How to improve your online patient communication strategy

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Chapter 1: Shooting a selfie video to promote your practice

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Welcome to chapter 1

In the past, dentists have been relying on their reputation and recommendations from satisfied patients in order to build and grow their practice.

But it's 2020 and like it or not, a great part of the audience and potential patients are on social media. So you need to adapt to this change and engage patients through different online platforms through blogging, paid social ads or video marketing.

But not all these techniques have to be expensive or complicated. One powerful and simple way to engage patients is a selfie video. This format provides a personal touch that can make patients feel closer and more confident.

It’s selfie time!

In this chapter, you will find a selection of insights and recommendations for the production of high quality selfie videos to engage your audience.

The content of this presentation is based on the contributions of Silvia B. Pitz, presentation and communication coach (https://www.pitz-coaching.de/) and internal sources and experiences.

Testimonial 60SEC video Silvia Pitz

Speaking in front of the camera

A different Challenge

You might be used to speaking to your patients, giving lectures or presentations, but speaking in front of the camera is different. There is no audience here – maybe someone is filming, or, in some cases, you are even alone with yourself.

No response is helping to fire you up or to help you react in a different way if necessary.

Often in this situation, the presenter doesn’t speak loud enough or shows little enthusiasm and reduced body language. This is not useful, because we need the right energy and expression especially in such situations where the audience is not physically present.

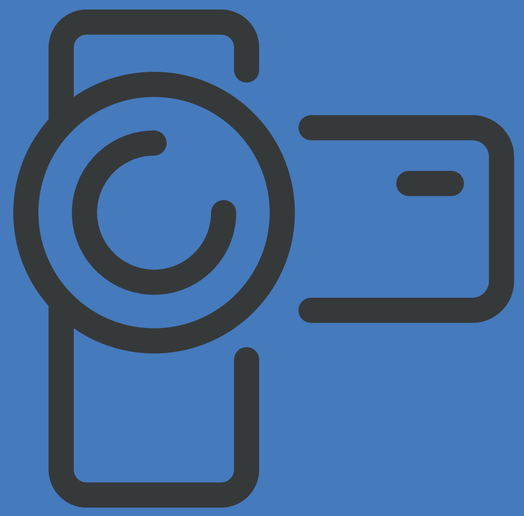
General recommendations

Important things to ensure:

- Good light conditions and background
- Good sound quality
- Good position in front of the camera: body slightly diagonal
- Long pauses for post-editing
- Use showpieces when appropriate, this serves as a variety in presentations in order to keep the audience involved
- Play around with the camera – always look directly into the camera, just as your audience would be right there (maybe feels a bit awkward first)

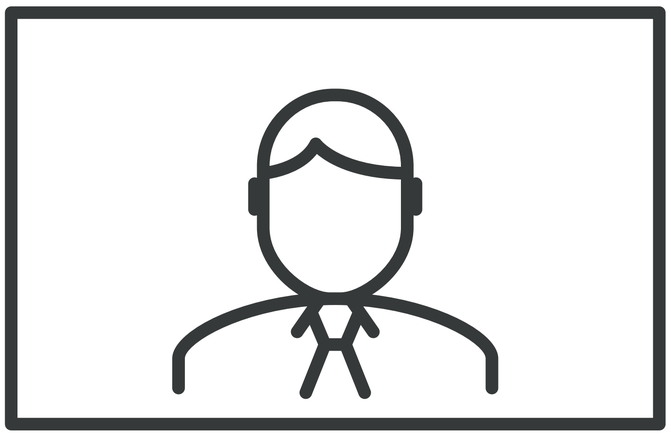
The correct scenery for filming

1. Look for a **bright space: face a light source**
   - You can use a window in front of you to get some light.
   - In case of cloudy day, make sure you turn on the lights in the room.
   - NEVER have a light source behind you.
   - Outdoor filming is NOT recommended!
2. Always try to act in front of a **neutral background.**
3. Select a location where you can have **silence** around you.



