

## The New Internet Marketing Machine

Stephanie Beck

Let's face it: we have so many new ways to do business. Social media and online marketing keeps advancing and it can be difficult to keep up. For some, about the time they decided to step into the social media world, all the rules changed. Like the recent 180 degree change with Facebook. Look on the bright side, instead of trying to catch up with your competition; you have an even playing field because EVERYONE has to upgrade their technology. The truth is marketing has shifted from a one-way broadcast to a multi-point conversation and you need to take action to stay competitive.

In 2011 97% of consumers used online searches when researching products and services. When searching for information, where do you think these smart savvy shoppers are finding this information? Where are you going to find your IDEAL patients or any patients for that matter? You have a new Marketing Machine at your disposal, and as long as you are using it correctly it will produce GREAT results. As Chiropractors you want to focus on what you do best, providing patients with the best chiropractic care. Finding patients doesn't have to be a struggle. Go where your potential patients are spending time and implement your new marketing machine with strategies to get you the results you desire.

"Old school" marketing techniques like sending out letters, and Yellow Page Ads are losing their effectiveness without additional help from online marketing. According to Yahoo 92% of all business searchers start looking online, either at home or on their mobile phones. Is your chiropractic practice easy to find online by your ideal patients? Are you active in all the places where your ideal patients are hanging out online? Do you have an easy automated way to follow up with them over time? If not, why not?

### Updating the Strategy

Updating your strategy is important; when I started working for a healthcare manufacturer over 12 years ago as part of our Distributor criteria we would ask the business owner inquiring about distributorships to submit a copy of their Yellow Page Ad with their application.

A few years later we were requiring websites and more changes have been implemented since that time. Do you realize new Chiropractors entering today's workforce have no idea what a Yellow Pages Phone Book is? Recently, the Encyclopedia Britannica announced they would no longer be printing new editions everything would be accessed online! This isn't just about the newest generation.

If today's patient wants to look something up they grab their phone or computer not a reference book. In 2011, over 90% of the U.S. Population uses a cellular phone. Sixty-five percent of mobile users said they used their mobile device to find a business to make a purchase. In terms of the types of information mobile users will be looking for, 31% said they will look for updates on sales and promotions, 27% will look for local store hours and directions! Guess what, a certain percentage of those people are looking for chiropractors!

How many online directories have you listed your chiropractic practice? Yelp, City Search, Insider

Pages, Merchant Circle, Google Places, Facebook Places and Yahoo Local are great ways to get started and all FREE.

Your strategy for directories is to be complete and be consistent. Make sure you use the same spelling the same way for all listings. If you spell out Avenue or Street for one listing, you need to keep it consistent for all. Fill in as much as you can, photos, videos, mission statement, services and every option the directory gives you as an opportunity for potential patients to know about your practice. Lastly, ask friends to like and place reviews on these directories and let your patients know where you can be found.

YouTube? Yes, YouTube

Did you know most consider You Tube to be the second largest search engine? You Tube gets more than 300,000,000 visitors a month who watch more than 2,000,000,000 videos. Patients go there to look for videos to answer their questions, show them how to do something, or review a product or business.

When patients are searching for information online and given a choice of reading content or watching a video, approximately 56% will choose to watch a video. If you want to use You Tube as a part of your marketing machine be sure you use this strategy. Create informational based videos, not promotional based videos! Patients don't care about your product or service. They care and choose to do business with Doctors who have solutions to problems they need solved. So, if you are going to create videos make them about solving problems for your patients and remember to include a clear "Call To Action" or next step that you want them to do after they watch the video. Also when you post your video include in your description a website link or contact information of how they are to reach you. If used effectively, online video is the most powerful way to educate, inform, and build a community of customers and potential patients about chiropractic care.

[pb]Other avenues for businesses and where to find patients are to use blogs. Did you know there are more than 200,000,000 blogs? People are more likely to visit blogs that align with their interests because blogs are non-selling environments! This should be good news for chiropractors who do not care to be "selling"! Think about it, you have completed several hours of education and attended many Continuing Education courses; do you think you could share helpful information about the body or how chiropractic care can help the body?

