



7 Insider Tips to Help You Create a Successful Marketing Strategy



Welcome

Like most things in business, you need a sound strategy for marketing success.

Don't waste time with an Insta graphic here, a Facebook post there, or a bit of tinkering on your website.

An ad hoc approach won't achieve much.

Instead, let's start from the beginning and walk through a comprehensive marketing strategy for your healthcare practice. Your strategy is likely to include website improvements and social media posts but they'll be done more purposefully with clear messages targeted to a particular audience.

Here's our top 7 tips for creating a successful marketing strategy for your practice.

01

Identify what makes you unique

Knowing who you are is the first step of your marketing strategy.

You need to have a clear sense of purpose and understand the value you offer to your patients. If you're vague about these things, you can only communicate indistinct, unconvincing messages to your patients.

Your vision and mission will align everyone in your practice toward a single purpose, and provide the direction for your marketing activities.

- ▶ A vision describes **where** the organisation is heading and **what** it seeks to achieve. The vision is **what** you want to become.
- ▶ The mission, sometimes called purpose, focuses on **why** the vision is important. The mission is **why** you do **what** you do.

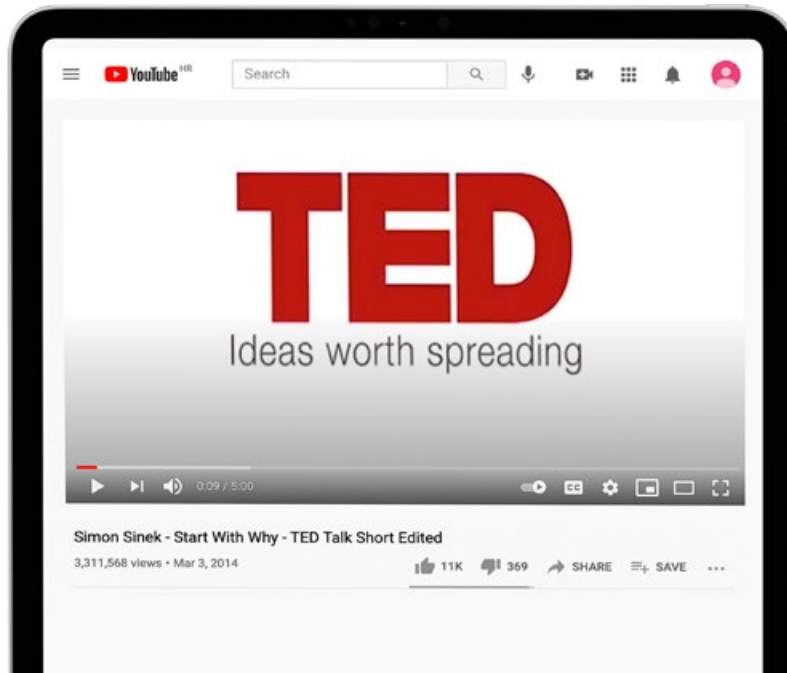
Developing these statements with your team is a valuable exercise. It strengthens your camaraderie, crystallises your purposes and catalyses your marketing efforts. Engage your team in the process by brainstorming questions such as:

- ▶ Why does our practice exist?
- ▶ Why is our work important?
- ▶ Why do you come to this workplace (beyond to get paid)?
- ▶ Do you feel you're making a difference? How? Why do you care about working here?
 - What feedback do you hear from patients about why they use our practice? What are you doing that makes a difference in their lives?
- ▶ Look at our main goals: what is your benchmark for success?