Camera settings

1. Position your camera (phone, tablet etc.) **horizontally** in front of you and secure it on a **stable surface.**
2. Make sure you are **centered** within the frame (camera at eye level) and that the frame includes head and shoulders. Once you find the position, make a mark on the floor so you know where to position your chair.



Audio settings

1. If you have a semi-professional/external microphone, **test it** before filming!
2. If you use a **teleprompter** (there are apps), train its usage first – don't put the camera too close (otherwise you can see the movement of the eyes)
3. Ensure you **don't cover the microphone** of the device!

Filming

1. Try to **sit as still as possible** during the filming, with the body in slightly diagonal position (of course, you can move your hands if you need to. In that case, please check that they are not “cutting” the gestures in the frame).
2. Ensure to speak with a **loud and clear voice.**
3. **Intonation:** make sure you do not intonate monotonously – this can quickly become very boring.
4. Make **short breaks** before and after each statement (this will help during the later editing of the video).
5. At the **end of the recording**, stay a couple of seconds in the same position, and look into the camera without moving (not pressing to stop the recording, picking the phone or else.)

Content

Informative video clips on social media have to be **short and right to the point**. This isn´t easy to obtain. It’s always important to think about the **target of your message**, the **audience** and the **“sender”** of the information.

- Structure what you want to say beforehand.
- You can use a “template” for this (see example on the following slide).

Example of template for content structure

Appeal (call to action)

Floss your teeth everyday!

Argumentation in 3 steps

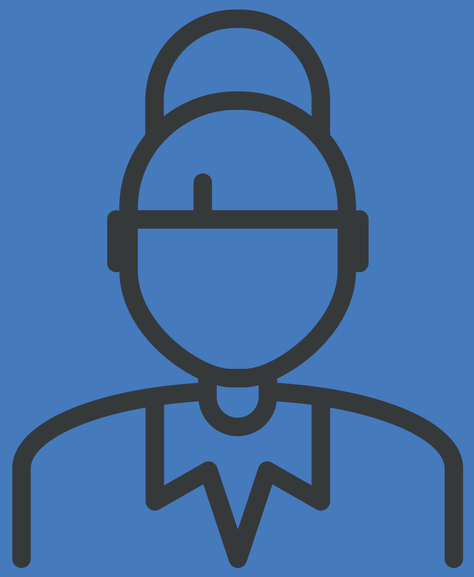
1. Argument 1: It prevents caries

2. Counterargument and refute it: It's time consuming. You have to spend time brushing your teeth anyway – these few minutes added make a big difference for your oral health!

3. Argument 2: you will enjoy a better oral health

Conclusion

Therefore: floss your teeth every evening!



Practice

- We recommend to **practice a couple of times** while recording and to watch the recording in order to make any adjustments. Getting feedback from someone else can be very valuable.
- If you use a written text, **rehearse in advance** so that you read in an interesting and activating manner (untrained reading looks boring!)

And lastly...have fun filming!

Chapter 2: Effective communication for your selfie video

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Welcome to chapter 2

Social media marketing is the ultimate way to communicate, build and grow relationships with your patients. In the previous chapter you learned everything you need to create a selfie video.

Now that we have all the tools, it’s time to focus on the message.

As a dentist, you are not only “selling” a treatment; you are providing health, comfort, health, confidence and, above all, a good experience.

Therefore, you will learn some tips and suggestions in this chapter on how to communicate effectively and transmit the right message with the right words.

General

In these times of uncertainty, it’s important to communicate a clear message that will make patients feel safe:

- Your clinic is a safe place to be.
- As a dental professional, you are used to working in clean environments where hygiene standards are high. Now, you are even reinforcing your procedures.
- You have taken all precautions and made new arrangements (e.g. waiting room, treatment rooms/protocols etc.).
- All your staff is trained and have the skills to deal with the situation.
- You are fully aware and constantly updated on governmental regulations.