If your best friend was suffering from stress, inflammation, or other forms of pain, what advice would you share to help them? Does massage help any of these, how? Why? You could probably and easily explain in 500 words or less to your best friend how chiropractic care can help them. Try that mindset when you consider blogging. Topical blogs and article directories establish authority and credibility for you and your chiropractic practice. Wordpress is the most common website with a blog format; you can also use livejournal, Tumblr, or Travepod.

The Big Boys

Over 800,000,000 monthly users of Facebook make this a very powerful part of the new Internet Marketing Machine. The fact that Facebook recently changed their strategy has created an even playing field for all businesses using this tool!

The new strategy for Facebook is to visually attract your patients, engage them, converse with them on a regular basis. No "drive by" postings, this means you shouldn't post something and walk away for a week! Set it up so your page responses are connected to your email so you can easily respond to anyone who makes a comment or likes your page when you are checking your

emails. Allot yourself a specific time to invest on any social media sites and stick to them. You will be surprised how 10 minutes a day can increase your brand and value on Facebook.

One of the fastest growing social sites is Google+ and Google+ Pages, Google reported over 100,000,000 active users within the first year! Facebook took almost 18 months to reach their first 100,000,000 and Google seems to have picked up steam. They offer many features for businesses, you can create circles and your content is indexed quicker since it is owned by Google.

LinkedIn has over 100,000,000 users monthly; since this forum is mostly used by professionals the most powerful strategy is to be part of the discussions. Join groups where your knowledge and services can be applied. Look for discussions with business owners where you both could benefit. This is also a good way to stay connected with other professionals and organizations within your chiropractic community. We all need to be connected and sometimes it is best to do that with others that share an understanding of our struggles first hand.

One of the more "up and coming" social sites is Pinterest. This new social site is certainly visual engaging. A lot of doctors are asking, "how do I use this?" This isn't like an ad space, no promoting or advertising your practice, just sharing valuable information. Doctors and individuals pin interesting, photos, poems, inspirational quotes, recipes, patterns, and all kinds of information. So Pinterest and Facebook have a similar strategy, use visual engaging photo and share educational information. Although you can not mention your website, phone, or email, you can still share information that will increase other's view as an expert and trust you.

#### Think Like a Patient

With any social media sites one great strategy is always think like your patient. Anticipate their needs and what they will be searching for online. Maybe they are looking for a way to relieve neck and back pain, or a healthy alternative to getting a good night's sleep? Could chiropractic care benefit anyone struggling with pain? Of course, so be smart when it comes to sharing information. Think in terms of how your ideal patients will need help. What kind of answers are your patients and potential patients seeking and how your service meets those needs. Now pretend you are having a conversation with them, ask questions and share information about solutions without being a commercial about your practice. Use the 80/20 rule. 80% keep it educational, 20% promotional. Another way to look at it is at least once a week be sure to include a post specifically for a special, promotion, offer, coupon, or other reason for them to make a purchase now.

Marketing online isn't an option anymore, it's a requirement. It's where your patients and potential patients are searching to find businesses they can trust to buy services and get their problems solved. Marketing online is no longer just having a website where people can come to find your practice. It's about going where they are online and connecting with them in those locations. Internet search engines, directories and social media are fast fuel-burning engines.

If you're not delivering something new on a regular basis, you're going to get left on the side of the road by someone else who is. Once you get found, engage with your followers on their terms. Get them to follow you on Twitter, Fan you on Facebook, or subscribe to your YouTube channel. Offer more insightful information, expert perspective, recommendations and news. As you build relationships, you will earn their trust and more importantly earn their business. Continue to engage and follow up. Provide valuable information and make offers 20% of the time. Integrate all the elements of your marketing machine so they amplify each other and are working together to keep your practice going and growing.