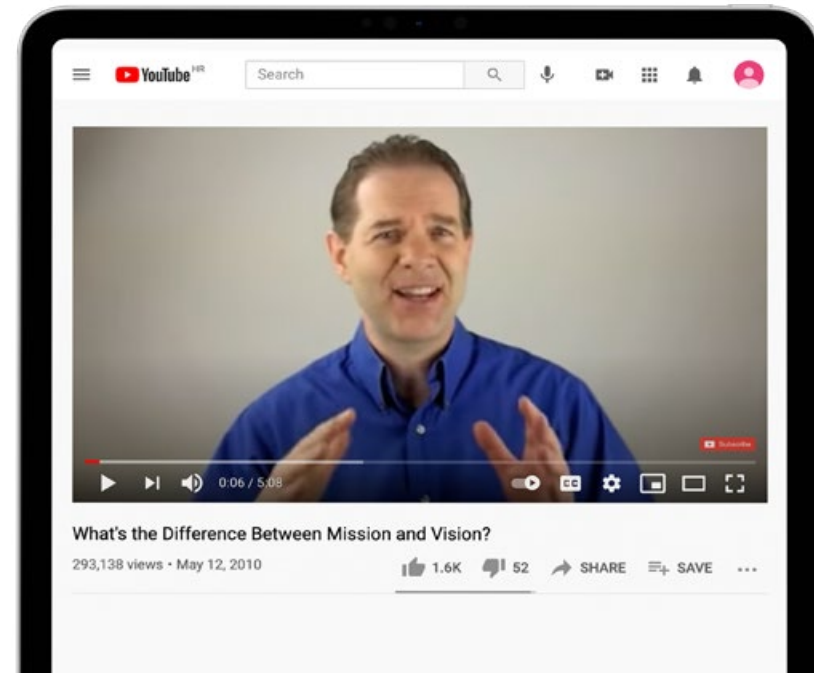
Use these answers to start crafting your vision and mission. Don't get hung up on the precise wording, and don't be surprised if this process takes weeks. You'll know you have these statements right when they feel right and when they energise people, not when the words are perfect and polished.



Want to learn more?



*Simon Sinek's famous TED Talk on
'Start With Why'*



*Bruce Johnson on
'What's the Difference Between
Mission and Vision?'*

02

Understand **your** patients/audience

Now you're clear about your purpose, the focus shifts to defining your patients so you understand how to communicate with them convincingly.

It's not enough to say, 'Our practice deals with everyone'. That might be your goal clinically but it can't be your approach to marketing. For your marketing to be effective, you must clearly define your patients so you know exactly who you're targeting and serving.

Think about the people who make up most of your patients. You won't turn the others away, but you can't market to 'everyone'. Think about:

- ▶ What defines your patients? Are they older people, young families with children, city workers? Are they mainly wealthy, or from lower socioeconomic areas?
- ▶ What differentiates your patients from those who attend other practices?
- ▶ How do their needs match with your offerings? Are there gaps? If you're in a multicultural area, do you have bilingual doctors? Do your patients know that?

A patient-centric approach focuses on crafting your message, products, services and content around the needs of your patients.

If you find you have different groups of patients, then segment them based on common characteristics, treatment types or conditions so that you can market to each group effectively by providing content that is specific and relevant to their health needs. Start with one group.



03

Set your marketing goals and KPIs

Now that you've got a really clear understanding of your practice and your patients, it's time to set some goals for your marketing efforts.

Your marketing goals direct your activities and provide a benchmark that helps you measure success.

A SMART goal is a carefully planned, clear and trackable objective. It stands for **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based**.





Specific

Replace a vague goal like 'increase patient numbers' with a more specific one like 'achieve 10 new patients per week by 30 June to meet annual revenue targets'.

Measurable

Specific goals tend to be easier to measure. A measurable goal means you can plan the size and scale of the effort needed to achieve it and you can clearly see whether or not you achieved it.

In our example above, you'd look back over your booking data until 30 June to see whether you had, in fact, attracted 10 new patients per week and were meeting your annual revenue targets.

Achievable

Try to set a goal that stretches you but is also realistic. It's demoralising and pointless to set a goal that cannot be achieved but there's no challenge in a goal that's too easy.

For example, you wouldn't be able to acquire 10 new patients within a few weeks without investing money in advertising. Therefore, your goal might be 'Acquire 10 new patients per week with a weekly advertising budget of \$500'.

Realistic

It's great to dream big but your goals need to reflect your current circumstances too.

Timely

Set yourself a deadline for achieving your goal. If you don't, there will always be something more urgent to do and your goal will gradually drop off your to-do list.

As well as a final deadline, it can be helpful to set a half-way point and see if you're on track to meet your goal. If not, you can alter what you're doing to increase your chance of success.

