

The Art Of Influence In Dental Marketing

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Abstract

The use of "influencer marketing" to promote one's practice has gained popularity, and many healthcare practitioners have embraced this trend, including dental professionals. Promoting awareness on social media channels may result in an increase in referral numbers. Many dentists and dental offices are growing and becoming more successful by utilizing social media channels, particularly Instagram and Instagram influencers. People may consider a dentist a trusted source after seeing reviews or before and after photos shared by an influencer they trust and admire. Influencer marketing is a great marketing tool provided it is used under the umbrella of bioethics.

Keywords: influencer, marketing, dentistry

INTRODUCTION

The advertising industry has been around for a long time and has evolved. Various brands and organizations advertise their services and products to make them popular. Like other services, dentists are also using advertisements to popularise their services. There are many types of advertising methods available in the market. Word-of-mouth advertising has been one of the most effective methods of advertising since the beginning and it is unlikely to be replaced anytime soon. Some of the advertising media are Radio, television advertisements, newspaper ads, posters, and social media allows advertising at the mass level in a short time. Initially, local print media was used commonly to advertise dental practices to patients. However, with the increase in patients visiting dentists for necessary services worldwide, local print advertisements are not enough.

Like other fields, Influencer marketing is quickly expanding in dentistry. Influencer marketing includestruly branding your business by becoming a household name and establishing credibility through consistency. Influencer marketing focuses on influential individuals rather than the target audience. It is a combination of both classical and modern marketing tactics. It modernizes the notion of celebrity endorsement by transforming it into a content-driven marketing campaign. Since 2016, when the market was predicted to be worth £1.2 billion, it has risen to an anticipated £10.1 billion in 2021, with no signs of slowing down.¹

In influencer marketing, influencers who have the most influence over potential buyers, are identified and targeted.² An influencer has the capacity to influence others' purchase decisions because of his or her authority, education, position, or relationship with his or her audience. As influencer marketing is so closely linked to social media, it is also known as social influencer marketing or social media influencer marketing. Social media

influencers follow a certain specialty, such as fashion, travel, food, healthcare, games, etc., and provide content on that subject. They have a loyal following of people who appreciate their ideas and tastes or love witnessing their lifestyle. As a result, they impact what their followers buy and can directly influence their followers' purchasing decisions.

Influencers are not just marketing tools; they are also social connection assets with whom brands, businesses, and organizations can work to achieve their marketing goals. Table 1 summarizes the type of influencers based on the number of their followers³

Influencer marketing in India

The influencer marketing sector in India was worth nine billion Indian rupees in 2021. Over the following five years, it was expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 25%. Influencer marketing platforms collaborate with influencers from a variety of industries, including beauty, fashion, sports, healthcare, gaming, etc. An influencer marketing platform not only assists the company in connecting with influencers but also in connecting with the right type of influencer. Some important Influencer Marketing Platforms in India are InfluenceMojo by TimesNext, OPA, Upfluence, Plixxo, Influencer.in, PulpKey, Mad Influence, Winkl, AspireIQ, CreatorIQ, Tagger, Social Bakers, Advowire, Klear, #paid, Hypr etc.⁴

According to a Rakuten Insight poll conducted in October 2020, approximately 67% of participants in India acknowledged to following at least one influencer on social media networks. Most respondents in India purchased items advocated by YouTube influencers. Other notable responses were television and Instagram influencers. In 2012, Philips released their latest kitchen gadget, the Air Fryer, which enabled deep frying of a range of food products while using 80 percent less oil. Despite having such a significant function, the Air Fryer was relatively unknown in the market. This is where Sanjay Thumma, best known for his YouTube cooking series Vahchef, was enlisted by Philips and its digital agency Ogilvy One. "Philips Superchef," a six-month television programme kicked off the promotion, and was successful in increasing customer awareness. Olay collaborated with Kusha Kapila, Dolly Singh, and Srishti Dixit to develop hilarious snackable content that incorporated the brand without interfering with the content of the video. The videos promoted the product and does not appear to force the brand in the audience's face. Through Kapila's video, the company was able to reach more than 9.7 lakh people.⁵

Influencer marketing in dentistry

Influencers are not only confined to beauty, travel, and fashion, but can now be seen in every field or industry, and the dental industry is no exception. However, unlike other fields where models were paid to pose to urge others to purchase the thing they were posing with, dentistry, is used for conveying knowledge and abilities. Numerous companies maintain a strong social media presence, supported by marketing agencies and digital analytics that assess the effectiveness of marketing tactics. This approach has been embraced by many healthcare practitioners, including those in India. It has become particularly popular in the disciplines of cosmetic medicine, plastic and reconstructive surgery, and dentistry, where it is used to advertise one's practice. Most dental offices contact known influencers to advertise their services when investing in brand awareness. A dental influencer can encourage their followers to take care of their teeth and gums, buy recommended dental goods, have regular dental check-ups, and make decisions related to their oral health.