Script example

I am glad to announce that we are re-opening our clinic. Undoubtedly, our main priority is to keep you and all our staff safe; at the same time, we want keep providing the treatments you need to ensure your proper oral health. To guarantee safety, we are continuously monitoring the situation very carefully, ensuring we follow local and international healthcare authorities' guidelines. Based on this, we have implemented:

- Example of implementation (e.g. use of Personal Protection Equipment for staff)
- Example of implementation (e.g. no accompanying people allowed in the clinic)

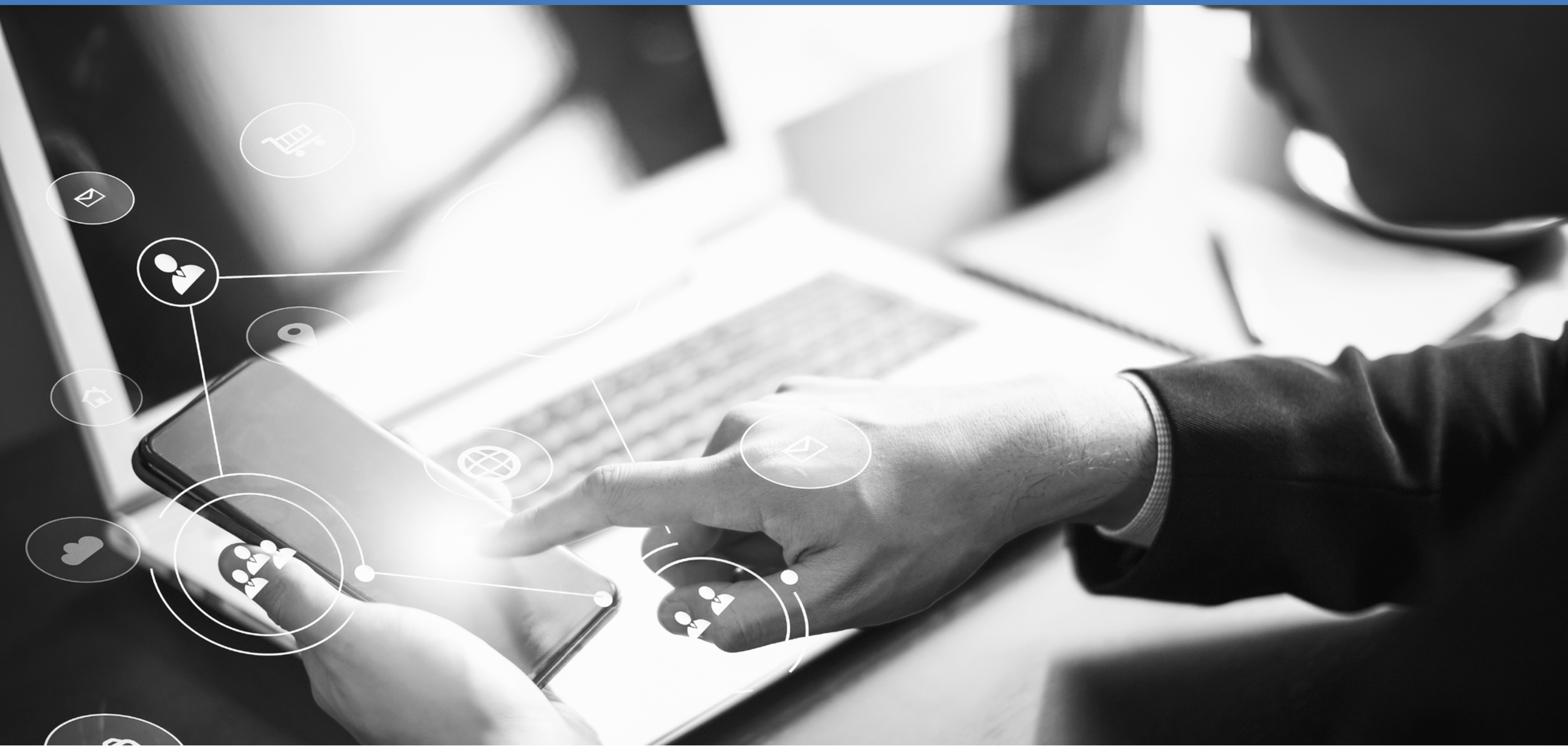
We will call you to re-schedule appointments and answer any questions. For new appointments or additional questions, please call us or send an email to _____ . For your safety, we kindly ask not to show up spontaneously at the clinic; instead, please contact us by _____ (e.g. phone, email etc).
You can also find more detailed instructions on what to expect at the clinic on _____ (e.g. our website) and we will in any case send these to you by _____ (e.g. phone, email etc.) once your appointment is scheduled.

