



**TOP 10 TRENDS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR DENTISTRY &  
MARKETING IN 2017**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whether your practice began long ago with ink on paper or recently on DocuSign, you have likely experienced major shifts in the way you do business. Outside the services you provide, the only constant has been change. Just over the past 10 years, every industry has been forced to evolve several times, thanks to the proliferation of social media, mobile devices, and the number of people who have constant Internet access. These technologies have worked in tandem to alter three things:

- **Marketing competition.** More businesses are competing for fewer consumer dollars and a diminishing attention span. They use all manners of advertising, including creating content that doesn't directly lead to a sale. Standing out from the noise has become more difficult.
- **Information providers.** In what is known as the democratization of information, more content providers and viewpoints are published online than one could ever fully keep track of, and they all have opinions. Barriers to entry are low, so just about anyone can become a source now. For every article claiming that something is true, there is another claiming the opposite.
- **Information consumers.** Everyone can access information at any time and instantly share their opinion with hundreds or even thousands of peers. This means there is an archived conversation about every topic under the sun, including your practice. Transparency is viewed as a virtue, and censorship of negative opinions is virtually impossible.

We explored these major shifts to develop a list of 10 trends continuing into next year, as well as recommendations to keep your practice prepared for them. Read this white paper to see what running a dental practice will look like in 2017.

## TREND 1: TRUST OF AUTHORITY AND EXPERTS IS DECREASING

Let's begin with a case study of a trending dental story from 2016: "Medical benefits of dental floss unproven," courtesy of the Associated Press (AP).<sup>1</sup> The AP is a trustworthy source, so there may be real concerns over this common dental recommendation, but this was picked up by dozens of less objective sources like SheKnows, with the caption "Sooo everything we've been told about flossing is a lie?!" and Ars Technica, with the headline "Dentists forgot to study flossing for a century, recommended it anyway." And as you undoubtedly noticed, this story raged across social media, with every 2-bit blog weighing in and very few people getting the news from a journalistic source let alone the original AP article.

This illustrates that people are now willing to dismiss the opinions of trained experts out of hand. First, content is created from a semi-reputable source, then a dozen less sincere sources pick up the story and regurgitate it for cheap traffic that boosts ad revenue, and finally various social media followers of these sources share the story. Now their friends will see the story with their stamp of approval and opinion attached, a title designed to stir up controversy and encourage clicks, and a source they've maybe heard of before.

The most troubling part is this: 59% of links shared on social media have never been read; instead they are being shared based on just a title and maybe a summary, or a summary of a summary without going deeper.<sup>2</sup> Despite their cursory review, these shares are taken seriously by friends of the sharer.



59% of links shared on social media have never been read.

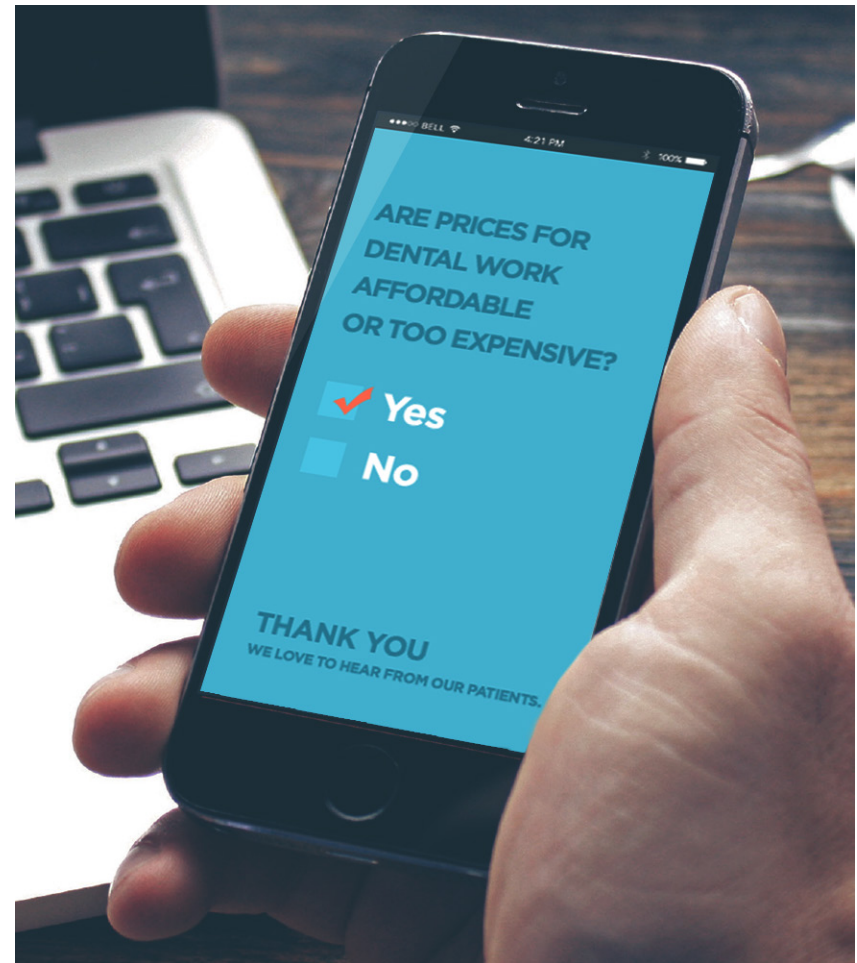
Inflating this problem is an increasing disbelief in the findings of science, authorities, and experts whenever they go against one's preconceived beliefs. For example, in a Pew study on this topic, 87% of scientists in the American Association for the Advancement of Science believe that climate change is mostly due to human activity versus just 50% of respondents from the general public.<sup>3</sup> By this same token, when people "learned" that flossing wasn't necessary, they were willing to believe it because, as you know, they already hate flossing.

