

# The Next New Normal: Marketing Your Practice Post-COVID

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**Y**ou can't put the genie back in the bottle. If there is one main takeaway from 2020 for marketers – it's that. The pandemic has upended our lives and dramatically altered how patients access medical care. As a result, marketers of large or small medical practices must rethink their business strategies, messaging, and targeting tactics when trying to reach patients in need of immediate or preventive care in 2021.

Patients have become more digital savvy in the medical space this year and it is apparent that they expect practices to continue to deliver virtual options for certain services they once only would have sought in person. So, now is the time for medical practices to radically rethink their marketing strategies for 2021.



Here are four ideas that medical practices need to consider as they navigate the next new normal and develop their 2021 marketing plans:

**Define Your Primary Objectives:** This may seem obvious; however it is necessary to look at the current state of your practice and define your goals for 2021 to either maintain or (more likely) reestablish your brand position. The world around us has changed, and your brand will need to change with it.

Think about what you need to do to best position your practice for success. Do you need to expand demand, recapture lost patients, enhance your brand image, improve your digital search position, or measure the patient experience? More than ever, your goals will serve as the foundation for your marketing plan in this upcoming year – make sure they truly reflect your business needs.

**Expand Your Digital Footprint:** A well-structured digital marketing experience will serve as one of the main keys to success in 2021. While digital advertising will play a role in targeting patients, medical practices need to leverage their software and electronic health record solutions to expand the virtual experience including:

- Telemedicine care
- Remote online appointment scheduling, check-in process and pre-appointment form submissions
- Robust patient portals
- Targeted organic digital communications to current patients
- Paid search and display digital advertising for new patients

**Enhance Brand Activation and Effective Messaging:** Delivering the right message to your patients through the right channels remains best practice to build brand equity. Focus your messaging on what your patients need to hear in the here and now to give them the confidence they need to take charge of their health and feel safe coming back into the office. Highlight safety protocols, including social distancing, PPE usage and online engagement solutions to deliver the highest level of patient care.

**Focus on the Patient Experience:** Word-of-mouth recommendations remain the best way to capture new patients. Our digital ecosystem has provided current, as well as prospective patients with the ability to see how your practice is rated and what people are saying.

If you don't have a formal reputation management program in place, now is the time to implement one. Reputation management programs provide real-time feedback, service recovery options and enhance SEO strategies.

As we head into the new year and the next new normal, keep in mind that while patient expectations may have changed, your connection to them and to your share of the market has not. Through goal setting, expanding your digital footprint, enhancing brand activation and messaging, and focusing on the patient experience, you can rethink your marketing strategy to set your practice up for great success.

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