

3 Ways to Ignite Patient Communication





About eDoctors:

eDoctors.com is a medical-practice marketing service that helps physicians Find, Convert and Retain their patient base. They operate a portfolio of health-specific websites that generate over 20 million unique visitors each month. In addition to websites, the eDoctors team has developed a suite of marketing technologies and services focused on improving the value of medical practices through better communications with patients. To find out more about eDoctors visit www.eDoctors.com.

The New Era of Patient Communication

Digital communication has drastically changed in the past 10 years. New devices and technological advancements have accelerated the speed at which we communicate. Patient's expectations are higher than ever, and if your practice isn't evolving with online technology, your patients could leave you for one that is. The key to establishing a successful communication plan is to evolve your **digital communication tools** to meet (or exceed!) your patients' expectations.

The web allows businesses to be accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Is your website ready to give digitally savvy patients the web experience they're after? Today's consumer expects more than a couple generic pages about your practice and a phone number not answered after-hours. Listing your practice's location, phone number, and a basic list of services might have been enough a few years ago, but technology has pushed today's marketing game far beyond that. Patients expect **educational content, experiential interactions, and instant access** that empower them to make informed decisions and act at their convenience.

Improving the way you communicate with your patients doesn't have to be complicated. While you could build and implement communication tools on your own, partnering with a web company that specializes in digital communication solutions makes the transition much easier. Ultimately, improving patient communication is all about making your web presence as accessible and engaging as possible. The tips outlined below are the first steps toward building a communication plan that captures the consumer's interest and holds it for years to come.

One: Create Engaging Content

Adding educational and experiential content to your website positions you as the trusted source patients are seeking. Being able to learn about what's involved with the procedure and recovery and view other patients' experiences makes your site the patient's "one-stop-shop" for medical information. Patients who have access to all the resources they need to take the next step and book an appointment will do so if you've provided them with the information they're looking for.



Solid educational information is vital, but fresh, ongoing communication is equally important in today's media game. You need to create diverse types of content to effectively interact with savvy patients.

Enhance your basic website by incorporating some of these modes of communication to your web presence plan:

- **Blog** – A blog is an opportunity to cultivate and share fun and engaging content. You can use your blog as a platform to more frequently generate shareable and social pieces.
- **Social Media** – Decide what social media networks would be best for your practice and establish accounts. Integrate social media with your website by including links and building blog content you can share across your social networks.
- **Before & After Gallery** – The Internet has become an incredibly visual place. Creating a photo gallery is a great tool for demonstrating success and helping prospective patients understand the process of care.
- **Q & A** – Create and participate in a two-way conversation. Hosting this form of communication positions you as an expert, and when you answer questions with kindness and professionalism, you demonstrate your knowledge and “bedside” manner.

Two: Open Your Front Desk to Appointments 24/7

Mobile, online-ready tablets, smartphones, and notebooks have established an “instant gratification” expectation among consumers. There is a growing demand for patients to be able to book appointments with ease whenever the moment strikes them. What if it's after hours? Or the patient is at work and can't pick up the phone? Is your website ready to book appointments online?



A recent study found that over 47% of patients are booking appointments online. As technology evolves, the number of practices offering online appointments will continue to increase. Embracing these changes early and implementing an online scheduling tool offers appealing, interactive convenience for patients, and will also help reduce phone time for your busy staff.

Three: Use Email to Maximize Your Patients' Lifetime Value

Acquiring new patients is essential, but retaining each and every one of your patients will help you grow your practice. Maintaining strong, consistent communication with your patient after their appointment is the key to keeping your practice top-of-mind. Whether your efforts result in positive word-of-mouth advertising or another appointment, your practice has a lot to gain from keeping in touch with your patients.

Today, email continues to be a leading mode of digital communication. It's both cheap and effective. When using email marketing it's important to keep the communication consistent. You want to send out an email on a monthly basis, versus sending one out every few months when the mood strikes. Consistency in communication is crucial to balancing between appearing "spammy" and maintaining meaningful contact.

Forward-Thinking Communication

We've all heard the adage, "The only constant in life is change." As the use of technology in the healthcare space continues to evolve in the coming years, you'll want to continue to keep a close eye on new developments and think about how you can use them to your practice's advantage. You can't expect to stand still and continue to stay competitive. However, by integrating the three simple communication solutions we've outlined here, you can have confidence that you're adapting to the current marketing and communication field and establishing a strong position for the future. Show patients that through your website's fresh educational content, experiential interactions, and instant access you're embracing technology and the power it has to connect you to their needs.





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