What does this all mean? For starters, you can't rely on the old "nine out of 10 dentists recommend" messaging anymore to convince patients. Trust in experts will only decrease next year.

## Recommendation

These problems are so pervasive that they cannot be ignored—so go to the source. Engage in social listening through your practice's Facebook page and other social media channels and search for opinions on the topics you want to talk about. Conduct simple surveys with your followers to understand their opinions on everything from how they maintain their teeth to the pricing of dental services. Then address these topics on your blog along with your survey findings. Also touch on newsworthy topics relevant to dentistry and weigh in with your thoughts so that readers can get to know you as a trustworthy friend.

By doing all this, you can be seen as one of the "good ones" who listens to your patients and not just an "expert" spouting that you know best.



Engage in social listening by conducting simple surveys and polls with your followers.

## TREND 2: BELIEF IN CROWDS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IS INCREASING

Replacing the old faith in experts is the belief in the majority—and every person has a personalized majority based on their own social network. Social media content like that on Facebook isn't just a collection of every thought posted in order. It's curated twice: first by Facebook's algorithm to display relevant content and ads to its users and then by the users themselves by what they Like, what they follow and unfollow, and whom they block or hide.

This results in a snowball effect where what you believe is influenced by what everyone is saying, but you and Facebook work together to control just who "everyone" is. Over time people are developing feeds that display largely what they already agree with—a phenomenon known as confirmation bias. In fact, the Wall Street Journal published a tool called "Blue Feed, Red Feed" that shows a left-leaning and a right-leaning Facebook feed side by side on various political topics. The "objective" news displayed on each is 100% opposite the other, where headlines claim the same political figure is either a savior or a criminal, the same soundbite a slam-dunk or an indictment.<sup>4</sup> And from Trend 1, we know that the headline is almost the only thing read or shared.

What all of this means is that one's existing opinions are the driver of "truth" online. With their news sources and friends list curated, social media users can comfortably believe most of what they read or have shared with them while scrolling down their feed.



Nearly 90% of people ages 18 to 24 would trust health care information found via social media and shared with friends.

This applies to health care too. **A 2012 PricewaterhouseCoopers survey found that nearly 90% of people ages 18 to 24 would trust health care information found via social media and shared with friends.** This doesn't preclude older generations, as 56% of those ages 45 to 64 would do the same.<sup>5</sup> With more people online since 2012, this has only increased and will likely continue into 2017 across all demographics, though trending younger. Social media reviews of dental practice pages can drive consumer choices about using specific providers and increase the likelihood of trying them.

## Recommendation

In light of the increased faith in peers and social media, it is important to not only have a presence but be an active participant. Respond to community complaints and compliments alike so that users feel like you are another one of their social network friends and not just another dental clinic.

Provide incentives for your patients to share information about your practice and their experiences, whether through raffles and giveaways for Liking your page or with minor discounts for referring a friend for a checkup. Announce that you have a social media channel through patient newsletter emails, your website, and signage in your office—and say what you'll use it for so that people know what to expect: News? Giveaways? Dental tips and tricks?

Finally, conduct formal and informal surveys with qualitative entries to see patients' complete thoughts and use quantitative data collection to measure their collective attitudes. Make improvements to your practice based on these responses, then share what you've done on social media "in response to community feedback." If you make your followers feel at home, there's a good chance they'll have your back and spread the word.



Invite patients to Like your page on Facebook and provide incentives to do so.

## TREND 3: SEO SUCCESS DEPENDS ON GOOGLE LOCAL SEARCH AND REVIEWS

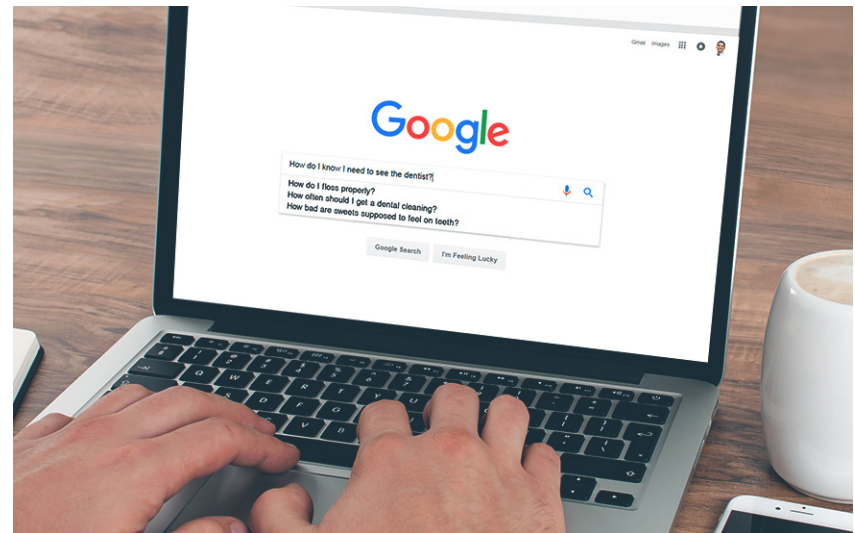
Social media helps drive the final push toward a purchase decision and cultivates a community of patients. To truly drive business to your practice, however, you need to master the first capture point: search engine optimization (SEO).

