

Marketing Minute: Creating Effective E-Newsletters

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Each day, your patients' email inboxes are flooded with newsletters and e-blasts craving their attention. Whether they come from daily deal sites, their favorite big box stores or their tried and true online retailers, the sheer volume of these newsletters are causing consumers to hit the delete button without even opening up the email.

So in a sea of sameness, how can you make your e-correspondence stand out?

- **Brand your e-blasts.** Give your communication the look and feel of your practice. Include the colors and logo of your branding; photos of your providers; and your practice's voice. For example, if you have a more laid-back coastal practice in California, the graphics and wording may be more casual than those of an upscale practice in Manhattan.

- **Speak the patient's language.** Make sure your newsletter is written in the patient's preferred language. While the majority of aesthetic patients in the U.S. cite English as their first language, a growing number of practices in certain areas of the country are serving

primarily non-English speaking patients. For instance, we have clients in Miami who communicate with 90% of their patients in Spanish. If that's the case with your practice as well, consider publishing two separate e-newsletters—one in English and another in the primary language of your practice.

- **Ditch the lengthy diatribe.** Of course, you want to tell your patients about each and every amazing thing your practice offers. But in reality consumers are running shorter and shorter on time, and having a harder time choosing from the number of messages competing for their attention. Choose a single message, keep it brief and encourage them to click through for more information if your message catches their eye.
- **A picture is worth a thousand words.** Be sure to include graphics and photos that will catch your patients' eye. Promoting laser hair removal? A great image of a sexy pair of legs will catch their eyes more than a photo of a laser. They want THOSE legs! Promoting leg vein treatments or permanent makeup? This is the time to show your best before-and-after photos, showing off your results and instilling trust in your practice.
- **Link back to your website.** Following the short-and-sweet description of the service or offer you're promoting, provide a link back to your website where prospective patients can find more information on the procedure, product or concern. This is where more detailed information can be provided and the most common questions can be answered. Then encourage them to contact your practice for more information or to set up a consult with a strong call to action.
- **Segment your e-blasts.** E-newsletters are most effective when they touch on a topic or concerns of interest to the individual patients. Use your communications to share specific offers with specific patients by targeting your e-blasts according to patient demographic or specific concerns/interests raised in prior appointments. For example, promote hand rejuvenation treatments to your older patients and laser hair removal to your younger patients.

- **Keep your list fresh.** Make sure you have a banner or link on your website that directs current and prospect patients to subscribe to your e-newsletter. This serves as the formal “opt-in” requirement. (Most email services offer website coding that does this.) Train your front desk staff to confirm patients’ email addresses during visits and over the phone, and make sure that information is synced with your email marketing system, so addresses are automatically updated.
- **Watch your language.** Did you know some words in the title section of your promotion will trigger email systems to categorize them as SPAM? Avoid words like FREE, Buy Direct and Order Now, to make sure that your email lands into the hands—and devices—of your patients.
- **Quality beats quantity.** Rather than investing money into buying email lists—which can land you in hot water if recipients have not opted in to your newsletter database—focus on building a list of existing patients and event attendees and creating quality content for those who have specifically opted in to your list.
- **Include a special call tracking phone number.** This allows you to track the results of each e-newsletter and blast, so you can zero in on the most effective messages.
- **Analyze your results.** Within a week of the campaign, most people will have acted on your calls to action. Take the time to look at how many appointments were booked, which offers they called about, which links they click on in your e-blast, and how many people opted out. Knowing this data is important and using it for your next e-blast is key to continued growth and success.

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