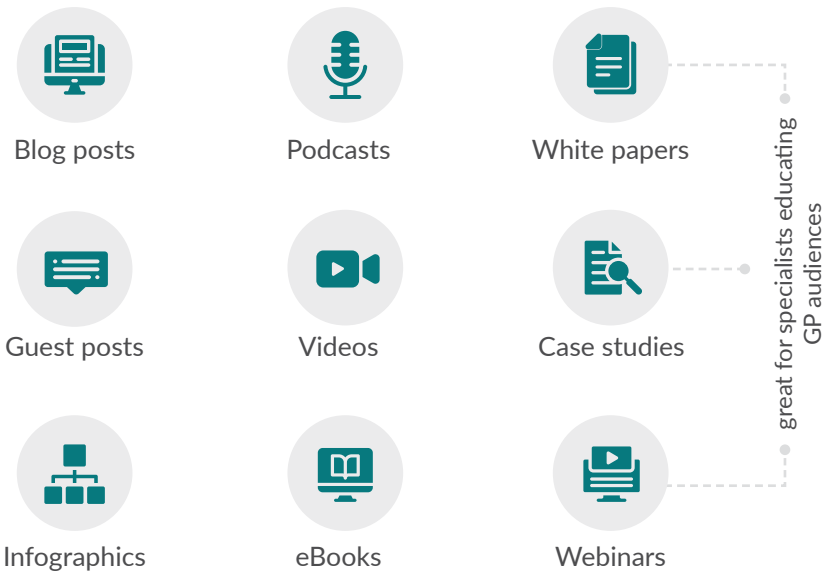
04

Create your content strategy

A content strategy is your plan of how to create, deliver and manage useful content that meets your target audience's needs and positions your practice as a source of authority and expertise.

Content is the cornerstone of social media marketing success. People learn about you and your services through content – photos, videos and articles published on Facebook or Instagram.

Content types





If you want to attract more patients to your practice, then your blogs, social media, email marketing and website need to answer the questions that patients are typing into search engines like Google, which fields 70,000 health questions every minute of every day.

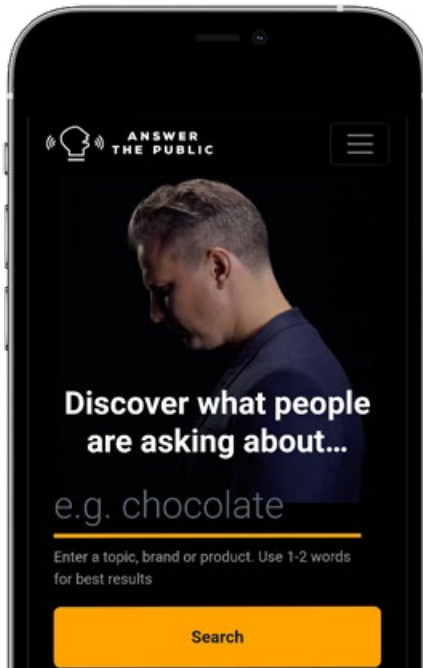
If you create blogs that address the frequently asked health questions patients are searching on Google, then after a few months your article might rank in search results and find that patients are clicking on your blog and being exposed to your brand. They're learning to respect your expertise and trust your answers. When they need to see a local doctor, they're now likely to choose you.

It's easy to start a blog on your website, and there are some great tools to help. The hardest part is often working out what to blog about. Go back to the things you learnt when you defined your patients then brainstorm:

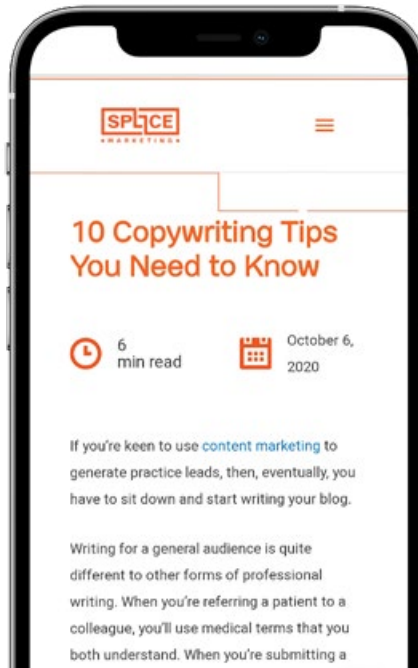
- ▶ What problems and questions do customers or our target patients have?
- ▶ What questions are the practice team asked?
- ▶ Which of those questions could you write useful information about? For example, educating patients on alternatives to spinal surgery or laser treatments for women experiencing menopausal side effects.