People search the Internet to answer questions and solve problems, and **41% of all Google searches from mobile devices are health care related.**<sup>6</sup> Most often these searches are intended to identify a problem, provide a remedy, or determine whether a professional is needed. The remainder of searches are to compare health care providers. On top of this, 60% of consumers conduct research through online searches specifically, before ever going to a particular website to weigh a purchase decision (see Trend 10 regarding patients as consumers).<sup>7</sup>

During this research phase, potential patients are reading articles about their concerns, like “What does tooth sensitivity to cold mean?” or “What’s the right way to floss?” Writing relevant, in-depth content about things patients are likely to search for, and getting them to share it on social media, is the key to getting higher rankings in Google search results. It follows that if people don’t trust authority, they do trust things they researched themselves—so leave a breadcrumb trail for them to discover.

By the time patients are reviewing specific practices to make their final choice, they’ll be searching for “dentists near me” or “dentist in [insert city].”

These types of searches result in maps directly on the results page with the top three or more best-reviewed practices in a searcher’s vicinity. That means your practice’s name, location on a map, and 1-to-5-star aggregate rating could be right in front of a potential patient’s face.



41% of all Google searches from mobile devices are health care related.



Clicking one of these links shows your Google My Business reviews, attached to the real names and faces of Google users—trustworthy, authentic opinions of exactly the sort that people are most likely to believe, according to Trend 2. High ratings and backlinks related to a specific city are correlated with rankings for “near me” types of searches.<sup>8</sup>

As we enter 2017, Google will increasingly dominate this review space, muscling out popular competitors like Yelp by putting their results first in searches. It will be vital to encourage patients to review positively to get ahead.

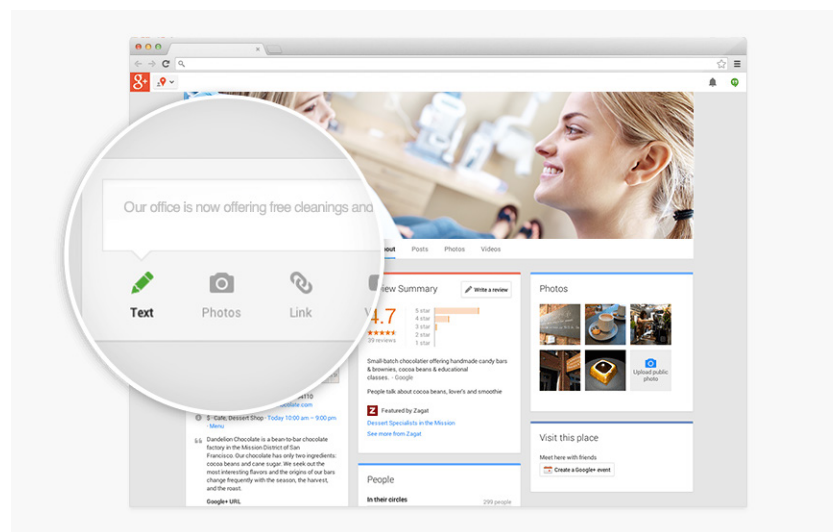
## Recommendation

To play the local search game, you need to have accurate listings on Google Maps and Google My Business. That means that your operating hours, address, and phone number are up-to-date; your images are appealing; and there’s no confusion like duplicate listings. If you have an old location still showing up, for example, click “suggest an edit,” report this location as “permanently closed,” and select “duplicate listing.” Also clean up your info on other popular sites like Yelp, Angie’s List, WebMD Local, and of course your social media pages.

To win the local search game, you need many positive reviews consistently over time. High ratings bring your practice to the top of Google Maps and regular Google results. Add a Reviews page to your website to make it easy for current patients to leave reviews—but ensure that you have publishing authority so that you remain in control of what is posted. You might also

consider offering an incentive to satisfied patients to leave reviews.

