

VIEW FROM THE PRACTICE

ASSUMING YOUR WAY OUT OF THE MARKET

Branding and being on top of your game is of utmost importance when marketing your practice. Rahul Doshi explains how you should never become complacent when advertising your services

Today's marketing reality is very different from that which transpired years ago. Previously marketing consisted of nicely mapped out steps that would take potential customers through an educational journey. These steps might be fashioned in such a way that the experience elicited curiosity and trust that resulted in customers becoming patients.

SURFING DETECTIVES

Nowadays, however, customers become patients through a sophisticated web of connections and information. These days a person might find you at step 4, 5, 7 or 9! They might search for something on Google and find you (great!). They then ask a friend on social media and get sent your press release from a few months ago (gasp!) Forgetting about it until next time, they surf the net and come across a blog you wrote a year ago (gosh!). After discussion with another social media friend they end up onto your website and look at the recent stuff that you may or may not have updated (hallelujah). This creates a story about you in their minds that is made up of different pieces of the jigsaw in a sequence unique to them. Hence, we cannot assume that if people discover our marketing material that they have already read enough initial information about us. They may not be following us in an orderly pattern or sequence.

What does this mean? It means that we have to repeat content from step 1-4 in step 5, because step 5 might be the first step seen

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by a potential patient. We cannot assume that they already know about us.

OLD AND NEW

In marketing we often make the fatal mistake of not repeating ourselves often enough simply because we get bored of our own message. We hear our own material (product info, press releases, blogs, website, etc.) many more times than our customers. This means that we get bored of it much more than any one of our customers. For this reason we are constantly

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chasing the 'what's new?' However the 'old news' for one person might be the 'what's new?' for another. This is a particular area where people can go wrong when 'branding' their practices. They assume that people understand their branding concept and what it implies. This often makes it very hard work for customers. They need to be first explained who you are and what you do before camouflaging your brand in a cool new image. The message needs to be a strong one that is repeated often to ensure that it sticks. Assumptions that can endanger our marketing processes:

- Assuming that our target market will be sick of our marketing messages or our positioning statements (just because you are) can endanger your marketing processes.



- Assuming that the value we created in one piece of marketing will easily be connected to another.
- Assuming that if a potential patient sees one piece of marketing that they will look at all of them and hence build the entire picture in their mind.
- Assuming that people know what your practice does.
- Assuming that people read everything you publish in the order you present it.
- Assume that people know how you are different from other practices because you already told them once before.

We need to repeat a strong marketing message continuously and consistently to make it become our brand. This creates a self-generating marketing engine that attracts the appropriate target market in the correct way. But we also need to remember that if the game changes so may the players and also the rules of the game. This means your marketing will also change with the times. Don't lose the original message in the new marketing. And don't make detrimental assumptions to presume to know what your customers will know. Tell them!

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