Now you've written the content, you need to choose the right communications channel for it. Social media channels are a popular choice because:

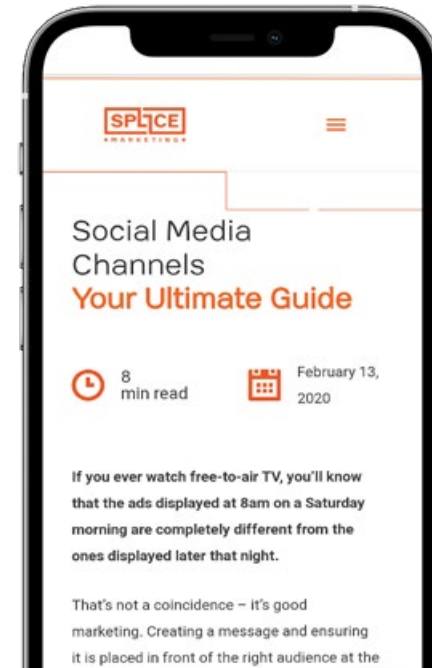
- ▶ People can share your post - the online version of word-of-mouth referrals
- ▶ They help you build engagement, which translates to practice loyalty
- ▶ You can share educational content of healthcare promotional campaigns with more people in your local area at a much cheaper rate than any traditional form of advertising like billboards, flyer drops
- ▶ You can acquire new patients by running a targeted ad through social media channels like Facebook or Instagram.



If you want to find out more about what patients are asking, then head to **Answer The Public** and type in a topic such as 'Low B12'. The site will show you the most frequently asked questions on that topic.



Follow these **copywriting tips** when you start to write your blogs and include a clear call to action such as 'book an appointment'.



Check out our **guide to social media channels**.

05

Attract patients to your website

Your website is your most important communications tool. You need to attract plenty of people from your target market. When they visit your site to get information, they are gaining a sense of who you are and what you offer and this builds your credibility.

Your website needs to:

- ▶ Work well on mobile since the vast majority of people use their phone when searching
- ▶ Load within 3 seconds or your prospective patient will lose patience and go elsewhere
- ▶ Be secure and private including:
 - A secure sockets layer certificate, better known as an SSL certificate, that denotes a secure website by showing a padlock or a URL that begins with https.
 - A privacy policy that protects you and your website visitors.
- ▶ Harness local SEO. An up-to-date, accurate Google My Business account is vital for securing more patients from local health-related searches for example, 'general practitioner near me' or 'physiotherapist in North Lakes'. It allows you to communicate to people in your local area by displaying your correct business information to users, including opening hours, contact details and your social profiles.

Your social media posts, paid ads and emails should all draw people to your website. And when they get there it should be easy for them to grasp what you do and make an appointment (do you offer online bookings?).



Case Study 1:

Physiotherapist loses hundreds of dollars a month because their website wasn't secure

We were contacted by a physiotherapist who was spending hundreds of dollars a month on Google ads and not getting any calls.

When we audited her online presence, we noticed her website didn't have a security certificate. That meant every time someone clicked on the ad to visit her website, Google warned them not to visit the site because it wasn't safe.

Her ads looked like they were working as they were showing a good click-through rate but they didn't convert any visitors into bookings because of this warning. Her ad spend was wasted and her diary had a lot of gaps in it.

The takeaway?

Make sure your website has an SSL Certificate.



Acquisition and patient retention strategies

Acquiring patients

Patient acquisition is the process of attracting more patients to your practice. If you need to increase appointment numbers, patient acquisition is a great strategy.

In recent years, the concept of inbound marketing has emerged, which focuses on attracting customers to you by sharing information (content) they value, or which answers a problem or question they have. Social media, blogs, Google My Business, search marketing (SEO) and your website are great examples of inbound marketing. Customers visit this type of website because they want to know something.

