



10 WAYS TO GROW YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE USING DIRECT MAIL

by Joe Niewierski , VP Marketing for PostcardMania

There are many places to go and get advice on how to grow your dental practice, but we have been helping dentists with their direct mail marketing for over 8 years now and we have seen it all. We know what works, what doesn't work and we have great inside knowledge about how dental practices work and can be marketed.

You want to grow your practice but you've hit a few road blocks. Maybe you have a great base of regular patients but you just can't seem to drive in new business. Maybe you have plenty of new business but can't seem to get the second and third visits. Whatever the problem you are trying to fix, direct mail can help.

Here are what we have found to be the Top 10 ways that you can grow your practice using direct mail – in no particular order. Each one handles different aspects of your marketing, so it would be impossible to say that any one is the most important. You may not find that every one applies to your practice but I guarantee you will find something useful in the tips that follow.

1. EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS ABOUT CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH

We have found that in families with children the mother is still the one making the dental decisions a majority of the time. Use your direct mail advertising to educate moms on how to keep their children healthy with regular trips to your office and you will see many more younger patients.

2. SELL YOUR COSMETIC DENTISTRY SERVICES

Do you have cosmetic dentistry services like ZOOM or other whitening services? How about Invisalign®? If so you can use them to hook people who may not normally come in. Some people are far more interested in appearance than the intricacies of a healthy mouth. By letting these people know that you can help them with their appearance you can get them in the door. At that

point you can educate them on how regular check ups can not only improve their oral health but their appearance as well, and you will be able to land patients who would otherwise not have ever come in.

3. REMINDER NOTES TO PAST PATIENTS

Even patients who want to come in twice a year can't always remember that it is time for their next visit. You remember though and direct mail can help you remind them. It sounds too simple but it is amazing how many dentists don't send out reminders to past patients.

4. REFERRAL PROGRAM

Many people don't like going to a new dentist because they don't know what they are going to get. That is why some of your best clients have come from referrals. Start a referral program to give some premium to past patients when they refer a friend or family member. Telling customers about the program at the end of every visit will work well, but using direct mail to remind them will work even better. Send them a postcard at their house where they actually interact with their friends and family and they will be more likely to remember.

5. NEW MOVER ADVERTISING

We can get you a list of people who recently moved into your area. These are going to be people who are looking to set up their new life... they need lawn maintenance, a new doctor & of course a new dentist. Make their search as easy as possible and start growing your patient list with direct mail. You will definitely want to have a "Welcome to the Neighborhood" offer that has a specific expiration date.

6. TARGET SERVICES TO SPECIFIC MARKETS

Get a targeted list for each of your specific services. If you do orthodontics you may want to target it to families with a minimum annual income and children in the home. If you make dentures you can target that service to people of a certain age. Not everyone is going to be interested in every service that you offer. Take a look at your past patients. See what the people using a specific service have in common and target your promotion for that service to other people that fit that description. All of these lists are available for you to use.

7. USE AN OFFER TO INCREASE RESPONSE

Giving something away or giving a discount will always get people's attention, but you have to give away the right things. Offering a free check up is a good way to get people in the door. Discounts on expensive cosmetic procedures are also good ways to get attention. Stay away from puffed up discounts that don't actually offer much.

8. PUSH YOUR INSURANCE EASE

Many people have dental insurance and are looking for a dentist that makes it easy to use. If you accept all major types of insurance, or handle medicare issues for your customers, make sure you say so on your direct mail pieces. The easier it is for someone to use their insurance the more likely they will be to come in. Most patients are only concerned with the "out-of-pocket" expense so if you can make them feel more confident about their insurance you will definitely get more business. There are also some circumstances where customers have insurance plans that are "use it or lose it" style, so you can get a response from them toward the end of the year if you remind them to use the benefits that will be gone come January 1st.

9. HIGHLIGHT THE CONVENIENCE OF YOUR OFFICE

Maybe you are located in an easily accessible area. Maybe you are open for a half day on Saturday or later into the evening a few nights a week. Most people don't like to miss work or pull children out of school to go to the dentist. You can use the convenience of your office as a response multiplier. Don't make the hours you are open the main point of your direct mail promotion, but mentioning it will definitely help put you over the top compared to less convenient offices in the area.

10. MAKE SURE YOUR PROFESSIONALISM SHOWS

Make sure that the quality of the promotion you send out is the same quality of the services you provide. You could be the most skilled and caring dentist in the industry, but if your direct mail pieces are of sub-par quality or not professionally designed the people receiving them will assume the same thing about your practice. Don't fall into the trap of finding the cheapest one color flyer that you can. Color pictures of happy people with healthy teeth will help you show the care and professionalism that you are trying to portray. As an addition to that point, stay away from before and after photos because, let's face it, these close up pictures are never pretty, and the before picture almost always turns people away from reading the rest of message.

Hopefully you have found something in this report that will help you in your future marketing efforts. If you didn't find anything new you are probably already doing a great job with your marketing.

If you have questions, would like more information or simply want to get started with a direct mail campaign of your own, give us a call at PostcardMania and we will be glad to help. We were the first company in the direct mail postcard industry to set up a quality control department to help you get the response you need.

Also, mention to your representative that you have already read this report and they will give you 1000 FREE postcards with your first order. In any event we hope this report has helped you in your future marketing endeavors.

Joe Niewierski, the VP of Marketing at PostcardMania, became a published writer after graduating with a BA in Advertising from the University of South Florida. Joy Gendusa founded PostcardMania in 1998, her only assets a computer and a phone. By 2005 the company did over \$12 million in sales, employed over 100 people and made Inc. Magazine's prestigious Inc 500 List as the one of the 500 fastest growing companies in the nation. She attributes her explosive growth to her ability to choose incredible staff and her innate marketing savvy. 70% of her staff are young creative minds under the age of 35, like Joe. Visit Joe at her website postcardmania.com

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