Complement your SEO efforts by writing strong content on your website’s blog to answer patient questions with some local flavor and make it useful and interesting enough for them to want to share it.<sup>9</sup>



**Make sure your Google My Business page has up-to-date practice information plus engaging photos.**

## TREND 4: EVERYTHING IS GOING MOBILE

It's inevitable that 2017 will see even more people around the world glued to their smartphones. What's important about that is that it drives Trend 2 (getting information from social networks) and Trend 3 (getting information from local reviews) by allowing everyone constant access to these sources at all times. Patients will increasingly rely on these to inform all of their decision-making. Among American adults, 64% own online-ready smartphones, overlapping slightly with 85% of younger Americans who own them. Of all Americans, 10% rely exclusively on their phones for high-speed Internet access, forgoing computers altogether—and all three of these stats are growing.<sup>10</sup>

As of 2014 more than 50% of online searches occur on mobile devices rather than on desktops or laptops, and this too is increasing.<sup>11</sup> Even design decisions for desktop searches are being affected by this mobile-first philosophy. Google now makes its desktop search results look like mobile results, running in a single line without any content on the right-hand side. This includes pay-per-click ads, meaning that organic search results are getting pushed farther down the page, and searchers have to scroll to see them.<sup>12</sup> Working with this is vital because 28% of searches for something nearby result in a purchase.<sup>13</sup>



**50% of online searches occur on mobile devices.**

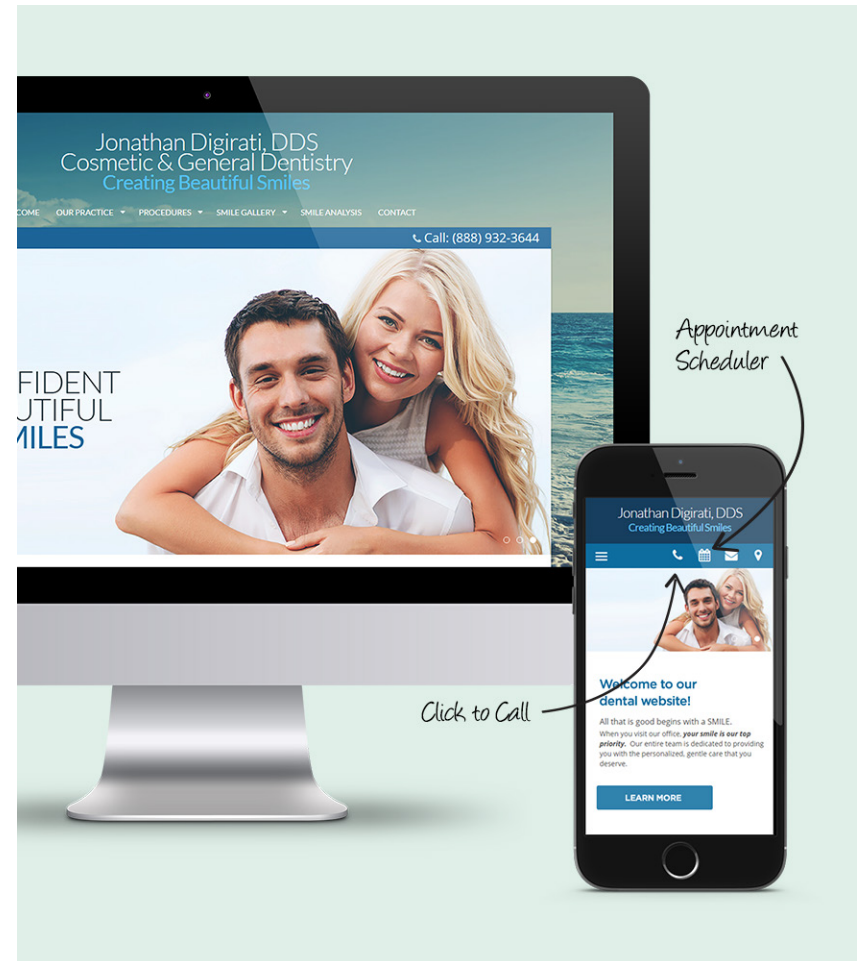
Regarding your website, it is no longer optional to have one that is mobile responsive, that is, optimized to be legible and friendly to touchscreen controls on a small display. Why? One big factor in SEO ranking is the bounce rate, and it has been shown that users will immediately leave sites that take more than a second or two to load on their phones. Also, recent Google algorithm updates check websites for ease of use on phones, marking them “mobile-friendly” in the results page and penalizing sites that aren't.<sup>14</sup>

## Recommendation

Similar to Google, you must take a mobile-first approach to everything you do online. Although you may conduct most of your practice management needs from a desktop computer, the average patient manages most things from a phone.

Your website must include not only a mobile version but also a responsive design that adapts to any screen size, as new types of phones and tablets are released regularly. This means a lightweight design that loads quickly, large thumb-friendly buttons, forms that can be populated with little effort or even with a single tap to fill information from a patient's Facebook or Google account, and not having too much text on pages meant to convert searchers to patients. Appointment scheduling should be as easy as tapping a date on a calendar and choosing a time from a list of hour-long blocks.

Above all, do everything you can to get out of your patients' way when they try to work with you. Every extra tap is a chance for them to give up and hit the back button to look at other options.



Get a mobile-friendly website to ensure an optimal experience on any device.

