

Elkins Dental Case Study

Company:
Elkins Dental

Customer:
Robin Spangler

Website:
www.elkinsdental.com

Industry:
Dental

The Problem

One challenge most dentists face, especially when first opening their practice, is the acquisition of new customers. Since there is usually minimal perceived differentiation in services, prospects are unaware of any reason to choose one dentist over another. Attracting new patients is often directly correlated to the dentist's value proposition — what can a particular dentist offer that no other dentists can? Secondly, once prospects convert to new patients, an equally important challenge is that of retention. Not so much because patients are inclined to switch dentists, but because, let's face it, people of all ages often delay or avoid dental visits.

Elkins Dental encountered similar struggles when Dr. Elkins first opened his office nearly a decade ago. In addition to the reasons cited above, many of the surrounding areas were rural. A few specific, small communities grew quickly, but a sparse population of prospective patients overall posed an even greater challenge. How could Elkins Dental drive new patient growth and retention without breaking the bank?

The Solution

Nurture campaigns are Elkins Dental's crowning glory. Post-sale nurture campaigns including a newsletter and re-care package enable Dr. Elkins to stay in touch with patients regardless of how long it's been since their last visit. Their pre-sale "New Mover" nurture campaign enables Dr. Elkins to introduce himself to new residents in the area before other dentists have a chance.

In 2013, Elkins Dental engaged Newsletter Pro to design, print and mail their newsletter. Beyond the benefits of educating and entertaining their audience, the newsletter was extremely effective at revealing Dr. Elkins' personality.

Most dentists lack time to make personal connections with their patients because they're focused on the task at hand. The newsletter bridged the gap between patients and Dr. Elkins' amazing and interesting personality. In fact, each new patient is given a newsletter at the start of their office tour. They're told the recipes are "to die for," and often return in subsequent visits to share which recipes they made and stories they enjoyed hearing about Dr. Elkins. They often hand their newsletter to a friend needing a new dentist in the form of a referral.

"The biggest value of working with Newsletter Pro from my perspective is the personal connections they create. Your writers capture Dr. Elkins' voice perfectly and the stories reveal just how interesting and cool the dentist behind the mask really is."

Marketers often speak to resolving "pain points," but dentists must alleviate actual pain frequently for patients who delayed dental visits for a variety of reasons, including fear. To solve the issue of some

patients' avoidance of regular maintenance, Elkins Dental added a re-care campaign. Patients receive cheeky reminder letters when they miss their six-month regular check-up at six, nine and 12 months since their last visit. Although the main message encourages patients to schedule their routine appointment, it's written with well-intentioned wit. Making light of what some consider a scary or serious situation has propelled patients to schedule appointments more quickly and frequently than without the re-care campaign. This underscores the effectiveness of post-sale nurture campaigns. In fact, nurtured leads produce, on average, a 20% increase in sales opportunities versus non-nurtured leads, according to Demandgen.

The Results

Today, 60% of Elkins Dental's new patients result from referrals and 6%–10% represent direct responses to the New Movers campaign. Some converted from prospect to patient more quickly than others, which is common. The journey a prospect takes to become a customer can be long and winding. In fact, the Aberdeen Group reported that it takes an average of 10 marketing-driven touches to convert a lead into a revenue-generating customer.

"Touches" are any point at which a prospect is exposed to or engaged by your brand. In this case, each appointment where stellar service was provided, every edition of Elkins Dental's newsletter, each reminder letter for care and the special invitation to New Movers worked in concert to nurture and strengthen the relationship.

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"I appreciate how the Pro's work together to ensure success for our business. They consistently over-deliver with these amazing products. Working together all of these years, we too have become a fantastic team. As we approach our 10-year anniversary, I cannot imagine where we'd be had Newsletter Pro not been a key partner on our path to success."