

To Get New Dental Patients, It Helps to Go “Old School”



Dentistry Today (August 2019) — Like any business, if you want to grow your dental practice, you can't rely only on your existing clientele. Certainly, there are some patients who likely keep you in business—the ones who (despite you and your staff's entreaties) don't brush or floss and then need to come in repeatedly for fillings and root canals. Still, ideally, you'd like to see your practice grow by having happy patients with healthy teeth and a steady stream of new patients stopping by.

But how do you get those new patients?

It's time to consider new mover marketing. Our Town America, a franchise that targets new movers by direct mail, has a proven business model that helps local businesses thrive even in this increasingly technological and wired world.

While many may think that direct mail and paper incentives may already be obsolete, the data shows otherwise. According to numerous reports, the direct mail industry has been steadily, albeit slowly, growing over the last 10 years. In today's world where everything is digital and it's easier than ever to delete emails (or even block them from arriving in your inbox in the first place!), offers that are mailed directly to a new resident have proven to be more effective than their electronic

counterparts.

Now, of course, businesses advertise through social media and reach out to people through their phones. You would think that would have finished off direct mail, but no. In fact, despite being more wired and connected than ever, it's become clear that direct mail—especially when it is aimed at people who are new to a community—works better than ever. According to the business intelligence company USData Corp, **which did a study on direct marketing**, 25% of millennials consider reading direct mail a leisure activity.

I know. You're wondering how reading mail could be a leisure activity. But it makes sense if you think about it. If you're thinking that reading direct mail for enjoyment is nuts, you're probably a generation X'er or baby boomer who is used to getting letters and bills in the mail and tossing direct mailers in the trash. Nowadays, receiving any mail is rather unique and, yes, it can be fun to open.

It's email that's become sort of a drag. Adobe, the computer software company, **polled more than 1,000 white-collar workers last year** and found that millennials spend 6.4 hours a day checking their email, with more than a third checking their work email before they get out of bed.

And it's especially fun to get actual mail in your mailbox when you're new in town and trying to get acclimated to your surroundings.

That's where targeted new mover marketing comes in. By providing new movers with one-time use housewarming gifts from local neighborhood businesses in a premium welcome package, your business is capturing the new residents' attention first. The key is to provide an offer that has value. It's a welcome package, not a flier. The offers can be tracked, so as a business owner, you can feel comfortable knowing your investment is paying off. Once these new customers redeem the offer, they get a followup mailing to improve the chances of them turning into a repeat customer.

If your dental practice is part of a beautiful new mover welcome package, consisting of valuable offers from businesses in the area, essentially alerting somebody that, "Hey, welcome to your new home! We'd love for you to consider us to be your new dentist," prospective patients are going to be far more receptive than if you sent them yet another tweet, text, or email, which will probably go in the spam folder anyway.

When we're on our phones, desktops, or devices, we have countless distractions. When we're at our mailboxes and then walking back to our apartments or up the driveway to our homes, dentists (as well as pizzeria owners, auto mechanics, hair stylists, and anyone else) have at least a fighting chance for some mindshare. And once you've captured their attention, these new residents are far more likely to visit your establishment than that of your competitor. Never underestimate the power of being the first to grab a potential customer's attention!

In other words, these days, if you're trying to get new customers' attention, you need to find a marketing strategy that has some teeth.

Mr. Plummer is president, CEO, and CTO of Our Town America, the nation's premier new mover marketing franchise. A US Army veteran and Certified Franchise Executive, he has more than 15 years of experience as a senior-level franchise executive and IT professional in the direct marketing industry. He can be reached at jplummer@ourtownamerica.com.