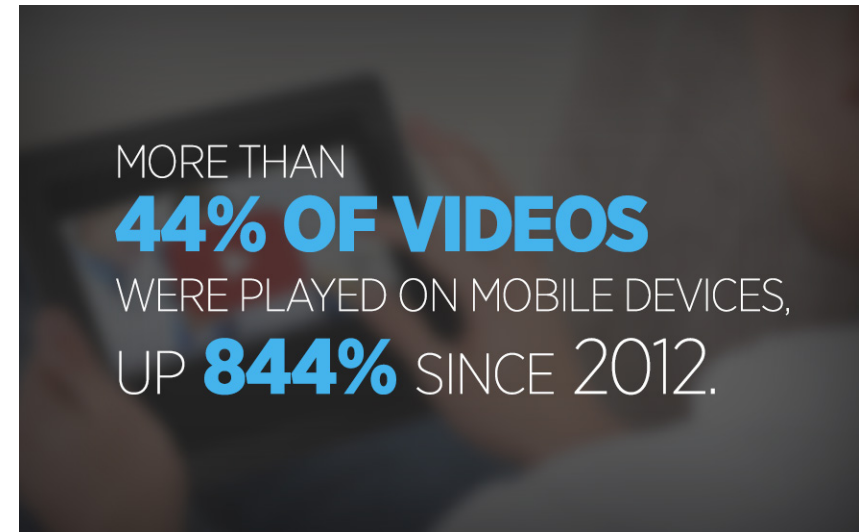
## TREND 5: VIDEO CONTENT IS BECOMING NECESSARY TO ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

One of the more profound changes that increasing Internet access has led to is the prevalence of video content. Now that most phones can stream a YouTube or Facebook video as soon as you hit play, there is no barrier to viewing everything that catches your interest.

Here are some stats to consider: More than 44% of videos were played on mobile devices, up 844% since 2012.<sup>15</sup> Facebook videos receive a collective 8 billion average views per day.<sup>16</sup> Every minute, 48 hours of video is being uploaded to YouTube.<sup>17</sup>

This means there is more video being created and consumed all the time. And it's not just there—people actively want it. Simply using the word video in an email subject line boosts open rates by 19%, ups click-thru rates by 65%, and reduces unsubscribes by 26%.<sup>18</sup> Just as people switched from newspapers to TV, they are switching from reading the Internet to watching it. It's easier to consume and far more engaging.

This engagement is important because of a growing phenomenon known as “banner blindness.” On sites featuring banner ads, and even the right-hand rails of Facebook feeds, the ads are increasingly not seen. Users of these sites have learned to selectively not focus on areas where an ad is likely to appear. In contrast 75% of online video viewers have interacted with an online video ad in the past month, and 92% of them have shared videos with others.<sup>19</sup>



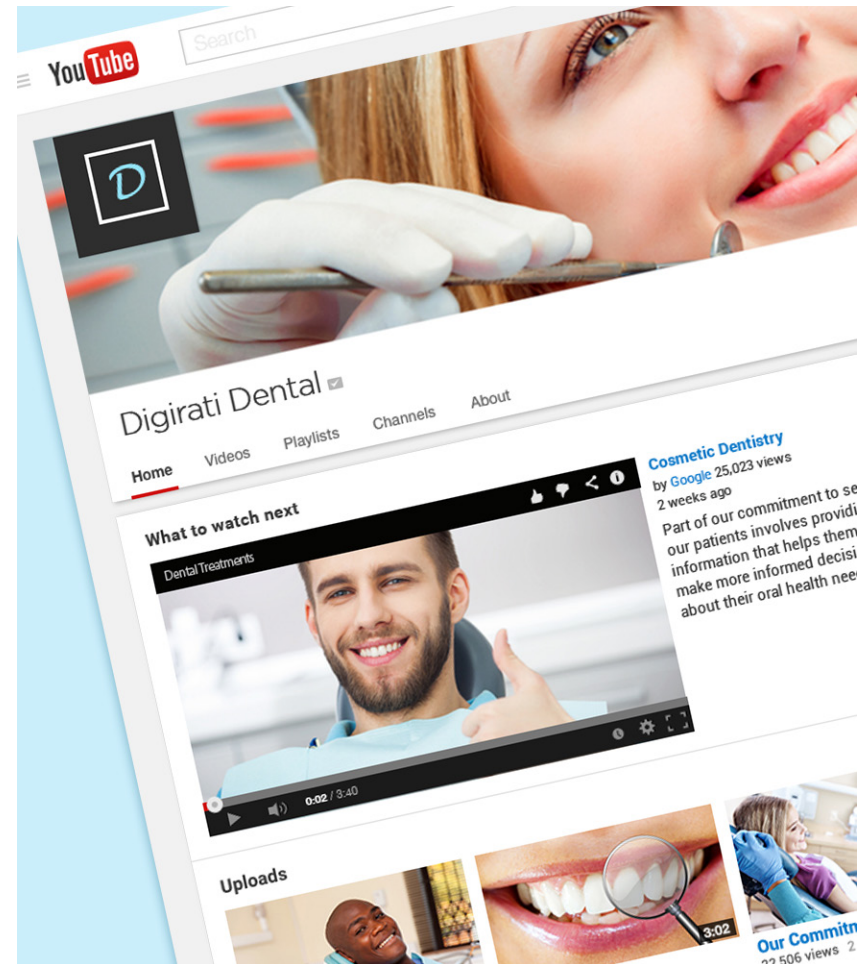
Just like with searching in Trend 3, people often turn to videos for help. “How to” searches on YouTube are growing 70% year over year.<sup>20</sup> People have more faith in their ability to follow along with a video in performing a task, as opposed to following written instructions. This type of video helps them with a specific problem, which means they're more likely to watch it to the end. If it helps them, they'll come back to that video creator for more.

