

Direct Mail Marketing Helps Dental Clinics Maintain Customer Relationships



Dentistry Today — As dentistry offices slowly reopened their doors after closing during the initial days of the pandemic, many relied on direct mail marketing to help recoup losses and maintain customer relationships.

The outbreak of COVID-19 sent a shockwave through the healthcare industry. While hospitals were grappling with sick patients, other healthcare professionals were forced to close shop to help flatten the curve.

At the end of March 2020, nearly 95% of private dental practices were closed or only seeing patients with an emergency issue, the **ADA** reported. After adopting new safety precautions, dental offices were able to reopen and resume servicing their local community.

Many offices employed a variety of direct mail marketing strategies to help reassure existing patients and add new patients to their rosters. Direct mail marketing also helped them maintain customer relationships when people were nervous about scheduling in-person visits.

Here are just a few direct mail marketing strategies implemented by dental offices during the pandemic.

Remind Patients of the Importance of Regular Visits

Many patients canceled appointments or neglected to schedule a visit during the early days of the pandemic. The **World Health Organization** reported that oral health services were among the most affected essential health services because of COVID-19, with 77% of countries reporting partial or complete disruption.

Regular dental care not only keeps teeth and gums healthy, but dentists are often the first line of defense against serious health issues, like oral cancer and bone loss. To encourage patients to reschedule missed dental appointments, dental offices sent direct mail postcards to their current lineup of patients to remind them about the importance of preventive dental care.

Alert Patients to New Safety Protocols

Despite being dubbed high risk, fewer than 1% of dentists nationwide were found to be COVID-19 positive, according to data collected by the **ADA**. These figures indicate that the rigorous safety practices implemented by dental offices across the country were successful in keeping both their employees and patients safe.

Some of the new guidelines include screening patients for COVID-19 symptoms by taking their temperature, installing plastic barriers in the reception area, and requiring dental hygienists and dentists to wear proper protective gear, including face shields.

To make patients feel safe at the dentist, many offices used direct mail marketing to promote their new safety procedures. Understanding the precautions dental offices were taking helped to reassure patients and prompted them to reschedule missed appointments.

Offer Add-On Deals or Discounts

To help recoup lost revenue, some dental practices decided to offer special deals, like a discount on tooth whitening for patients who come in for a cleaning. Dentists used direct mail marketing to blanket the local community with their special offers in an effort to increase foot traffic.

Postcards are easy for customers to handle and provide a tangible tool to increase volume of appointments. Many dentists turn to postcards when looking to promote a special deal, especially when the direct mail postcard company offers the mailing with **no long-term commitment**.

Tout New Online Services

During the pandemic, some dentists implemented telehealth services as an option for patients unwilling or unable to visit the office in person. Teledentistry can be used for monitoring, like retainer checks, as well as providing education and screening for emergency care.

Direct mail marketing has been an important tool to alert people about teledentistry services during the pandemic. At the same time, dentistry offices used direct mail marketing to encourage patients to follow their practice's social media pages for important urgent updates.

New Mover Marketing Helps Add New Patients

As the vaccine rolls out across the country and COVID-19 numbers drop, dentists will benefit from continuing to use direct mail marketing as a component of their marketing strategy. While nearly 60% of private dental practices are currently open and operating as usual, 41% are still seeing a lower volume of patients than normal, the **ADA** reports.

One effective direct mail marketing strategy that dental offices can implement to bolster patient counts is **new mover marketing**, which provides a proven offer to new residents before they establish loyalties to other providers.

It's an easy and effective method for dentistry offices to increase patient counts during this unique time as each month advertises to a brand new audience. Dental offices can work with their local new mover consultant to decide on their one-time-use housewarming offer. This turkey program allows practices to set it and forget it, so they can focus on servicing clients and fostering customer relationships.

Direct mail marketing helps dentistry offices maintain relationships with current patients and add new patients as they continue to navigate this challenging season.

