patients and explain things they should know. This is an excellent first step, but it is certainly not everything. Quality content also needs to be successful. Successful content is findable, shareworthy, readable and actionable.

Findable content

Clients should be able to find and access your content easily. Both social media and SEO, or search engine optimization, can make this happen. When you engage your community and post regularly, your clients see your content. When you create content that applies SEO principles, search engines see and rank your content, helping you grow your audience.

Shareworthy content

Shareworthy content is content that is both interesting and relevant to a broad audience. This often comes down to design. Creating a good article title and a relevant call to action in your social media post will make people more likely to share it. We will go over some techniques to create buzzworthy content like this in chapter 7.

Readable content

Consider the tone and design of your content when you create it. Its writing style and format should be easy to read. If your patients want an answer to a question, then put the blog in Q&A, or question and answer, format. If you know that certain parts of the content are more relevant than others, then put this information in the beginning of the blog so it is easy to access. Do not make your audience work for answers.

Actionable content

This may be the most important attribute of quality content. Without an action, the entire goal of your content strategy is lost. You should always include information in your content on how to take the next step. In the healthcare industry, this usually means setting an appointment.

Interact with your audience

Interacting with your audience means having a direct dialogue. There are three ways to do this: answer patient questions, request feedback, and respond to reviews.

Answer patient questions

Make your social media platforms a place where patients can ask medical advice and get answers. Encourage patients to ask questions online, or create content that answers questions you know patients frequently ask in the office. You can use fun, engaging techniques to do this on social media like polls and interactive Q&As.

Request feedback and respond to reviews

A recent survey found that nearly three-quarters of patients use online reviews to find a new doctor. It also found that the majority of patients leave positive reviews. In the case of a negative review, 65 percent of respondents said it was important for the doctor to respond.

Patients will be more likely to choose you if they see positive feedback about your services. Patients will be more likely to stay with you if you respond to reviews, negative or positive. In cases of negative feedback, engage with the customer, and try to find out what went wrong, then find a solution to the problem, or learn how to avoid it in the future.

CHAPTER 3:

Educate Your Patients

Part of your role as a healthcare provider is to educate your patients. Social media and content marketing allows you to share useful information with patients outside the office. Social networks are an important health resource and not just for the younger generations. A recent study shows that 90 percent of older adults use social media to find and share information on health.

We divide patient outreach content into three categories: raising awareness, general education, and crisis communication.

Why educational content matters

Educational content supports preventative care initiatives.

It is an excellent way to communicate information that may be difficult to include in a short visit. For example, many healthcare brands blog about healthy diet and exercise by sharing recipes or physical games to play as a family. In this platform you can share information in a fun and casual way that is not always possible in an office visit.

It helps clients determine what kind of medical care they need.

The perfect example is cold and flu season. You can create content that helps patients understand the symptoms of colds and flu, and help them determine for themselves when they need to see a doctor.

It builds a rapport with patients.

Providing relevant content regularly helps you build a stronger relationship with your patients. It establishes you as an authority in the field, making you the one they will seek in a time of need.

Content that raises awareness

Content that raises awareness is timely and can be used to counter common misinformation. Vaccines are a great example. There is plenty of misinformation online about vaccines. It is important to add your voice to the conversation, and inform patients on the true benefits of vaccines as well as when and where to get them.

Other timely topics include flu season or allergy season. Content could also be specific to your practice, introducing new treatments that have become available, new equipment, or other new services.

General education

General education does not need to be timely. Instead, it should be more focused on patient relevance. Use your unique understanding of your patients to provide information that meets their needs. Consider again the vaccine example. If you serve a large clientele of new mothers, then you could provide them a guide of when to get vaccines and information explaining the benefits of each vaccine. Do this in the format of an internet-friendly infographic to make it shareable.

It is challenging to brave the internet to find useful, reliable healthcare information. Be the trusted source of information that provides clients FAQs and informative pieces on common healthcare topics. You can show your clients that you are a reliable source of in-depth clinical knowledge by making the unknown easy to understand.