Social media influencers can help spread the word about any dental practice while also increasing the reputation of the clinic. When potential patients see an influencer praising your clinic, services, or products, they can believe every word the influencer says and are far more likely to visit your practice. Patients acquired through influencer marketing are also more likely to invest in more expensive treatments.

Kusha Kapila has joined Invisalign India, a premium transparent teeth aligner company, as part of their worldwide influencer program #SmileSquad, which is powered by real brand promotion and testimonies. The digital creator posted a nine-minute clip on her Instagram account detailing her experience with Invisalign teeth alignment

therapy. While it is a testimonial video, it is not like the usual ones done after therapy. Unlike a short video that just conveys the corporate message wrapped in some content, this video depicts Kapila's whole treatment journey.

DISCUSSION

According to PPC Protect, the average customer sees 6,000-10,000 advertisements every day, which has reduced its effectiveness and made advertisements a poor choice for spreading the word about dental practice. Influencers, on the other hand, have a high potential for encouraging their followers to make purchases. According to Rakuten Marketing, 8/10 consumers have purchased after learning about it from an influencer. This makes influencer marketing considerably more effective and efficient for promoting your dental practice.⁶

Every year, businesses spend more money on influencer marketing efforts. While any practice may outsource their social media marketing to a well-known influencer, being an influencer, yourself will offer you more leverage. When you have control over the content and how it is promoted, you can fine-tune the details until everything is exactly how you want it.

Promoting awareness on social media channels may result in an increase in referral numbers.⁷ Many dentists and dental offices are growing and becoming more successful by utilizing social media channels, particularly Instagram and Instagram influencers. People may consider a dentist a trusted source after seeing reviews or before and after photos shared by an influencer they trust and admire. Dental care providers can use influencers to help them reduce their profession's myths and misconceptions. Their social media influencers increase awareness of dental care's benefits and users to get dental appointments. The social media influencer can even highlight your services and advertise you as an easy and affordable way to get dental care.

Some of the advantages of Influencer marketing helps a dentist to reach a larger number of potential patients. In today's world, when a potential patient searches for every little information online starting from the cause to the best specialist available online, one cannot afford to not be seen online. It Aids in Developing Credibility and Trust.⁸ It broadens the reach of dental practice. Unlike traditional marketing, it is comparatively less expensive. We are mostly targeting micro-influencers, which do not require a huge budget.⁷ Working with several relevant micro-influencers can be an effective way to promote niche-specific business. When an influencer endorses any practice, their audience is more likely to trust their recommendation. Many of their followers may end up visiting dental clinics a lot quicker than other potential patients who learn about dental practice through other channels. Also working with a good influencer can save time as he/she knows the best ways to create content that can help them engage their followers. They know the type of content that best appeals to their followers.

However, finding the ideal influencer for a brand's campaign requires a lot of time and work. If collaboration is not done with the right influencers, it might have an adverse impact on the brand's reputation. A survey found that 61% of marketers find it challenging to discover the proper influencers for their campaigns. It is difficult to know for sure whether an influencer has real followers. Since influencer marketing is still a new approach and there is no manual for developing a successful influencer marketing plan, dental practices must learn from their hits and failures. There is a high risk involved in influencer marketing as, if an influencer cannot generate compelling content, they may fail to connect with your target audience. In such circumstances, your time and money would be wasted.

Some frequent mistakes that influencers make that might harm a brand:

- Failure to disclose that a post is sponsored⁹
- Posting stuff that does not appeal to their target audience
- Ignoring the Advertising Standards Council of India ("ASCI") guidelines on "Influencer Advertising on Digital Media"¹⁰

Though influencer marketing helps in building a larger and stronger patient inflow, it can be misused by unethical practitioners to lure innocent people. A robust advertising campaign would give an advantage to unethical providers. Thus, influencer marketing is a great marketing tool provided it is used under the umbrella of bioethics.

CONCLUSION

If utilized in accordance with ethics, influencer marketing has the potential to be used as a successful marketing tool for promoting dentistry services or treatments and helping the dental industry reach its full potential.

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“Table 1: Types of influencers based on number of followers”

Type of Influencer	Number of followers	Description	Benefits
Nano influencers	1k to 10k followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have the highest engagement rate of any influencer type. • Content is hyper-authentic and personalized for the audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much more cost-effective • Higher local reach

Micro-influencers	10k to 50k followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are often driven by their perception as an opinion leader of the subject matter. • They are generally regarded as an industry expert or topic specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niche audience • Audience's trust
Mid-tier influencers	50k to 500k followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can secure more sizable sponsorships, and many make a full-time living off their Instagram presence. • They are perceived as more engaging and trustworthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger reach than micro-influencers
Macro influencers	500k to 1M followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They command thousands of rupees per sponsored post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide audience • Relatively low risk of fake followers
Mega influencers	1M + followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have achieved celebrity status on social media with a massive fan base. • They are essential, the trendsetters of the industry and their colossal follower count grant them a powerful position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass audience • Potential sales increase