



Dr. Anisa Patel Shaikh

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Dr. Anisa, has done her Masters in Dental Business from DBM Academy - UK

Certified in Digital and Social media marketing.

A certified story teller, a key note speaker at various prestigious dental shows and conferences, including the Famdent show and the World Dental show.

She maintains a successful private practice in the name of Ansh Dental Clinic, in Mumbai, since 2005. For more updates on social media. Join her FB group Let's get Social Beyond...

Health care is not social, sports medicine is not social, dental is not social but human beings are. The fact is that, we humans thrive on social interactions with fellow human beings. Over the past decade, there has been a massive shift in the way we communicate. We are scrolling, texting and commenting and tweeting more than we are talking these days. We are not antisocial, its just that the way T.V. replaced the radio, the internet and smart phone replaced the telephone.

In a world, where we are drowning with information, “ATTENTION” is the single most asset and the internet and specifically social media owns it. These days, aside from phone calls and games, the single most thing you will find people doing on their phones is social be it messaging, typing status updates, commenting tweeting, sharing or tagging or adding cool elements to stories!

As far as dentistry goes, we all know that that we dentists work in very intimate part of a person's body – the mouth and unless we build that trust, rapport and comfort level with our patients, we can never thrive in this profession. Unless our patients know, like and trust us, they never let us work inside their mouths. We dentists spend a lot of micro time inside people's mouth, but when you step back and think about it, What are you really selling? Are you selling that implant, filling or crown?

NO!!!

What you are really selling is comfort, health, appearance, confidence and trust. You are telling a STORY, where you made a difference in someone's life, by changing their smile and SOCIAL MEDIA provides us that platform and stage to tell our story. How you tell your story and whose story are you telling and to whom its reaching, will decide whether your social media works for you.

Let us see the 6 pillars of social media, which when done correctly will make your social work for you in your practice.

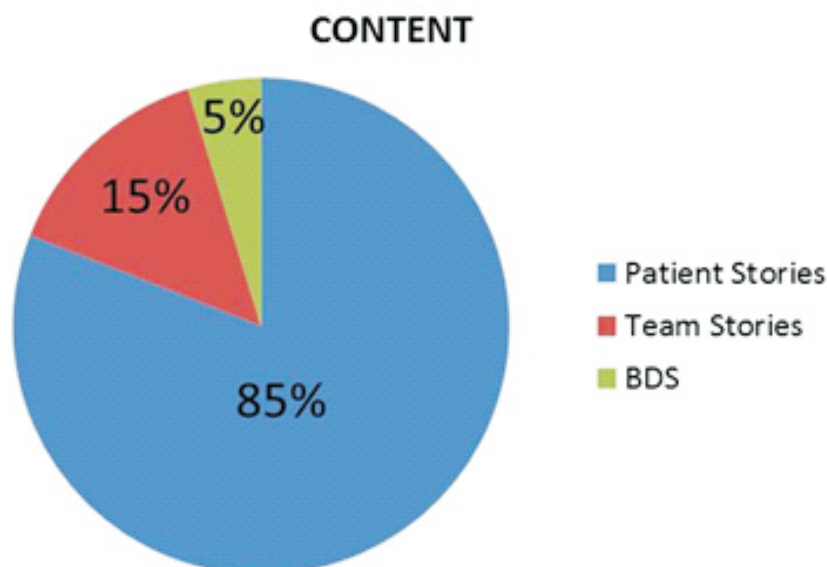
1. CONTENT – Content is King as far as social goes. Emotionally engaging, shareable content is what connects with people on social.

When you put out content on various social channels, ask yourself these 3 questions:-

- Does it educate my audience and provide value?
- Is it entertaining?
- Does it empower or motivate my audience?

If you are creative and smart enough and your content can do all 3 of the above, then that will be very engaging content for your social channels. As far as dentistry goes, there is a content rule given by marketing coach, Chris Barrow that states, in your content 80 % should be patient stories, 15% team stories and 5 % BDS - Coach Chris called this Boring Dental Stuff! (like tip of the day etc.).

Marketing Content Rule



Patient stories - 80% includes patient testimonials, selfies in the chair, photos and videos describing the difference that you have made to patients by changing their smile and improving their confidence and life. Stories of patients at their life events like a job interview or for example, smiling picture of a bride, at her wedding that shows the final outcome or the emotional difference that your smile Makeover has done for her .

15% includes Team Stories like team lunches, celebrations and showing your patients what your team is up to. Behind the scene pictures and videos about your practice and team etc..

BDS 5% or boring dental stuff as Coach Barrow puts it, is what we generally see most of the time. These include stock pictures from the net, before after pictures of only teeth, tip of the day etc.