A clever commercial organisation makes sure its website attracts customers by offering useful information about common problems and questions. For example:

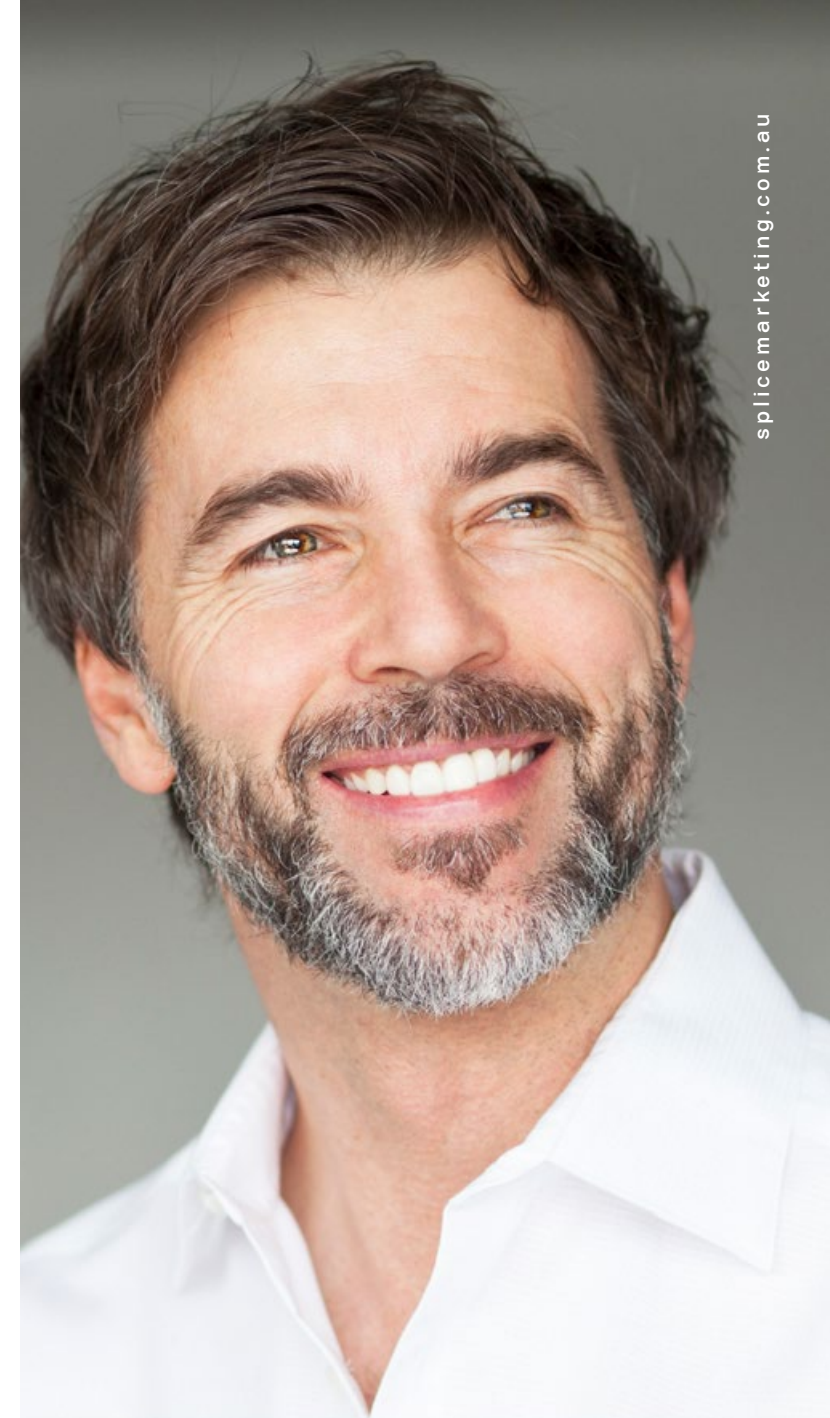
- ▶ A butcher's website may offer information on 'How to cook the perfect steak' or '5 ways to make dinner time with children easy'
- ▶ A childcare provider may help parents by offering 'Free activities to do with your children in school holidays' or 'Healthy eating tips for toddlers'
- ▶ A physiotherapist's website may give advice such as '5 stretches to do after running', 'How to recover after exercise' and 'Fit ball exercises that will keep you flexible'.

Inbound marketing draws in potential customers who are already looking for answers to their questions. In contrast, outbound marketing aims to put your message in front of potential customers who aren't yet looking but might be interested in what you offer.

In digital terms, it's Facebook Ads or Google Ads. These channels are more costly as you're paying an advertising fee to get your messaging in front of a patient and compel them to then visit your website or call you to book but they're often worth it.

