



Market the Benefits, not the Features

Joel Harris, CEO of ADA Intelligent Dental Marketing, explains the advantages of focusing your marketing efforts around your patients rather than your practice. What have you done for them lately?

If you want to make sure that you succeed in your practice marketing efforts, make sure you understand that the most important consideration creating an effective AD is to focus on the benefit to the consumer in choosing you as their dentist. Most dental practices are way too focused on the features of their practices and are not consumer focused in their advertising and marketing efforts.

If you analyze most dental ads, you'll notice that they are all about how long the practice has been in the business, where the dentist received their degree, the number of awards they have won, the beautiful facility, the kinds of restorative procedures they provide and their advanced training. Most dental practices actually think that the longer the list of features, the better. Unfortunately, what consumers want to read or see or hear is shockingly different.

Consumers really don't want to hear about you. Consumers want to know how you can benefit them. In fact, in an age-old service business like dentistry it is even more important that you clearly define for consumers what you will do to make their lives in some way better, easier, simpler or improved.

Rule number 1 is the rule of WIIFM – It means "what's in it for me?"

- Family Dentistry
- Cosmetic Dentistry
- Digital Technology
- 15 Years Experience

WELCOME

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You need to plant your message into your customers' brain and speak to their needs, their wants, their fears, their pain and their desires. After you've got the attention of a consumer (which might last only seconds) you've got to go to the next level of communication by clearly defining benefits, and show them how your unique products and services can help solve their problems, achieve results they only dream about, and take away pain that they might have been feeling in a particular area of their life.

Finding the most effective benefit statements can take some trial and error, but once you have identified the benefits that make consumers in your community respond to your marketing and advertising tactics, you've got to push the messages hard and repeatedly in all parts of your marketing campaign.

When creating benefits statements think about things like, how much time will they save? How is it going to make their life easier? How much money they can save in the long run? How will it make them feel better about themselves.

Most dentists are not very creative when it comes to differentiating their practices from the competition. They are usually constrained to the features that they see in every other dental ad and end up just like everyone else in their market. The obvious question then becomes why would a consumer begin to notice you among your competitors. Your aim must be to interrupt and demand attention from your customers. Telling a consumer that you have friendly staff and that you are a family dentist won't cut it.

Being different, brutally honest and "in-your-face" will make you stand out from the crowd. Avoid marketing messages based on facts and logic but instead advertise based on the emotions of consumers. Be enthusiastic in your approach and just shy of over the top. Such a style will strengthen your chances of a making an impact on consumers. People attach emotions to the thoughts they have, so you need to grab them by their emotion.

People buy based on emotion, then they justify their purchase decisions based on logic. We buy something we want, then justify and rationalize our decision to make us feel OK with the decision we made. As consumers we all operate this way, and as dental professionals you must follow the same emotional flow to make your advertising and marketing efforts as effective as possible.

Once you have clearly defined the benefits of your practice, make it a priority to include a call to action. Remember the advertising formula AIDA, which

means, "Attention, Interest, Desire and Action". It is also important to remember that when you get to the call to action, you take your potential new patient by the hand and instruct them exactly on what you want them to do. If they are ready to buy, they will be waiting for your direction, and it's your responsibility to direct them. "Call us today to schedule your first appointment", or "Call us now and ask us about Free Whitening for Life" are just two examples.

I can promise you that if you'll keep these basic concepts in mind during your career that you'll see a level of advertising success that most dentists will never experience.

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Joel Harris is a co-founder and President of ADA Intelligent Dental Marketing located in Salt Lake City, Utah. His company provides powerful marketing tools to help dentists grow their patient base, increase the profit and improve their image. Joel is also the author of the book, Breakthrough Dental Marketing.