2. CUSTOMER OR PATIENT -

Always remember social media is about the people, it's not about you. No one wants to know how great you are or how many awards you got!! People in general and patients want to know what benefit or value it is giving them. So make your content patient centric.

Also, whenever you put out any content about any patient, make sure you have taken a written consent about the same from the patient.

3. CONVERSATION -

If content is king, then conversation is the queen of social media. Your content should either start or contribute to online conversations. Engaging meaningful comments with empathy and respect for your audience will do the trick. Always be honest, genuine and respectful in your comments on social media.

4. CORRECT CHANNELS -

Among the various social channels, as far as dentistry goes the most important are Facebook and Instagram. If you are into implants and full mouth rehabilitation which caters to the senior age group for example, Facebook platform and Facebook sponsored stories is where you should concentrate your marketing efforts. Facebook is where you will find the more mature crowd and millennials and using detailed FB targeting you will be able to target this audience. For example, if your audience is kids and you are selling say paediatric dentistry and orthodontics then, Instagram is a good platform as it has a relatively younger age group.

5. CONNECT -

Connect with your patients by showing them the culture of your practice. Show a bit about your personality in your branding. Those are real people behind those phones and so connect with them sometimes in an informal way. If you have a non dental hobby like photography or cooking or art, share pictures of you engaging in them on your social media pages.

This shows the human side of your brand and establishing the connection with your audience .

Don't be surprised, if your patient asks you details about these during their next appointment!

Suddenly you have something to connect and start conversations and it really builds the know, like and trust factor, which is so important in marketing.

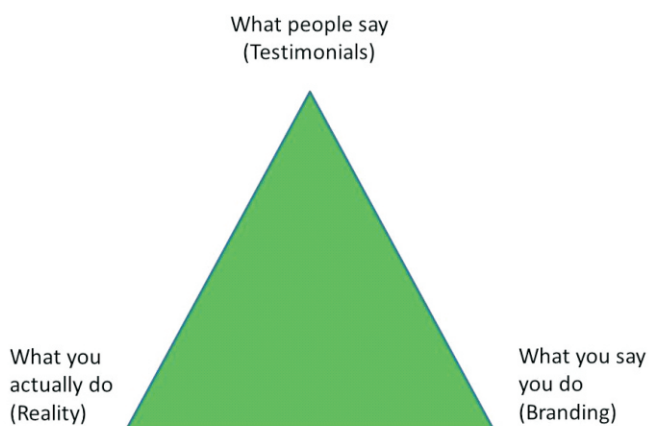
6. CONSISTENCY -

This is by far one of the most important aspects, and without consistency, none of the above will work. As with most of the things in life, there are no shortcuts and you will need to put in the work on a regular basis to see any results.

An important point that you need to remember here is that in marketing consistency is more important than quality, because if you are consistent you will eventually get better. With time you will understand what's working and what's not and accordingly tweak your marketing content strategy. But in the quest of quality, you might never begin, and the worst thing is a patient trying to check you out and realise that the last time you ever posted on your Facebook page was over a year ago!!

So “Progress, not Perfection!” Is the mantra and keep going!

Consistency is the most important and nothing will work if this important ingredient is missing in your marketing.



Another important thing to ask yourself is whether your social media Triangle is in sync.

- At the bottom corner of this triangle is your Reality or what you actually do.
- On the other end is your Branding, or what you say you doing other words what does your website and social media pages say you do.
- At the top f this triangle is what people say or in a digital world what the testimonials say.

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So for example, if all pictures on your website and your social media pages talk about cosmetic dentistry but what you actually do is general dentistry and your online reviews on google and Facebook talk about general dentistry then, this triangle is not in sync and your branding and social media will not project the same and will not work for you.

So make sure you have your own pictures and pictures of what you actually o on your website and social media pages and your testimonials should speak the same.

If the above points are taken into consideration, social media efforts will show results.

Below are some steps if you are a beginner -
Social media Action plan :



1. Create your practice Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter accounts and fill all the details and make the profile complete and post at least 3 times a week on these channels.
2. Claim your business on Google maps, encourage reviews on Google and Facebook.
3. Create your practice YouTube channel.
4. Start your practice blog from your website and blog every week.
5. Create a mail chimp account and make monthly newsletters.
6. Create your quarterly social media marketing plan.
7. Plan campaigns, contests and events for every quarter.
8. Every quarter review your social media strategy.
9. Always create and schedule content in advance to avoid missing posting.

In conclusion,

Social media is a place for people to connect, so it only makes sense that you'd use it to build relationships with both your current and future patients. When done correctly social media should create communities not markets.

Also it's important to remember that online marketing alone can give only limited success. Its only when it is combined with offline networking that the snowball effect of social media is seen.