We thank you for your trust. Be assured that even though we will wear a mask and not shake your hand, we will be as always glad to see you and take care of you.

Some tips

- Make the video very personal.
- You might want to include some pictures/footage of the clinic and the new measures you have taken (e.g. more sanitizer available, an adapted waiting room, instruction signs, infographics in the clinic, staff with protection equipment etc.).
- Consider including in the video somebody “being the patient” showing the experience from the entrance in the clinic to the moment of treatment. This way patients can imagine themselves and have a clearer idea of what to expect (e.g. patient entering alone, with a mask, disinfecting hands, going to reception where there is a separation glass between reception and patient etc.),
- You can post your video on your clinic’s website homepage and on social media.
- If you have TV/screens in the clinic, you can also play it there (consider using subtitles).

Chapter 3: Inspired by your peers: tips and best practice to optimize your digital marketing



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Welcome to chapter 3

Like everyone else, your patients are full of questions during these uncertain times, and your online platforms are a great tool to stay connected with your them, communicate new implementations and, more importantly, give them peace of mind.

You can share the most relevant information in easy to use, dynamic and didactic formats on your webpage or social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube.

In the previous chapters you have learned how to record a video and you have collected some ideas for what to say in order to communicate effectively.

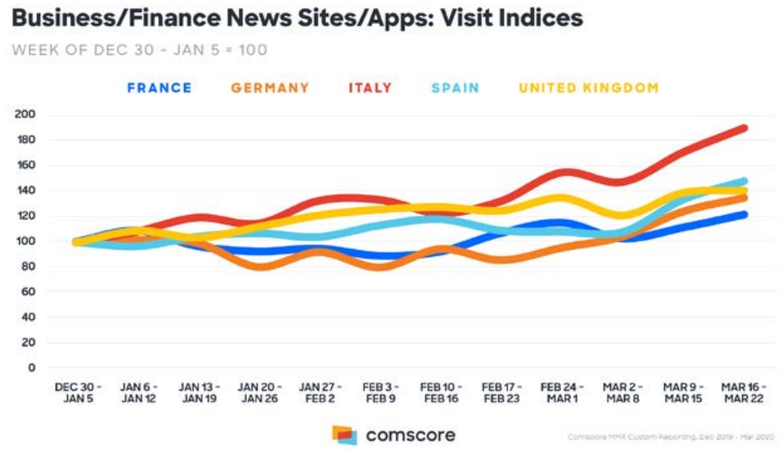
Now it's time to take a look into some inspiration:

In order to master your final outcome, we have collected some best practice examples for you and selected some tips and ideas for your online and digital marketing activities.

Content for this chapter is based on internal know-how and expertise, the Periospot blog, the Comscore blog, and the Moz blog.

