

Is your Facebook page gathering dust?

Neglected social media pages on the Internet reflect poorly on your practice. **Amy Rose-Jones**, Marketing Manager at Dental Design Ltd* and big social media fan, has a few tips to help bring your pages to life.

dust?

There are an enormous number of idle social media accounts out there – and dental practices are big offenders! When it comes to social media, it seems like a lot of dental practices were quick off the block, but have fallen at the first hurdle. Why are there so many unloved social media pages out there? Many have stopped posting because of a lack of inspiration, lack of followers, or not seeing a justifiable return on investment. That's where I can help.

First and foremost, it's important to view social media as a branding exercise, rather than a 'new patient' strategy. That's not to say you won't see a return from your social media efforts, you will, but it will be by no means instant. It takes time and effort to build up a following, so patience is certainly a virtue in this instance.

In order to cultivate online conversation, it's important to be consistent in your message and be interesting - it's hard to listen to silence, and difficult to engage with 'boring' - so why would you do so on social media sites? Being remarkable and sharing in the below will help your team become more personable

breaker' ideas to keep your social media pages interesting.

Photos

Photos are best used on Facebook, Google+ and Pinterest. It's good to note that Facebook's edgerank algorithm favours photos, making them more likely to appear in your followers' timelines than a standard text status update.

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and approachable – remember, people 'buy' people. Here are a few 'ice

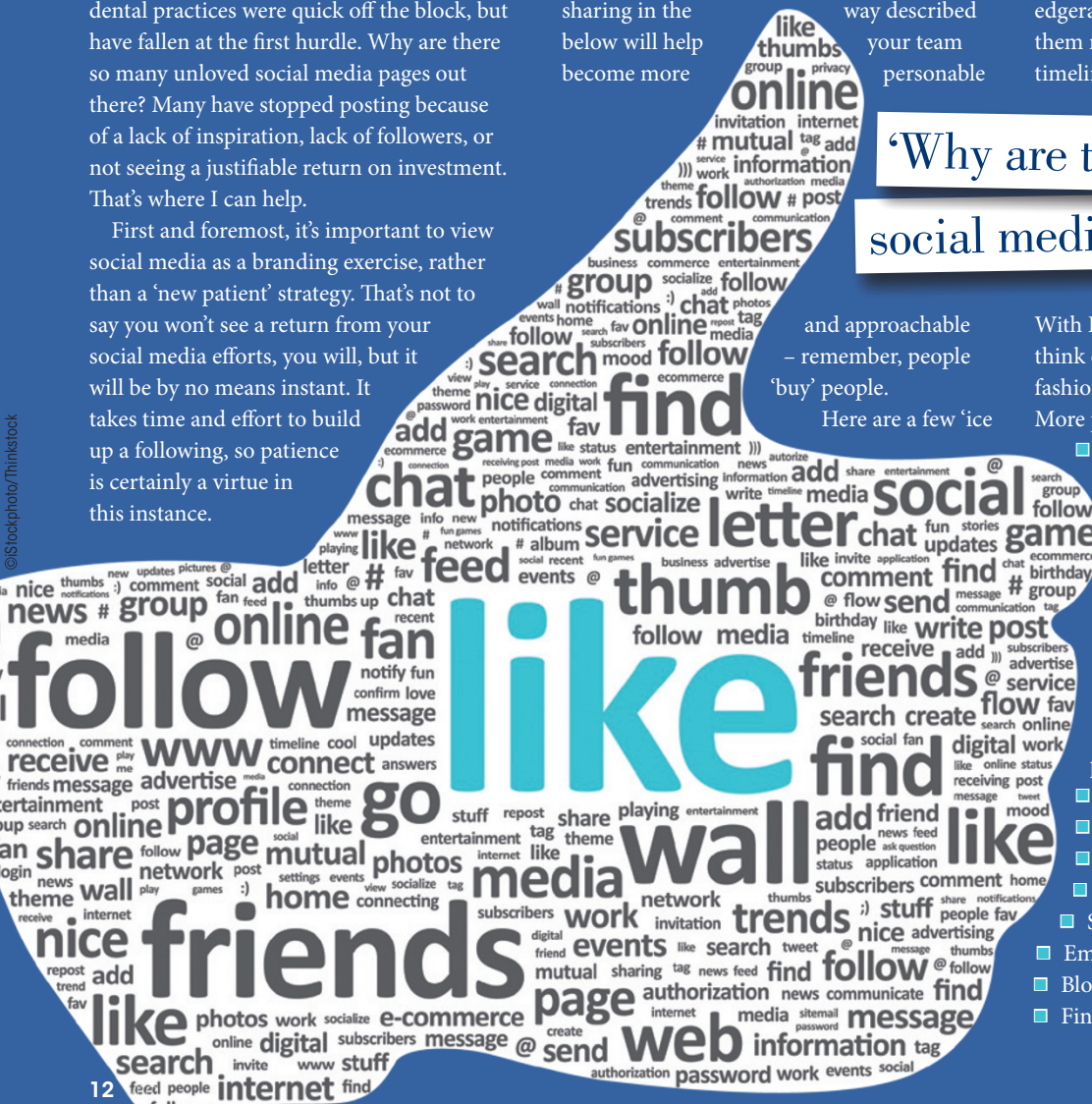
With Pinterest you can be a bit more quirky; think outside the box and pin photos of old fashioned dental surgeries, for example. More photo ideas could be:

- Photos of your practice
- Photos of your team
- Charity events
- Team building days
- Your latest patient cases.

Practice news

Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are probably the best platform for sharing news about the practice; here are a few examples:

- Latest reviews/testimonials
- Treatment information
- Available appointment times
- Staff courses and achievements
- Staff changes
- Emergency dentistry contact details
- Blogs
- Financing options.



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Promotions

Facebook, Google+ and Twitter are great for promoting your latest special offers – and it’s good practice to add ‘value’ to the patient by rewarding them for following your posts.

Discounts, free consultations and whatever else are personal preference - some love them, and others hate them. If you do decide a promotion is right for you, be mindful not to over sell; you wouldn’t walk into a party full of people you’ve never met before and force your business cards into their hands. The same thing is to be said for social media promotions; you will have a rapport with some, but not all; be forceful and your followers will very quickly find the ‘unfollow’ button.

Striking a balance

It’s important not to be too informal on social media sites and you’ll need to strike a balance. After all, you are representing your dental practice – a professional and trusted establishment. It’s good to add a few updates about dentistry in general to showcase your knowledge and how your practice is keeping up-to-date with modern techniques etc, in between your more sociable updates. Twitter is a fantastic medium for this and it’s also appropriate for Facebook. Here are some ideas:

- Sharing/retweeting interesting articles
- Thoughts for the day
- Dental facts
- Courses attended
- New treatments.

Local interests

Keep it local. Ninety-nine percent of your business is likely to come from the local area so try and engage with local businesses by commenting on and sharing their posts. Do the same with local events; show an interest, ask questions and engage - if you share others’ content, local businesses are more likely to return the favour by spreading your message much further than just to your own followers. It is also worth sharing local news stories, the weather forecast, even traffic alerts!

Charity events

Show that you care by taking part in charity events. Charity always pulls at the heart strings of patients and beyond, so if you’re involved in a charity event of any description, take a picture and share it across all of your social networks - not only will you raise awareness of your cause, you could also gain some extra donations!



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Customer relations

Social media is a fantastic customer relations tool, so make sure you listen in to what others are saying about you and protect your brand by replying to comments and reviews. Big fast-food players like Pizza Hut and Dominos do this exceptionally well. Whether the feedback is good or bad, you can soon turn a positive into a negative, simply by responding. There are a few inexpensive software tools which can help you do this, so that you don’t have to trawl through the web yourself.

If you are prepared to invest your time in social media, there are great gains to be had. If not, please remove the links from your websites! My advice is to take note of the suggestions above and stick with it - the benefits will invariably follow - and I daresay you might become a fan of social media!

If you want to maximise your online exposure through social media, for free advice call the Dental Design team on 01202 677277.



**Dental Design Ltd specialise in design for the dental profession. With more than ten years of dental marketing experience, Amy has a passion for driving your business forward through a unique blend of creative and marketing skills. www.facebook.com/dentaldesignltd @dentaldesign*