## Recommendation

Devote whatever resources you can to video, especially on YouTube and Facebook, where the tools are built in and the engagement is highest. A library of “how to” videos related to dentistry, like “How to floss correctly” and “How to help my child manage braces” would mark your practice as helpful and trusted in your community. Ending the videos with links and strong calls to action could bring local viewers back to your site to schedule appointments or at least to share your content with others. And while YouTube and Facebook are important outlets, don’t underestimate the power of your practice website. Including video content on your website not only engages current clients but can also boost your site in prospective patients’ search results.

Videos are a more complex, expensive investment than blog posts, but a video can be worth your while over time. Most of the script can become a blog post, too. Still frames from the video can double as image content for numerous social media posts. The video itself can be shared on every social platform available; and if it’s long, you can break it into manageable clips to release throughout the month. If you work with kids, videos could even be a sort of homework that their parents instruct them to watch, showing them the right way to brush and floss every night.

By getting your face out there as a friendly, helpful, authentic practitioner, you can grow your trustworthiness in your community.



Post videos across your social network channels to keep patients engaged with your practice.

## TREND 6: YOUNGER PATIENTS ARE MIGRATING TOWARD VISUAL PLATFORMS LIKE SNAPCHAT, PINTEREST, AND INSTAGRAM

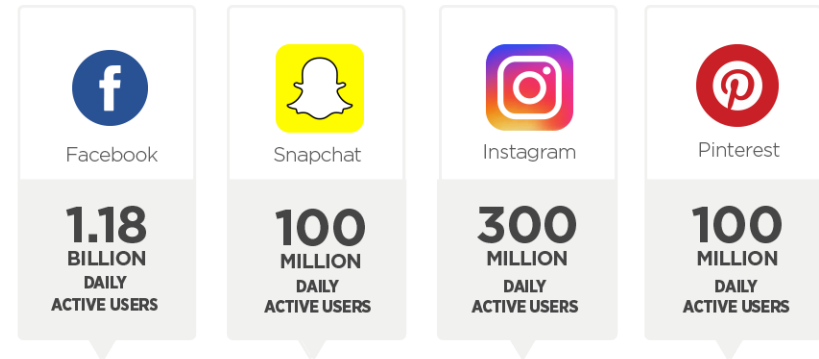
Much of this guide has talked about Facebook when referring to social media—and with good reason. With more than 1 billion global users, its domination of social networks is well established, and any dentist's online marketing strategy should include it for the foreseeable future. If your target patients include gen Xers and baby boomers, Facebook is still among the best ways to reach them online, and they should be engaged there frequently.

That said, an opportunity exists with millennials. While younger Americans have Facebook accounts as a necessity, it is seen as something for older people, like their parents. Many 16- to 34-year-olds spend more time on additional social networks for more-genuine communication—particularly Snapchat (100 million daily active users)<sup>21</sup> and Instagram (300 million daily active users).<sup>22</sup>

What's significant about these platforms is that they're primarily visual, instant, and used more specifically. Facebook has an unending deluge of stories from the news media, blogs, ads, polls, group invites, instant messages, and more. Instagram just has pictures and short videos, primarily from your friends and influencers you decide to follow. Snapchat has photos and videos only from your friends, which can be arranged in Stories or sent privately as temporary messages.

This leads to higher levels of engagement with relatively smaller audiences. If you can interest them, they'll keep following, liking, and sharing what you

### Social Media STATS



post. This is only going to increase; from 2015 to 2016, Snapchat's daily video views have increased 400%.<sup>23</sup>

Another social network that is primarily visual but somewhat more personal is Pinterest. With over 100 million monthly active users, it has a strong following.<sup>24</sup> Though users can upload photos (called Pins) of their own, the primary way Pinterest is used is to curate influencer and brand Pins, adding them to custom boards sorted by topics, and sharing those boards with friends. It is made specifically to consume content and get ideas about projects, beauty, home and health.

## Recommendation

With younger potential patients spreading out from Facebook, any future-minded dentist should be planning ways to engage them on their new terrain. At the very least, create profiles on these platforms, and cross-post your relevant visual social media content on them. This way you have content on all of these platforms without expending too much effort. Dentistry is especially well suited to visual platforms, as aesthetics are such a large part of its purpose and appeal. Who doesn't love a pearly white smile?

With Pinterest specifically, consider making infographic and advice-type content. Include stats about proper dental care with before-and-after shots in a single image, or create graphics of things like your "Top 5 hygiene tips." This is the content most likely to be Pinned and clicked thru.

In general, be aware of the visual appearance of both yourself and your practice. While you might not have time to share pictures of your clinic all day, younger patients do. Something messy or embarrassing could be snapped and shared without your awareness, affecting the online perception of your business. Plus, having the office "Insta-ready" makes for easy photo content when you do have time for social media marketing. You can direct how social media-inclined patients go about this: place a sign in the waiting room saying that patients are encouraged to post pictures of the practice; also provide an original, relevant hashtag like #brightsmiles, for example.



Take note that your patients can easily snap photos of your practice and share it with their friends in seconds. Make sure your practice is always photo-ready.