Context

- During these times, visits to health information web-sites have increased.
- Data shows that 15% of the population has a dental phobia. Transmitting security and trust to potential patients with such a precondition is a big challenge for clinicians, especially in these unprecedented times.
- It is therefore important to leverage key online tools and possibilities to boost patient communication.



https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Blog/Coronavirus-pandemic-and-online-behavioural-shifts-March-30-update

https://periospot.com/how-to-use-social-networks-to-boost-your-dental-clinic-after-covid-19-crisis-11-simple-recommendations/

General guidelines

- For inspiration, it’s always useful to check what other professionals are doing and to ensure you set yourself apart.
- It’s paramount to create **useful and valuable** content for patients that builds trust.
- This content could have lots of formats:
  - Articles
  - Clinical outcomes (e.g. before and after)
  - Infographics
  - Checklists
  - Educational videos

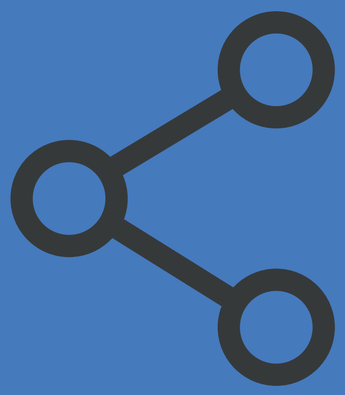
https://periospot.com/how-to-use-social-networks-to-boost-your-dental-clinic-after-covid-19-crisis-11-simple-recommendations/

Updating your website

Here's a quick checklist of suggested items to update on your site as soon as you can:

- Put a **site wide banner** on all pages of the website with key information such as "We are open again". Find some tips on tools to use for this on page 30.
- Provide the most **complete information** about how your clinic has reacted to COVID-19.
- Be sure **hours of operation are accurate** everywhere they are mentioned on the website, including the homepage, contact page, about page, and landing pages.
- If you have a **blog**, use it to keep the public updated.
- Be sure your website contains **highly visible links to any social media** platforms you are using to provide updated information.

https://moz.com/blog/operating-during-covid19-tips-for-local-businesses



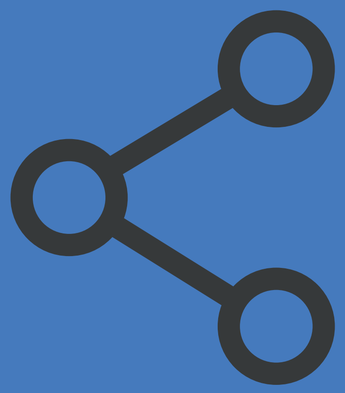
Social Media (1)

“Make it clear what you’re doing, and mention it EVERY-WHERE. The companies that are being successful with this are telling people non-stop how they can still support them. Additionally, don’t be afraid to reach out to people who have supported you via social media in the past and ask them to mention what you’re doing.”

– Dana DiTomaso, Kick Point

- Whether your customers’ social community is Face-book, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or another platform, there has never been a more vital time to make use of the instant communication these sites provide.

https://moz.com/blog/operating-during-covid19-tips-for-local-businesses



Social Media (2)

- **Employee advocacy**: Ask your staff to share information of the clinic: according to WeRSM, only 15% of people trust in brands, but – and special attention to this fact – an 84% trust in other people recommendations. If all your staff shares content, this will reach a surprising amount of people!
- Balance **clinical content and "humanizing content"**: Our objective is to generate trust and a professional profile. A good example of content to share is before and after pictures (of course, with patient consent only).
- Sense of **humor**: Showing in social networks that we aren't robots and that we have that human side characterized by our sense of humor is a huge asset. Remember to use high quality pictures.

https://periospot.com/how-to-use-social-networks-to-boost-your-dental-clinic-after-covid-19-crisis-11-simple-recommendations/