Whether you choose inbound or outbound acquisition strategies, the key to success includes:

- ▶ Ensuring your message aligns to your target patient
- ▶ Promoting your key points of difference as outlined in your vision and mission
- ▶ Selecting the right strategy for your budget.





Retaining patients

Another way to increase the revenue for your practice is known as retention marketing. This is about keeping the patients you've already got.

If you find that a lot of patients don't return after their first or second appointment, look at new ways to enrich the patient experience such as:

- ▶ Offering greater convenience through online bookings
- ▶ Ensuring a great patient experience by on-time appointments and great customer service
- ▶ Appointment reminders by SMS or email
- ▶ Proactive outreach for overdue routine care
- ▶ Recalls and reminders
- ▶ Invitations to educational events
- ▶ Leveraging national health events to send health appointment reminders
- ▶ Sharing practice news or health information with your existing patients via email to keep them in the loop
- ▶ Survey your patients twice a year and invite them to share their feedback (good and bad) so you know what to do more of and what you need to change
- ▶ Posting lots of interesting and relevant healthcare content on social media so your patients can engage with this content and stay connected with your brand outside of their appointment.

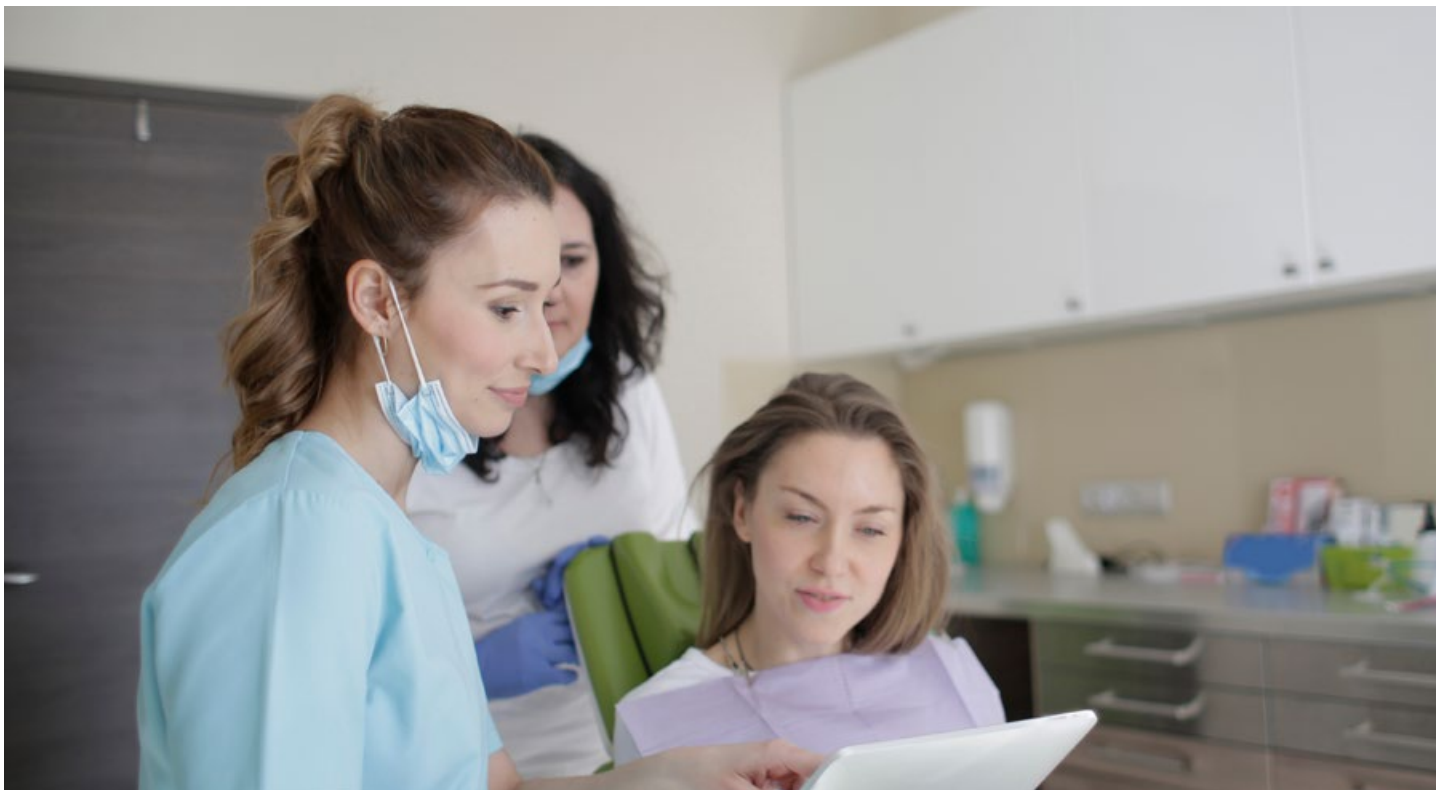
Loyalty drives profitability – the more patients you retain, the more revenue they'll bring in over the course of their lifetime.