Crisis communication

Be the comforting voice of reason during medical emergencies such as epidemics and FDA warnings. You should prepare in advance for how you will communicate during a crisis.

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The American Society for Healthcare Risk Management and the Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development created a [guide on crisis communication](#) for healthcare providers. Here are some key points:

- Establish a team leader for crisis communication who will lead strategy and messaging.
- Designate a spokesperson.
- Make sure content provides facts and that all content is honest, not speculative or exaggerative.
- Follow up when you agree to do so, even if new information is unavailable.

CHAPTER 4:

Community Engagement Pt. 2, Partner with Healthcare Leaders

Participating in the healthcare conversation among other professionals around the world and in your area shows patients that you want to stay active and relevant in the healthcare community. Here is how to do it.

Share valuable content

Follow other leaders on social media platforms and share valuable content. Not all content needs to be original. In fact, it is quite the opposite! Social media is about being social and sharing relevant, buzzworthy content. If you see something you think will interest your patients and meets your brand guidelines and mission of patient education, then share it!

Collaborate on healthcare projects and initiatives

Collaboration can take many forms whether strictly in the realm of the internet (sharing and following other healthcare leaders) or by collaborating on real-world projects and healthcare initiatives.

Participating in online healthcare initiatives is a fun thing to do. Examples include the [Ice-Bucket Challenge](#) that raised awareness for ALS and [Movember](#), which happens every November and raises awareness for men's health issues.

Examples of real-world healthcare projects include preventative care initiatives, fundraisers for a cure, and blood drives. These type of projects are great for creating relationships with other healthcare providers in your area that engage the community on a local level. Lastly, they are opportunities for you to meet with clients and prospective clients face-to-face, and show that you care about their wellbeing.

Top 5 healthcare brands on social media

In a world of heavy regulation, many in the healthcare industry stay away from heavy promotion on social media. However, these brands provide us an excellent example of how to do it right. As you begin to follow leaders in the industry, start with these.

Johnson & Johnson

[Johnson & Johnson](#) focuses its social media marketing heavily towards mothers and children. It often partners with doctors and other leaders in the healthcare industry to produce quality, interesting, and buzzworthy content. It also provides some excellent examples of crisis management.

The Cleveland Clinic

[The Cleveland Clinic](#) does an excellent job of providing general education content for consumers. It focuses on preventative care and promoting wellness, rather than content around sickness or disease. This content allows them to be a resource in the daily life of their followers.

The Mayo Clinic

[The Mayo Clinic](#) aims for their patients to become advocates for their own care. It uses their social media platforms to give patients access to the best information, to connect with quality providers, and to connect with each other.

Massachusetts General Hospital

The number one research hospital in America, [Massachusetts General Hospital](#) has a strong social media presence with over 80,000 followers on Facebook. It does an excellent job of putting a face on its name, often profiling its staff and personal achievements. This can help take the “scare factor” out of going to the doctor.

John Hopkins University

[John Hopkins](#) promotes a variety of content including profiles of alumni, medical research, and wellness tools for use by the general public. Its combines high authority and down-to-earth content, an interesting mixture that serves both patients and professionals.

CHAPTER 5:

The Power of Images & Video

Visuals resonate with people more than just text. Use images on your blog posts and social media updates whenever you can.

Choose images that fit your brand.

Just as you would do with content, use your brand guidelines to help you choose images. Here are a few tips for choosing the right images.

Think personal, not clinical.

Keeping with the idea of building a social relationship with your clients, you want to express your brand's human side. Consider warm photos of patients and doctors, not cold photos of medical equipment.

Use real photos of doctors and patients.

In the digital age, it is easy to spot a cheesy stock photo. Sure, you may use your fair share of these in your content, but use real imagery when possible. Putting a face to your practice will give it a very warm, human tone to which people will be attracted.

Use something other than photography.

Especially in the medical world with often scary or intimidating imagery like surgery, it may be preferable to use animations to send a message. Animated imagery can also help to explain complicated procedures in a simple manner. You can use this type of imagery very well in videos or infographics.