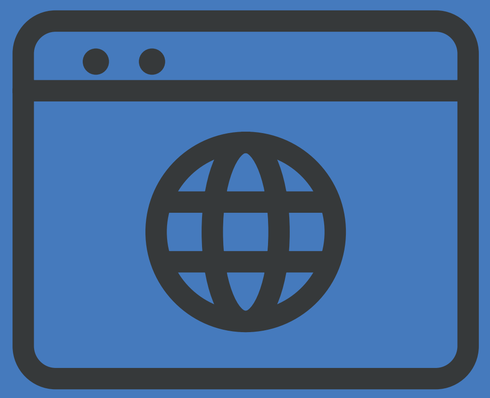
Email

- Of course, email is one of the best tools presently at your disposal to message your entire patient base about changed conditions and special offers.
- Be sure you're only communicating what is truly necessary. Put customers' concerns and needs first. Be a helper!
- For example, you can use email for
- Sending people to your online appointment form/platform/finder to make it easy for them to schedule a next appointment
- Sending post-treatment communication (e.g. "I hope you are ok and in case you have any issue please don't hesitate to contact us...")

https://moz.com/blog/operating-during-covid19-tips-for-local-businesses

New services to consider

- Offer dental video consultation
- Add FAQs on your website and social media. Some ideas:
  - Are all treatments available?
  - What shall I do when I arrive at the clinic?
  - Will I get personal protection equipment?
  - Is it safe to undergo a dental treatment now?
- Remote Monitoring options such as DenToGo to keep in contact with your patients