07

Measure, test and improve

So you've defined your vision and mission, identified your target audience, optimised your website, prepared content that addresses your patients' needs and shared it on the right channels.

Now you need to measure the results, test the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns and improve areas that aren't working as well as you'd hoped. This can be a fascinating process that helps you identify any issues that are undermining your efforts.



Case study 2:

Mixed messages and weak calls to action

A large, multidisciplinary primary health clinic contacted us because they were spending \$8000 a month on marketing and advertising spend with another agency and were only acquiring a small handful of patients.

They couldn't work out why.

When the Splice team conducted an audit, we discovered the following issues:

- ▶ Their Google ad copy didn't match the keywords the ads were targeting.
Their clinic ads (targeting general keyword 'clinic') didn't include the word clinic in the ad nor say what type of clinic they were, e.g. general practice, physiotherapy clinic or specialist clinic. This confused the audience.
Their ads targeting the keyword 'doctor' didn't use the word. Instead, they used terms such as 'Health Centre' and 'Health Professionals'.
- ▶ Their ads only focused on brand related ads which are good but only if your audience is familiar with your brand and use to searching your brand by name. As this was a new practice, no one really knew them by name so they weren't getting any traction.
- ▶ Their website was stylish but the messaging was unclear. Instead of a 'talk to us' button, they needed clear and regular calls to action throughout their site such as 'book now', 'click here to book a GP appointment' or 'complete this form for our reception team to call you'. The site also needed to clearly show the details that patients are interested in such as the clinic's location, opening times and contact details.

The takeaways:

- ▶ Ask someone to review your website who's never used it before. Ask them for their overall feedback, then get them to experience the site as a patient trying to book an appointment or contact you. Review their experience and see if you need to make changes.
- ▶ Monitor the click-through rates on ads.
 - ▶ If you have low click-through rates, focus on new keywords OR new ad copy that better relates to your keywords
 - ▶ If you have high click-through rates but no phone calls, address issues with the website such as calls to action, security, or ease of finding information on the website.

Once you've identified any issues that are thwarting your success, you can take steps to remedy them. Then you try again and measure the impact of your changes.
**Are you now getting more bookings?
If not, why not?**



How Splice Marketing can help you

So, there you have it.
With these 7 insider tips, you should
be ready to create an effective
marketing strategy for your practice.

The Splice team is here to help you if you'd like to draw on our years of healthcare marketing expertise to create a sound marketing strategy. It can be surprisingly difficult, for example, to work out what's special about your own practice but it's often very easy for others to see.

Please contact us today to get your
marketing strategy rolling.



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The Workbook

Practice vision statement

Complete your answer here

Practice mission statement

Complete your answer here

Your practice's 'why'

Complete your answer here

Your Practice's SMART Goals

SMART Goal 1

SMART Goal 3

SMART Goal 2

Your Audience

What defines your patients? Are they older people, young families with children, city workers? Are they mainly wealthy, or from lower socioeconomic areas?

What differentiates your patients from those who attend other practices?

How do their needs match with your offerings? Are there gaps? If you're in a multicultural area, do you have bilingual doctors? Do your patients know that?

Content plan

Topic	Purpose of content piece (Educate, encourage a booking)	Media type (e.g. blog, infographic, video)	Person responsible for writing/creating content piece?	Deadline for publishing content piece
What topic do you want to write about?	What's the goal of your content piece?	What way will you communicate the content?	Who is responsible to write content piece?	What's the deadline for publishing?