More Mistakes Doctors Make in Social Media and What to Do Instead

In part one of this series, we talked about five big social media blunders we see being made every day by practices. In the second part of our series, we’re taking on five more social media mistakes and ways you can avoid being cyberspace roadkill.

Mistake #6 – Buying Fans

Yes, you read that right – you can buy fans. Just Google the term “buying Facebook fans” and see what pops up. I’ll save you the time: “Get Thousands of Quality Likes from just $19.99.” Oh, the humanity! Buying fans is a terrible idea.

Okay, I get it – more fans makes you feel good about yourself. You’re one of the popular kids. Well, I’m here to tell you, “Get over it!” Don’t get so caught up in the numbers that you can’t see the forest through the trees. Who cares if you have 5,000 fans if those same people are not your current or potential patients? They distort your engagement statistics, which is one way to determine if your social campaigns are working or not. But worse than that? These useless slugs you just purchased actually lower your EdgeRank score within Facebook.

(Cue record screech sound) “Um, Monique… what’s EdgeRank?”

We’ll save the long explanation for another article, but in short, EdgeRank is the algorithm Facebook uses to determine who will see your posts. If you buy 5,000 fans who “like” you once, but care nothing about what you do, never visit your page and don’t “like,” share or comment on your posts, you are actually doing damage and Facebook will withhold the one thing you need most – visibility.

Mistake #7 – Link Testing #Fail

This is one we (sadly) see all too often – clicking a link that leads to some “404 not found” error. Pre-checking your links and contest forms to make sure they go where you want them to go and function properly before you hit the “post” button is kind of like hitting F7 (spell check) before hitting “send” on an email. Every post you make contributes to the overall perception of your brand, positive or negative, so take the few extra minutes to make sure things are just perfect.

The great thing about social media is that since content flows at such a rapid pace, every day is an opportunity to start fresh.
**Mistake #8 – No Cohesive Branding**

I am a huge believer in branding across all of your social channels and will be speaking about this topic, among others, at the AACS Annual Scientific Meeting in Las Vegas this January.

If you look at how most big brands market, you will see that whether it’s a water bottle, a billboard ad or their Facebook page, the branding is consistent. You have to do the same thing across your social media marketing channels. Make sure your Facebook cover art is updated, and that your Twitter wallpaper and Google+ images, e-blasts, website (and on and on) are unmistakably you and reflect your practice.

The same thing applies to your online voice. Make sure the writing in your Facebook posts, tweets, blog posts, e-newsletters, etc. feels like it fits your brand. Notice, I didn’t say it has to sound like you, the physician. Rather, the voice you are aiming for should be that of the practice.

**Mistake #9 – Failing to Listen**

Mari Smith (my dear friend, mentor and Facebook expert) said recently that she is surprised by the number of people who don’t monitor to find out what is being said about them online. The Web is a 24/7/365 platform, so it is imperative that you know “the good, the bad and the ugly.” Set up a Google alert for your name and the practice name. You can also set alerts for your Twitter handle (i.e., mine is @MoniqueRamsey, so this Google alert would be for “@MoniqueRamsey” in quotes).

You can create alerts for your competitors’ names so you know what’s happening down the street (i.e., competitive intelligence), too. You can also set alerts for broad categories, such as “cosmetic surgery” or products you use in the office, such as “Botox.” This is a great way to see what topics are trending, which can help you with blog posts, tweets or to notify your patients and staff should there be a recall or other important industry news.

As Mari puts it, setting up your Google alerts is “part of reputation management 101 and is an absolute minimum” for any business. Apart from Google alerts, you’ll find many other websites that have excellent tools, as well. Check out this blog post from Dreamtime with 54 free monitoring tools: go.cosmeticsocialmedia.com/csm2.

**Mistake #10 – No Call to Action**

Even though social media is not a place for traditional “push” marketing strategies, potential patients are out there, so you need to be ready with clear, concise messaging when they are ready to take the next step.

When done correctly, social media helps you establish two things: likeability and trust. Once your prospective patient feels like they’ve gotten to know, like and trust you, they will be ready to take the next step, so make it easy. Your website, landing page(s) and other online content should have obvious ways to contact you. If you want them to sign up for your e-blasts, make it easy to do so from as many social platforms as possible (apps are good for this). If you want them to fill out a contact form, make it accessible from many different pathways on your website and blog.

Don’t know if your call to action is clear? Have an independent third party take a look at your online content and give you their unbiased opinion. You and your office staff might be too familiar with the content to be objective.

**Kaizen!**

Continuous improvement is your goal. If you’ve made any of the mistakes we mentioned above, it’s okay – you can get back on track. The great thing about social media is that since content flows at such a rapid pace, every day is an opportunity to start fresh.