

Marketing with a Microphone

Kelley Mulhern, DC

"All things being equal, people will do business with, and refer business to, those people they know, like, and trust." - Bob Burg, 2006, *Endless Referrals*

When given an option, it stands to reason that people prefer to do business with those they know, like, and trust. However in today's world - where your patients can exhaustively research their condition, diagnosis, treatment options, and treatment providers - they may have formed their opinion of you before you've even met. If that's the case, how can you help people get to know, like, and trust you - before they meet you - in order for them to want to become a patient in your practice?

The answer is simple. Go out of your way to introduce yourself, your values, and your practice to your community before they need you. Make it easy for prospective clients to learn about you and feel a connection to you. One of the best ways to do that is by marketing with a microphone. Let's take a look at some of the ways to incorporate a microphone into your marketing strategy, as well as some tips and suggestions to maximize its impact.

A Microphone in Your Strategy

There are a variety of ways to use a microphone as part of your marketing strategy. For example:

- Record and produce informative podcasts which can be shared via social media, text, or e-mail.
- Host a web-based radio show on a site like Blog Talk Radio.
- Develop an online course on a site such as Udemy.
- Enhance your website's SEO.
- Add video into the mix and you can then develop advanced tutorials, YouTube videos, videos for your website, courses, webinars, videos to share via social media, etc.

It's one thing for a prospective client to read about you or to read something you've written. A deeper connection can be forged when they hear your voice. Besides, it's easier to listen than to read. Clients on-the-go may not have time to sit down and read something, but they may be able to listen to an audio file with the same information. Listening to your voice is a great way for prospective clients to see you as an authority in your field. It can also help you build visibility for your practice and make a connection with people you haven't yet met.

In 2013, Apple reached more than 1 billion podcast subscribers on iTunes. A 2014 Share of Ears survey by Edison Research found that almost 26% of the time people spend listening to audio products they're listening to podcasts. That number is growing every year. Be an early adopter and use available technology to grow your practice. It's easier than you think.

How to Get Started

So, what equipment do you need to get started? It's really not as complicated as you might think.

You need:

- A computer. In general, Macs seem to have better artistic/entertainment capabilities although a PC works fine, too.
- A microphone. Don't use the mic built into your computer for this unless you want your product to sound amateurish. You can get a decent quality mic for less than \$200.
- A pop filter to decrease extraneous sounds from your recording.
- Headphones or ear buds to block out environmental noise and echoes.
- A mic stand or boom arm to hold your mic. This gives you flexibility in positioning the mic as different distances result in audio changes (i.e.: closer equals louder). Make sure the mic you purchase fits properly into the stand.
- Software to record and edit your tracks. There are many free options available such as garageband (Mac) or audacity (PC).
- A dedicated room or space free of distractions and noise.
- Start with the basics - you can always add more later if the need arises.

Once you have your equipment, familiarize yourself with it. Record some practice takes and learn the capabilities of your equipment. In the meantime, think about how you want to use the mic in your marketing strategy. Here are some questions to get you started: Do you want to host a radio show? Launch a podcast? What topic(s) will you focus on? (Hint: What are you most passionate about?) Will you interview other people or provide the information by yourself? Who's your target audience? How frequently will you post your show or podcast? How long will each recording be? Will you have a branded theme to start and end the show? How will you get the word out? How will you name your recordings? (Suggestion: Use Google Adwords Keyword Planner to find common search terms. Try to incorporate related popular terms into your titles to maximize potential exposure.)

Helpful Tips

Once you've decided to use technology to grow your practice and have gotten the necessary equipment, keep a few things in mind. First, your material must be important to your target audience. Answer their burning questions or help them solve nagging problems. Give them a reason to listen to you instead of someone else.

Second, the presentation of your information must be professional, personable, and developed. Take the time to properly research and write out the information you'll be recording. You could have great information, but if it's presented poorly people won't tune in. Be yourself and let your unique personality and perspective shine through.

Third, practice your recording and listen to the audio. Check yourself for pauses, verbal space holders (such as ummm, ahhh, and so on), repeated phrases (common ones to avoid are "you know" and "like"), and anything else that might be distracting or irritating to the listener. Have others listen and provide feedback, too, as they might catch things you missed. Practice until you're proficient at delivering a clean and polished recording.

Finally, as with any marketing endeavor, be consistent. Use the same branding (i.e.: images, photos, music, and color palettes). Commit to a time length and frequency and be reliable. If you tell people you're going to host a radio show once a week, but you only do it once a month you'll lose listeners. If the length of your podcasts are unpredictable, people won't know if they have time to listen and may move on to a podcast they know will fit their schedule.

If you decide to start making audio recordings part of your marketing strategy, you don't have to go it alone. There're a multitude of free resources and tutorials available online, in addition to fee-based programs. Spend some time looking through the material and learn from the mistakes of

others. It's possible to start marketing with a microphone within a few weeks for less than \$500.
What are you waiting for? It's time to share your passion - and your voice - with the world.

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