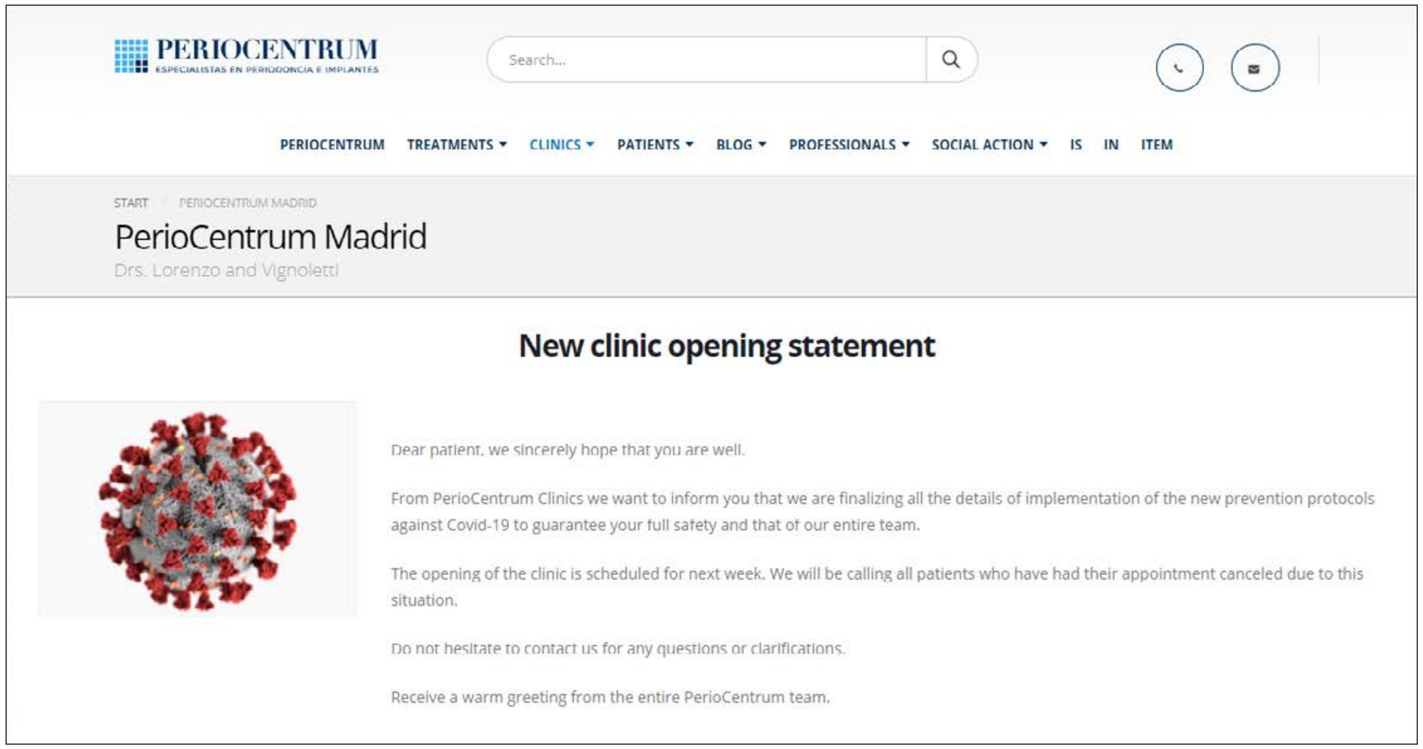
Useful tools

- Update your local listing in Google Business: you can also insert a “Covid 19” update in your business to inform your patients.
- Inform people and also capture leads by leaving details and asking for a call-back : http://hellobar.com/; sleeknote.com; https://unbounce.com/; https://popupmaker.com/
- Chats/Messenger on your website like https://wame.chat/en/, Facebook Messenger, Telegram, WeChat, Kakao Talk
- Social media scheduling: there are lots of apps that help saving time on community management. Buffer and Hootsuite have basic offers that might cover your needs. There are also less expensive options like Social Pilot and Loomly.
- You can download a useful guide on web communications for dentists here.

https://periospot.com/how-to-use-social-networks-to-boost-your-dental-clinic-after-covid-19-crisis-11-simple-recommendations/

Best practice websites

- Clear message on homepage
- Highlights importance of safety and availability for emergency procedures
- Closes the message with thanks/ positivity/encouragement



https://periocentrum.com/periocentrum-madrid/

Best practice websites

We are here for you!

Dear patients, our practice remains open for you!

In order to avoid spreading the infection, we have adjusted our appointment system so that patient contact remains very low in the waiting areas as well as in all other areas and the recommended distance is kept. We have further intensified our already high hygiene standards according to RKI these days. All possible contact surfaces, even outside the treatment rooms, are disinfected at short intervals. Emergency dental treatments for quarantine, suspected infection or a proven infection are currently not carried out in our practice according to the guidelines of the German Dental Association . These require special equipment and should therefore be carried out in specially prepared centers.

We kindly ask you to observe the following rules when visiting our practice:

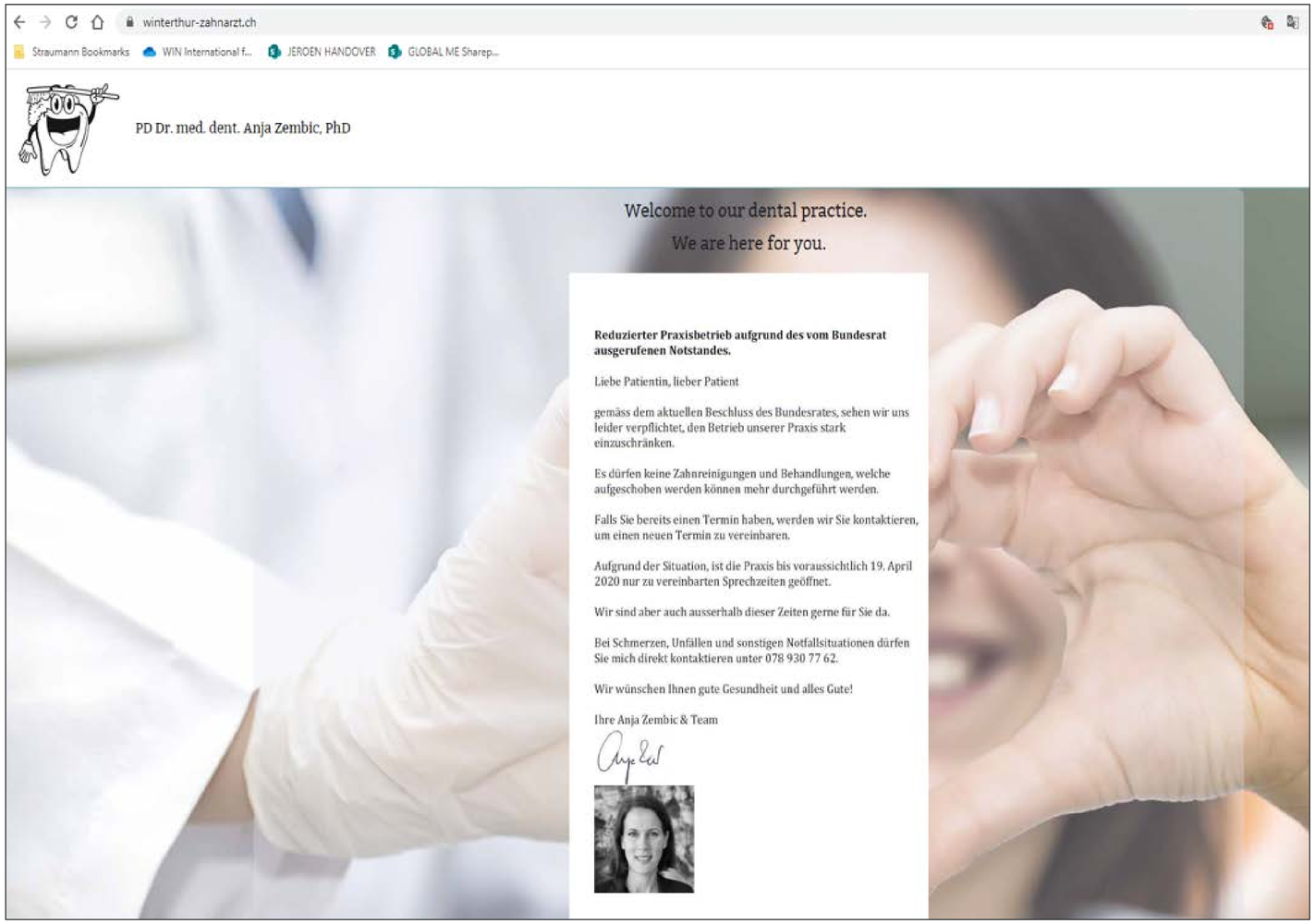
- If you have cold symptoms, please call us before your appointment.
- If you have been in a risk area in the past 14 days, please contact us by phone.
- Please refrain from Your appointments, if possible, on a companion
- Please disinfect your hands thoroughly immediately after entering the practice . Disinfectant is provided
- Please wear a face mask in practice as long as you are not being treated

https://www.fachzahnarzt-praxis.de/

- Clear message on homepage
- Clear actions and indications for patients

Best practice websites

- Clear message on homepage
- Very personal thanks to the signature and the picture
- Closes the message with positivity/ encouragement



https://www.winterthur-zahnarzt.ch/

Best practice websites

https://www.clinicahugomadeira.com/

- Clear message on homepage
- Links to social media
- Contact email listed

Best practice examples

Social Media

- Personal touch with selfie video explaining that clinic is open again
- Positivity

@dramarisazenha

https://www.instagram.com/tv/B_2raOTnNMm/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link (Portuguese)

Best practice examples

Social Media

- Clear communication of situation
- Posts also on hygiene/prevention reccomendations

@horiclinica

Best practice examples

Social Media

- Showing patients how time is invested while clinic is closed.

@dramarisazenha

- Opening clinic announcement, link to making an appointment

@dramarisazenha

- Showing extra personal protection equipment to reassure patients

@clinica_hugomadeira

- Showing the new technologies (UV light) they have implemented.

@topdentistry

Best practice examples

Social Media

GAOC - Gan Advanced Osseointegration Center

GAOC Dental’s Patient Safety and Sanitation Protocols

https://www.facebook.com/gaocdental/videos/1115786968776459/

- Useful to show patient experience when coming to the clinic.