

## **Ice packs, Happy Birthday & Facebook Likes!**

If you have a Facebook account, think about some of the most recent things you have “**liked**” that your friends or, more importantly, companies that you follow have posted.

I often tell clinic owners that setting up a Facebook page is the easiest thing to do – but developing an authentic connection with potential and existing patients is a much more difficult thing to accomplish.

Having talked to hundreds of clinic owners about social media and having been involved in trying many different approaches to social content, today I’d like to share some examples of how I have seen some clinics connect effectively with their customers online using social media.

### **Lets start with Ice Packs**

Yes... Ice packs. This picture to the side was posted on Facebook by Orthopedic Rehab in Montana. It is a basic photo of a home made ice pack and instructions on how to make your own. This particular post generated 30 shares – an indication that their audience saw something that they want to tell other people about.

Likes and shares on posts are a key contributor to determining how many people will see your posts.

### **Plant Your Roots With Fantastic Content**

Having great content posted to your social media site will go a long way in benefiting your business.

Facebook reports that the average page reaches about 12% of its fans organically. The percentage of people that will see a post you make is determined by a number of factors that Facebook controls, but the number of likes, comments, and shares that you get on posts are “signals” to Facebook about the engagement of your posts. You will find that some posts get broader reach than others based on the level of engagement the post created.

With the right content, you're bound to reap a number of benefits such as:

- An increase in friends, fans and followers
- An increased likelihood of having your content shared (which is great "technical" word-of-mouth marketing)
- A boost in your readership and leads
- An increase in trust

### **The Stats Are In!**

Pew Internet recently reported that as many as 81% of internet users sought out health information on the web within the past year (Pew, 2013)(1). This number is only bound to increase as more people are using mobile devices to access information. In fact, in 2012, 31% of cell phone owners and 52% of smartphone owners reported using their phones to look up medical information (Pew, 2012).

So why social media then? According to Pew Internet Project's research, as of December 2012, 67% of adults online were using social networking sites (Pew, 2012)(2) – and spending a lot of time on them, too. Experience Marketing Services released a study which revealed just how much we're globally spending on sites like Face Book, Twitter, and LinkedIn:

- Americans are spending 16 minutes of every hour on social media sites.
- Users in the United Kingdom spend 13 minutes of every hour on social media.
- Australians spend 14 minutes of every hour on social media (Experian Marketing Services, 2013)(4).

For your patients and potential patients that are researching your clinic online, Social media is a channel for networking and building relationships but it is also an opportunity to share who you are through an authentic and meaningful dialogue.

Here are some other examples of posts that I have seen achieve very strong engagement between clinics and their online network:

### **Happy Birthday Matt!**

Progressive Physical Therapy in Indiana recently posted a photo of "Matt", a therapist at the clinic with "Happy 1 year anniversary" on the picture. This post was "liked" by over 12% of their Facebook fan base (which is more people than the average post gets seen by).

A post like this accomplishes a few things:

- Puts a face to your clinic and connects with people on a personal level
- States that you are about relationships and celebrating people

### **They brought her flowers!**

A patient of Spear Physical Therapy in New York brought flowers to the therapist that had provided his treatment. Spear posted a picture of one of the therapists with the flowers with a note of celebration to their staff and a note congratulating their patient for “getting back to life”

This kind of a post is innovative because it celebrates the clinic staff but importantly within the context of treatment... the real celebration is about patient recovery.

### **Look, We’re in the news!**

Farmersville Physical Therapy in Texas posted a clipping from a local newspaper where the local chamber of commerce highlighted the clinic for its commitment to local health.

This post was liked by over 20% of its fan base and attracted comments like this:

*“Great place to be cared for so loving in there own way”*

This post is creative because the clinic is promoting itself the right way – it’s letting the article speak for the clinic vs. talking about themselves.

If you were a friend of a Farmersville patient that saw a like for that post or a potential patient that saw the testimonial comments, you would find this obvious authentic connection with its patients attractive.

### **The Take-away. Educate, Inspire & be personable.**

Patients come to your clinic to get better and to get more out of life.

To get there, they need to learn.... to learn about their condition, what to expect and how to get better. To get there they also need to be inspired – to get through the hard days and to get closer to their goals.

In the online world, people are not looking to be “talked at” they are looking to learn and to be inspired. In this online world, that is the business you should be in “Inspiring and Educating” your community.

Here are some recommended Do’s & Don’ts

### **Don’t**

- Talk about yourself.
- Let others talk about yourself for you.
- Ask for people to share or like. This will happen on its own if you are creating the right content
- Say nothing. This is the big Don’t. If you can’t invest in building authentic and engaging dialogues online, its better to not have a social presence.

### **Do’s**

- Comment on other peoples posts... comments and likes can reciprocate.
- Respond and acknowledge likes and comments on your posts.
- Give Advice! You know what types of questions you often get at the clinic. Enlighten the world.
- Amuse. If you find the right post that is funny, this goes a long way and shows your personality.
- Use pictures and videos wherever possible. People love visuals.
- Inspire. I have seen great response from inspirational quotes or news.

### **How do you sustain interesting content long term?**

The examples above are great creative ideas, but you won’t have an ice pack post a day or a staff birthday or a patient that dropped off flowers.

I have seen a lot of clinics get great traction by making regular posts about general patient education topics (e.g. Understanding ankle sprains, stretching before golf) as well as inspirational stories from the news and inspirational quotes.

Within this context, you can build a reservoir of content that “educates and inspires” your online fan base on a regular basis.

## **The Bottom Line**

There are a number of benefits to be had with the proper implementation and use of a social media marketing campaign, but it all starts with the type of content that you produce.

Once mastered, not only will you be able to captivate your current clients, but you'll increase the number of shares and retweets received, which will only further broaden your visibility and reach online. As long as your business continues to focus its social media efforts on being customer-focused, you're bound to come out on top.

## References

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## **About Scott Waddell**

Scott Waddell is the president of PatientSites.com (A Metamor Group Company).

In recent years, Scott has been working with PT clinic owners around the world to help maximize the performance of their online presence.

Since 1998, Scott has led the strategy and development of online "customer engagement" solutions for leading brands such as Microsoft, TD Financial Group, HSBC, McDonalds, Bell, Sprint and numerous other companies. These customer engagement initiatives are designed to create a unique and valuable customer experience online that leads to increased financial performance.

Scott has also created a number of web products, some which were purchased by other organizations.

Scott can be reached at 866 565 4746x282