



Make Community Marketing a Priority

By Roger P. Levin, DDS

Community marketing is a long-term approach to building relationships with the people and organizations in your community, including fellow business owners, civic leaders, charitable groups and residents. By engaging in multiple community activities throughout the year, you can create greater awareness of your practice. The goal is for your office to be known as the best choice for dental care in your area.

Here are four community marketing strategies that we recommend to our consulting clients:

1. Organizations – Joining the Chamber of Commerce and other similar groups will enable you to meet and network with other business owners and potential patients. You'll expand your list of contacts, keep abreast of what's occurring in the community, and increase your name recognition. While you can't join every organization, there may be opportunities to give presentations on dental-related subjects to additional groups.

2. Schools – Reach out to local schools about the possibility of speaking with students about oral health. Many schools are open to bringing in healthcare professionals to educate their students about important issues. By providing a public service, you raise your practice's profile in the community.

3. Youth Activities – Many dental practices sponsor sports teams for school-age children. This is an excellent way to get the practice's name in front of parents and other adults in the community, but you shouldn't stop there. Kids are involved in a wide range of activities, from high school bands to karate competitions to dance clubs. These are all opportunities to support the local community but also promote your practice. If you are currently only sponsoring a Little League team, consider supporting another activity. For a small investment, you often get high visibility.

4. Charities – Adopt a cause... or two. Examples include holding a food drive in the fall or sponsoring a team in a 5K race to raise money in the fight against cancer. Whatever cause(s) you choose, you'll be engaging patients and prospects, raising awareness about important issues and making your community a better place. Always a good thing.

Conclusion

Community marketing takes time. It's an incremental process, building year after year, the longer you are in a particular place. These four strategies will help you create greater name recognition, generate more word-of-mouth "buzz" about your office and, ultimately, gain more new patients.