This Cleveland Clinic video uses a simple combination of animated graphics and text to explain how certain healthy lifestyle changes can benefit cancer survivors. The clinic uses this simple animated style over and over again with different topics to great effect.

Use your logo.

Use your logo whenever you can. If it is photos of staff, make sure they are wearing something with the logo on it. This will help create a streamlined look and feel, allowing your audience to associate an image with your brand.

Take a look at [this post](#) from Massachusetts General Hospital. It is a simple template for pull-out quotes that incorporates a photo and a logo and can be used over and over again.

Video marketing

Video marketing is the fastest growing and most important medium for information on the web. It is more engaging than written content, has been proven to have a [huge return on investment](#), and works wonders with SEO.

We use it too. “Video is one of the most impactful marketing tools for brand recognition and holds a ton of value for viewers. It is one of the most effective ways to introduce yourself and showcase your mission, vision, and culture,” says iProv’s Creative Director and head of video production.

Video gives clientele a real-life picture of your healthcare brand that is easy to digest and share. Jump to Chapter 7 for video-making ideas.

Infographics, GIFs, and animated text

Beyond pictures and videos, infographics, GIFs, and animated text are great ways to capture your audience’s attention. They can extend the chances of going viral in a positive way, promoting your brand and getting your business known. This type of content is extremely shareable, because it stands out. It is fun and differentiates you from other healthcare social media accounts that might posts dry, boring content.

CHAPTER 6:

Make a Content Strategy

A content strategy involves two steps: making a content plan and promoting your content. Promoting your content on social media gets your patients to read it and drives healthy traffic to your site.

The benefits of planning content in advance

Having a set of images, stories, and posts created ahead of time and scheduled to post in intervals helps you stay on top of your social media and ensures posts keep to your brand. Obviously, things will come up, and you will need to create other posts on the spot, but having a content plan takes a lot of the grunt work out of it. The benefits of planning your content in advance are generous, and here are a few examples.

Planned content gets created.

Rather than having a vague deadline to post “something” every week or two, a content plan means you are more likely to post quality content on time and on brand.

You do not just post to post.

Planning ahead gives you time and energy to put more into your posts and content. This produces a higher quality end result that will actually help you reach your goal of community engagement.

It is efficient.

You can focus on creating the right content instead of lots of mediocre content. When you post so-so content, you can lose followers. Posting with higher quality and less frequency, however, will have the opposite effect.

Make a content calendar

Create a content calendar with the text, links, images, and videos you will use for each post. This will help you map out your content, ensuring that you create content in many categories using a variety of types like video, blog, or sharing content.

Once you have complete this, you can directly schedule content on the social media platforms, set to post at on a future date or at a certain time intervals. You can create Instagram posts, Facebook posts, and stories in the right size with the same or corresponding images for a post. You can also utilize engaging social media tactics like Facebook polling, tagging, or simply asking a question to your audience.

Determining the right frequency of posting for your practice really depends on your bandwidth. Most importantly, you should create an achievable plan. Do not post too often, or post content that is outside the scope of your brand. A poor quality image, caption, or unmatching post can really stand out in a negative way.

Use direct language

When you post, you should have a goal in mind for the user to take action. This could be clicking a link, commenting below, or, the ultimate goal, scheduling an appointment. The best way to accomplish this is to use direct language that tells them what you want.

Use active language, and be specific. Examples include Like, Comment, Click, Register, Tweet, Share, Vote, or Tag. Here are a few more examples:

- Is this helpful? Leave a comment letting us know!
- Like if you would you do this exercise!
- Tag a friend to challenge them to do push-ups with you!
- Like if you made this recipe. Leave a heart if you loved it!

Create a sense of urgency

People are more likely to engage in content if they feel there is a reason to do it now. Create posts that contain a sense of urgency. Use phrasing like:

- Offer expires...
- Only 2 more days...
- Get your flu shot before...

Reuse content

You can reuse content or blog articles, but update the information in the social caption. Even something as short as a cute quip or meme can create a more updated feel.

Manage your reputation

Encouraging and responding to comments, reviews, and other feedback is an important part of any social media content strategy. Make sure you reserve time at least once a week to do this.

