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The Power of Email Marketing

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For many of us, our first introduction to email was AOL and the infamous phrase, "You've Got Mail" when you logged on to the site. Fast forward a couple decades and the magic of email has been lost on many. Albeit the scams from Nigerian Kings, the mounds and mounds of unwanted spam, and phishing schemes trying to capture your identity haven't helped email's reputation in the least.

Two Big Practice Perks

So, as an acupuncture practice, should email marketing be something you focus on? Yes, yes, yes. Here are two big perks:

Volume: In 2017, according to Statista, there were 3.7 billion email users globally. Even with strict CAN-SPAM laws and regulations, it's still easy to get in front of your target market. Remember, you have hundreds or thousands of email addresses in your practice management system. Get people to opt in - after all, you only want to expend your energy on people who want to hear from you.



ROI: Email marketing has a median return on investment of 122 percent¹ according to Direct Marketing Association and Demand Metric. This is huge compared to direct mail, print ads and even social media. Email marketing is inexpensive. All you need is the program - and for many it is minimal or free - and good content, which takes time.

Making Your Email Marketing Convert: 10 Important Rules

1. Make sure it's optimized for mobile. Short subject lines, minimal (or no) pics, responsive layout and text that's readable on a phone. Emails not optimized for mobile will get deleted within 3 seconds according to Adestra.²
2. Subject lines are king. Think of a subject line like the headline of a newspaper. If it doesn't intrigue the reader, it won't get clicked on. We like to use short one- to three-word subject lines - something intriguing ... but still relevant to the body copy of the email! Click bait will only get you one open and then you will be done. Don't be tempted.
3. Be personal. Your business emails should come from a person - not ABC Practice. This is a conversation between two people. We are fans of using first names in the emails ,such as "Good Morning [First Name]." Of course, older patients may prefer Mr. or Mrs. That data will be in your patient charts. Speaking of conversations, the tone of the email should be just that: conversational. Write like you speak - always.
4. Know thy audience. Segment your lists. Know who buys what from you and when. Know if they are a patient, a potential patient, an influencer or all three. Divide and conquer. Your potential patients don't necessarily need the same email as long-term patients. One you are trying to woo; the other you are nurturing.
5. Be relevant. Back to #3 and #4 above - you should be talking to your audience and giving them relevant information they need and more importantly, want.
6. Be consistent. Weekly is best, monthly is OK. Whatever the cadence - stick to it. Do not waiver. You can add, but do not take away. Same time, same day - be a robot.
7. Watch your opens, click-throughs and opt-outs. This a process; if you aren't watching your metrics, you won't know when to shift to new approaches. If you used to have open rates of

30 percent and now they are down to 5 percent - Houston, we have a problem. Look at your list, look at your content. Are you being too salesy? Are you being boring?

8. Remember the 80/20 rule. Eighty percent of the content you put out there should not be trying to sell anything. It should be content that is like #5 - relevant and useful. That doesn't mean you can't have a call to action at the bottom of the email to make an appointment or sign up for a class, etc. - but that should not always be the focus of your email. People need to get to know you, then like you, and when they finally trust you can solve their problem, that's when they will ask for your products and services. Not before.
9. Stay flexible. We stick with the 80/20 rule, but you also need to be flexible to push out content that is opportunistic. You have some openings that just came up and you would like to fill them - send out an email blast. You have a class, a speaking engagement that you would like people to show up for - send out an email blast. You have some big news - you can send that out in an email blast. Use your best judgment.
10. Automate It. If you are a newbie to email marketing - this isn't for you. But if you've mastered Constant Contact, MailChimp, etc., and have a good segmented list and access to a good content writer as well as a techy, it might be time for you to step up your game. Platforms such as Active Campaign and Infusionsoft combine email marketing with a CRM, turning your email into full-blown marketing platforms. These automation tools allow you to add Boolean cues to trigger email automations, further deepening your customer's experience with you. Automation isn't rocket science, but it is several steps above a simple email campaign. Hiring a marketing team to help you set it up and train you is the best way to start.

Your No. 1 Marketing Tool

In the end, email marketing is still the No. 1 way to get in front of your desired audience. It's the least expensive, allows you to be targeted and most importantly, the metrics tracking is detailed, allowing easy A/B testing and adjustments.

References

1. "Email Continues to Deliver Strong ROI and Value for Marketers." eMarketer.com, Sept. 12, 2016.
2. 2016 Adestra Consumer Adoption & Usage Study.

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