## TREND 7: DENTISTS ARE RELYING MORE ON OUTSOURCED MARKETING

This has a 49% chance of being news to you: 51% of dental practices use an online marketing solutions provider, according to an extensive study from Hanover Research. Of those that do, 75% have been doing so for more than a year and 5% for more than 10 years. If you have started using a provider, the value is high enough to continue, but the trend is still relatively young.<sup>25</sup>

The practice is growing, however. As is apparent from this guide and likely your own experience, the world of digital marketing is a tangle of tools, data, and automation that is inconvenient to start and difficult to master. Among dentists who use a marketing provider, 34% mention doing so for the provider's expertise and skill that wouldn't be cost-effective to learn or hire for in-house; 27% cited saving themselves hassle and time. Others admitted that it was due to the difficulty of keeping abreast of constantly evolving technology in the field.

As competition increases and patients' selective attention becomes more difficult to capture, marketing budgets are increasing in kind. Of the practices that Hanover surveyed, 51% expected to increase their budget over the next three years, 41% expected to maintain their budget, and only 7% planned to decrease it. Of those boosting their marketing spend, common reasons cited were a need to increase the flow of patients into the practice and because they needed to expand to new channels like developing a website or investing in social media.

It's important to note that 91% of the respondents to this survey were from private practices.

### Recommendation

With soaring competition and increased complexity of advertising, it is best to leverage a firm whose entire job is marketing, rather than hire one internal marketer. With a staff and access to numerous cloud-based tools that require a monthly fee, what you get from online marketing providers is a lot more than one employee could provide on their own and generally at equivalent cost or less.

It is vital to keep pace with your competition. If you don't have a responsive website or appear on Google Maps, you might not even exist to potential patients. Being aware of missteps is also important: if you are online but don't know what you're doing, you can sabotage your practice more than you know.

Compare marketing providers and their values relative to your marketing budget, keeping in mind that the majority of practices will be increasing their own budgets to help draw in new patients.

Over half of dental practices are using an online marketing solutions provider; 51% of them plan to increase their budget over the next three years.



## TREND 8: INTEREST IN NEW HEALTH CARE TECH IS INCREASING

In this paper and in headlines throughout the year, it's clear that there is a global interest in technology of all sorts. Even news of advanced dental technology—such as Invisalign, 3D imaging, teledentistry, and better types of fillings—reaches the ears of the public. Advertising campaigns of these technologies have led to interest and requests in practices across the country, though not many can offer it all.

On top of public interest in technology, there's also the rise of “disruption”—technology being applied in a way that fundamentally changes how an industry operates. The most prominent examples are Uber, which disrupted the taxi industry, and Airbnb, which disrupted the hotel industry. This occurred because the technology of the “sharing economy” made interacting with these services significantly easier and better for customers.

Health care and dentistry have not yet been disrupted that significantly, but one opportunity that sees spikes in patient interest is remote checkups, and 75% of patients who have never used telemedicine are interested in trying it.<sup>26</sup> Patients don't like going to the dentist, and a quick video consultation is far more attractive. With barriers to high-quality video calls eroded and secure, and HIPPA-compliant data transfers becoming more sophisticated, teledentistry is more possible than ever before.



**75% of patients who have never used telemedicine are interested in trying it.**

Of course, you can't perform X-rays remotely, but it could still be a helpful and profitable add-on. Teledentistry could serve as a way to prequalify interested patients, using your downtime for several 10-minute video consultations at a nominal fee for quick diagnosis and inviting them to schedule an appointment for a more in-depth examination based on what is discussed. This way the gaps in your schedule can be filled with money-making micro-appointments that could lead to larger patient relationships down the road.

## Recommendation

Remain aware of changing technology in the dental industry and invest when you can. You can make your practice stand out by offering cutting-edge equipment like cone beam CT or in-demand brand-name treatments like Invisalign. With these sorts of tools on hand, you can position your practice to attract upscale patients who demand the best care science can offer—and increase your fees accordingly.

Consider technology like HIPPA-compliant teledentistry systems with built-in billing. Laws requiring that teledentistry be covered by dental insurance are moving forward state by state, and it may already be covered in your area.<sup>27</sup> It is still rare for patients to be offered this state-of-the-art care, and it isn't just underserved remote patients who would be interested but busy urban professionals, as well. Providing a service that no one else in your area offers helps you stand out from the competition.

Whatever you choose to invest in, make hay of it in your online marketing. Announce your practice's technological upgrades on social media for all to see, and write blog posts about your experience and the benefits of the new technology.



Make your practice stand out from competitors by offering cutting-edge equipment and treatments.