Social media is a platform where patients can share their experiences. You need to be present in order to respond, especially in the case of negative feedback. Remember that prospective patients are likely to check your social media reviews. This plays an important part in their final decision of choosing a healthcare provider.

Stay compliant

Healthcare brands have a unique responsibility in social media in that they need to remain compliant with HIPAA guidelines. It can often pose a challenge, and keeps many brands off social media. The payoff, however, makes it a challenge worth facing.

Be careful when publishing any content that might reveal sensitive information about a patient. Make sure that you have explicit written consent from a patient before publishing anything about them.

Chapter 7:

Beyond Blogging: Q&As, Customer Stories, & Interactive Content

Creative content separates you from the competition. Here are some tips to get you thinking outside the box.

Q&As

As healthcare professionals, you know that the [growing phenomenon of self-diagnosis](#) is not always in the patient's best interest. In many cases, it can lead patients astray and cause unnecessary anxiety. Yet people still have questions about their health. Social media provides access to their doctor right at their fingertips!

The Q&A format is straightforward, and audiences love it. It gives your patients quick answers and builds rapport and trust.

Lead up to the Q&A with engaging content. You can do a series of posts asking your audience to bring questions, and get the buzz going about the video or blog. Let Q&A sessions focus on a topic. You can even create a series about it.

Customer stories

Customer stories (also called testimonials) are fantastic marketing for your business. In fact, 89 percent of businesses consider video testimonials to be the [most effective content marketing tactic](#). They are real and natural and showcase a potential client's desired result. In other words, customer stories are relatable.

When you have a patient who had a successful procedure or appears satisfied with general services, ask them to talk about their experience. Oftentimes, customers will be very open to this. For many people, it is fun to be in the spotlight!

These stories will work wonders for bringing in prospective patients. Testimonials are another form of review that is extremely powerful, especially in the video format.

When making customer stories, be sure to remain [HIPAA compliant](#).

Behind the scenes

Video is the ultimate medium for behind-the-scenes content. Showcase your facilities, walk clients through popular or common procedures, or introduce new equipment. This type of content highlights the fun side of your practice by not only introducing the audience to your space but also to your staff.

Staff profiles are a key part of "behind-the-scenes" content that allows your clientele to get to know your staff with miniature video bios. You can showcase staff achievements and their friendly bedside manner.

User-generated content

This option has proven very powerful. Content “from the voice of the people” is relatable and real. It is also easy to achieve in today’s world of geo-tagging. Tell your patients you are active on social media so they can include you on their posts.

Hashtags

If you are ever in a content rut, the world of hashtags is a wealth of inspiration. If you find a trending topic that is healthcare related, then do not be afraid to jump on it. However, do not stray from your brand. It can tarnish a reputation to see your doctor’s office tweeting about a trending Hollywood debacle or the latest political debate.

Interactive content

The goal of social media is getting your audience to participate, and interactive content pushes a strong call to do it. Many of the following examples are simple to set up in social media platforms like Facebook.

Polls and quizzes

Polls and quizzes are a fun way to engage your audience, and get their opinions on things. Use this to further your content initiatives (like asking them what they want to hear about), or get a brief look into their health (like asking about their health concerns or testing their health knowledge).

Challenges

Challenges help healthcare brands make a difference. Posting daily challenges can be as simple as daring patients to get a flu shot today or daring them not to drink soda today. Challenges can also be more complex, like a weekly workout plan. Encouraging patients to take part in wellness not only improves their quality of life, but it draws attention back to your brand. A branded hashtag like **#MyHospital** could encourage your engaged patients to send more people to your practice.

Imagine what a well crafted social media strategy could do to grow your practice. Imagine taking advantage of free tools to generate more referrals, better reviews, and more revenue.

Ready to get started? Schedule an appointment with one of our consultants now!

[Book an Appointment](#)

or call 501-213-1171.

The logo for 'iprov' features a stylized lowercase 'i' with a horizontal bar above it and a dot below it. The letters 'p', 'r', 'o', and 'v' are in a bold, sans-serif font.