

Currents

May-June 2017

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Email is not dead!

Why you should immediately invest in a good email marketing strategy

By Jennifer Kilkenny, Managing Director at Total Social Solutions

Your website is one of your most important digital assets. But there's another asset that is almost as valuable to your practice: Your email list.

Why is email so important?

Despite the growing use of text messaging and direct messenger apps, reliance on email has never dwindled. In fact, 99.4 percent of Americans are checking their email at least once per day, with 33.8 percent saying they check email periodically throughout the day and 39 percent saying they check up to three times per day.*

That's a lot of marketing opportunity. The most important reason to immediately invest in email marketing is that **these are people who are already presold** on your practice and the services you provide. Your email list will usually include current patients, former patients and non-patient self-subscribers.

Current patients: Patient retention and referrals

You already know that patient acquisition costs five times as much as patient retention. Happy patients will also refer their friends and family to you for free. In addition to excellent patient care and a support staff dedicated to customer service, email marketing helps you achieve both of these goals.

Patient retention is achieved through monthly or bi-monthly email messages

that provide a balance between:

1. **Education:** Blog articles, new product announcements and quick skin care tips.
2. **Recent news:** Board-certification renewals, new providers and change of hours.
3. **Exclusive offers:** Monthly specials and event invitations.

Coupled with well-written content, high-quality graphics and clear calls-to-action, you will see increased patient retention. **You will also begin to see up-sell conversion**, as patients begin to explore other treatments and products within your practice.

Referrals are achieved once you've established a good relationship with your current patients. By adding the following calls-to-action to your email messages, you give your patients an easy way to refer their friends and family and share their experiences with potential prospects:

- **Request for reviews:** Links to popular review sites like Yelp and Google, plus industry sites like RealSelf and Vitals.
- **Forward to a friend:** A simple link that does all of the work for the recipient; all they need to do is enter email addresses.
- **Share on social media:** A series of links that open a draft in the social network of their choice, with a link to your newsletter.

These can be used repeatedly to encourage your current patients to continue referring their friends and family to your practice, **helping your practice grow organically over time.**

Quick tip: To increase your referrals, try implementing a "Bring a Friend" special to encourage patients to bring a non-patient in for a free consultation or a patient education seminar. Offer a referral or new patient discount.

Former patients: Win them back

How many patients have you seen once and never saw again? With email marketing, you have an opportunity to **win them back**. Stay "top of mind" with messages to remind them why they came to you, or persuade them back with a special offer that is easy to act upon. Even if they aren't interested in returning, they may find your content interesting and forward to a friend, helping you secure a new patient.

Quick tip: Send a "we miss you" email to only former patients with an exclusive offer expiring soon.

Non-patient self-subscribers

Website design can increase patient acquisition with a well-placed "subscribe" call-to-action. You might also have a list of people who indicated interest in your services, but have never actually scheduled an appointment. Email marketing to non-patient self-subscribers can help convert these leads into patients.

Non-patient self-subscribers are warm leads. In addition to calling or emailing them back personally in order to schedule an immediate appointment,



DIGITAL MARKETING

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adding them to your email list is vital. They've already expressed an interest in your practice and services. By sending them regular emails, you can win their business without any additional effort.

Quick Tip: Offer an introductory special to your warm leads, such as a free consultation, savings on their first cosmetic treatment or a complimentary non-prescription skin care product.

What about new patient acquisition?

Much like your non-patient self-subscribers, you can use subscription forms on your website and on social media to encourage people to subscribe to your newsletter, rather than going straight for the appointment. This is perfect for those people who aren't ready to have a procedure, but are

thinking about it and need more time to get to know you better.

Some ways you can grow your list include:

Your website: Include a simple subscription form on your site to collect names and email addresses that feeds directly into your subscriber list with no manual work required of you or your team.

Social media: Convert your social media fans into email subscribers by linking to your subscription forms.

Internet advertising: Use paid ads to reach new people in your area who are interested in your products and services.

What to do next:

Discuss solutions with your team.
Subscribe to your competitors' email

newsletters and reach out to colleagues to find out what's working for them. Put together a strategy and email calendar that align with your blog and social media calendars. Get referrals for email marketing professionals, graphic designers, content writers and conversion experts who can help you get started quickly and efficiently. Remember to look at your open rates, click-through rates and conversion rates to uncover the content your subscribers are responding to. Email is certainly not dead and can be a vital component of your marketing plan. ■

**Email marketing statistics based on 2015 data acquired by Business Insider, <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-often-do-people-check-their-email-2015-8>*

Kenneth W. Fields, MD, Resident Education Enrichment Scholarship Program

Deadline: July 31, 2017

In memory of ASDS member Kenneth W. Fields, MD, ASDS is pleased offer this generous program designed to enrich and support the educational development of two ASDS resident members. It provides the opportunity to attend:

- 2018 ASDS Premier Annual Resident Cosmetic Symposium
- 2017 ASDS Annual Meeting
- ASDS Resident Preceptorship (two-day visit)

■ ASDS residents in their second year of training are eligible to participate. For more information, please visit asds.net/FieldsScholarship.

■ To support this program or make a donation in the name of Kenneth W. Fields, MD, please contact Helen Prostko at 847-956-9140 or hprostko@asds.net.

Dedicated Physician, Role Model, Friend to All

A gifted doctor and surgeon, Dr. Fields was an incredible role model. He embodied what every doctor should be – professional and yet a friend. He truly enjoyed his patients and brought a joy for life to everything he did.

Kenneth W. Fields, MD
1958 – 2016