## TREND 9: MORE GROUP PRACTICES ARE FORMING

It's hardly a secret that levels of student debt are increasing, and graduates from dental schools are faring no better. In fact, they often have it worse, going through dental school after undergraduate studies and racking up accelerated debt with fewer years on the job market than their peers. A new dentist's average debt is \$241,000, up 66% in the past decade, according to the American Student Dental Association.<sup>28</sup>

Simultaneously, there are increased competition in most areas, more-expensive necessary equipment, and online marketing budgets to consider. As modern technology becomes default for all but the oldest practices, there are even bigger costs like transitioning to electronic records, which requires specialized health care IT services.<sup>29</sup>

Yet another co-occurrence is that the millennial generation as a whole is increasingly entrepreneurial. They are interested in going their own way to strike it big, as opposed to joining a corporation, and the same goes for young dentists.<sup>30</sup>

With all of these trends occurring in tandem, it is likely that the number of group practices will grow in 2017 and beyond. With diminished opportunity due to debt and increased competition, along with the drive to be independent still within them, young graduates are teaming up to mitigate risk and the work/life balance necessary to succeed.<sup>31</sup>

### Recommendation

Capitalize on the drive and determination of recent grads while also providing them with smart opportunities. If you already have a well-established practice, consider either expanding your staff or opening a new franchise with these currently less expensive, entrepreneurially driven graduates at the helm or second in command. They'll be more driven to prove themselves, and with more responsibility and a higher degree of ownership, they'll rise to the challenge as sure as if they'd hung out their own shingle.

For millennial dental school graduates, such an arrangement would likely be more appealing than simply working for an established practice, meaning you'll get their best work toward your own reputation. Plus, when it's time to retire, you may be able to continue owning these practices while they are run by hardworking dental managers who have grown in their career under your tutelage, before selling your practice to them outright.

If you are a younger dentist or a recent graduate who would like to start a practice but cannot afford the risk, don't shy away from the trend. Find trustworthy partners among your schoolmates or the local dental community with whom to establish a group practice.

## TREND 10: PATIENT BEHAVIOR EXHIBITS MORE CONSUMERISM AND PICKINESS

This may be troubling to hear, but since the Great Recession and the many upheavals in the health care and dental insurance industries, patients don't feel the same commitment to dental checkups that they once did. Even preventive health care is viewed as a luxury as wages stagnate amid a significant rise in the cost of living.<sup>32</sup>

Patients now treat health care—and dental care especially—as a product, compared with all the other products they could spend their money on. It's a rare indulgence when everything costs so much, and a \$5 tube of toothpaste will put their mind at ease for now anyway. Patients are putting off any dental work deemed not critical.

As determined in some of the trends related to marketing discussed earlier, these consumers are scrutinizing their choices more closely, constantly researching, reviewing, and comparing to make the most of their strapped budgets when they do decide to see a dental professional.<sup>33</sup>

Not only are consumers pickier but in a combination of narcissism and civic-mindedness they feel compelled to overshare online, with 32% sharing negative experiences to protect their friends and families from

wasting precious dollars on a product or service that isn't up to snuff.<sup>34</sup> If negative feelings are associated with your practice, you can expect to be reviewed on Google My Business, Yelp, or Facebook, which can hurt business.

### Recommendation

Follow the recommendations made earlier in this white paper to be perceived as a high-value generator of knowledge, to be considered a trusted friend of the community, and to garner authentic consumer reviews to publically display. Don't slow down a patient trying to interact with you on social media, via your website, and especially at your practice itself.

The customer is always right. Treat your patients like a restaurateur would treat their most loyal diners, and they'll sing praises about what you've got cooking.

## CONCLUSION

These 10 trends in patient behavior, dental practices, and marketing opportunities from 2016 illustrate a vast landscape of shifts in how we conduct business. With more content, choices, competition, and consumerism than ever before in the dental industry, it isn't easy to keep up with all the changes. The recommendations in this white paper can help you navigate 2017 and provide a framework for success.

Remember to stay abreast of what's happening and what's next in your practice, as well as the industry and world at large—but don't neglect the fundamentals. Always follow the best practices of honesty and openness with your patients while providing reliable, top-notch service, and your loyal community will serve you in kind.

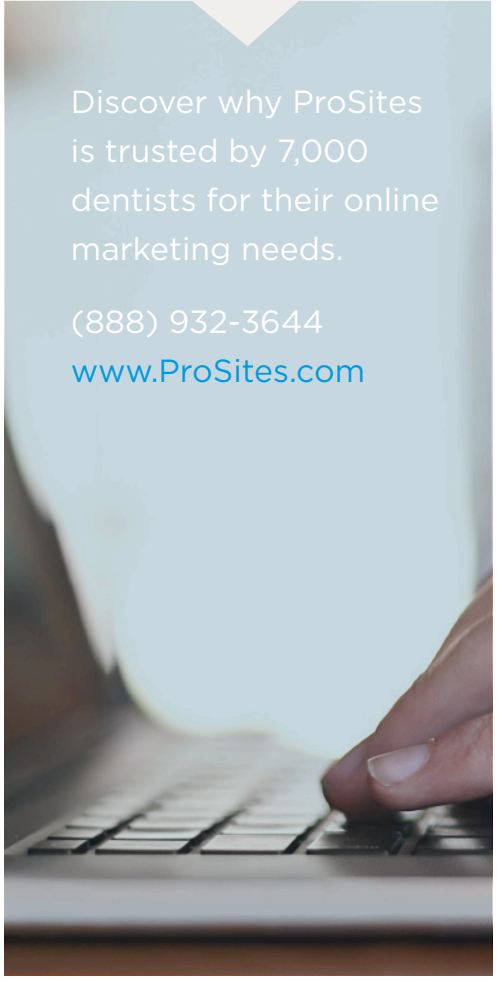


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