



COVID-19 Medical Marketing Mistakes You Don't Know You're Making

Healthcare Digital Media
220 Park Avenue South, New York, NY, 10003
(917) 355 1112 | pharmed.com



COVID-19 Medical Marketing Mistakes You Don't Know You're Making

DO YOU REMEMBER why you wanted to become a doctor? Whether you're an endocrinologist, gastroenterologist, dermatologist, internist and anything in between, you got into your profession because you wanted to help people. Are you able to help those you want to serve if they don't feel safe and secure coming into your office with everything going on regarding Covid-19? Are you able to help those you want to serve if new patients can't find you as well because you're lacking an online presence? Are you able to help those you want to serve if they are choosing to go see another doctor because they feel safer seeing them and they know, like and trust them more because of their consistent social media presence? These are things you need to think about as a physician as we enter this new era of acquiring and retaining patients, particularly post Covid-19. How will you handle these changing times? Will you adapt? Or will you stay stuck? If you want to adapt and thrive, then keep reading on to learn about the possible medical marketing mistakes your practice might be making.

Mistake #1: You don't have sufficient COVID-19 updates on your website

You can be taking all the necessary precautions in your office to keep your patients safe, but are you telling them about what you're doing? Patients are going to choose the doctor's office they feel safest in! How will they know the office is safe? By telling them! There are many places you can tell them, including:

- Instagram Stories
- Facebook
- Email newsletter
- On your website

On your website, you have a few different options. You can have a banner on top of your homepage with a link to a page that outlines all that you're doing to keep them safe. You don't need to go into specific details, such as what specific sanitizer you're using, but just keep it simple and give them an overview of what you're doing. Another option is when someone goes to your website, have a short video pop up of the doctor explaining how you plan on keeping them safe. Whatever your approach is, the point is to communicate with your patients and let them know what you're doing; don't keep this a secret!

Mistake #2: You don't offer digital intake forms

Part of keeping patients safe is minimizing the amount of time they spend in your office. Digital intake forms are a simple and effective way at accomplishing this. Filling out paperwork in the office not only means more time spent in the office, but also more contact with items in the office that will require sanitizing. You can either have access to



the intake forms on your website, or you can have patients receive the intake forms right to their phones. Offering digital intake forms means patients spend less time in the office, which means you can also see more patients throughout the day to earn more money. Everyone wins!

Mistake #3: You don't offer virtual appointments

Up until Covid-19, many practitioners were hesitant to get started with telemedicine. However, these challenging times require us to adapt. Using telemedicine is essential because it allows doctors to effectively screen a patient before they ever come into the office, thus reducing the possible exposure of SARS-CoV-2 to your staff, other patients, and the general public.

The only way patients will know you offer virtual appointments is if you tell them! Make sure you tell them on your website and social media pages.

Seeing established patients virtually isn't as challenging because they already know, like and trust you, but what about getting a new patient to see you virtually? This is where a social media presence is incredibly powerful, which we will talk about in mistake #5. Another benefit to using telemedicine is shorter, more efficient appointments, which means:

- Less hassle for the patient
- More time for you to see more patients, thus earning you more money.

Telemedicine is the future because of its convenience and safety for the patient, and your competition is going to be taking advantage of this. If you want to have a thriving practice in the post Covid-19 era, then you need to take advantage of telemedicine too. If you don't have a telemedicine platform in place, we recommend Zoom for Healthcare, Mend, NextGen and Medici, to name a few.





Mistake #4: You haven't defined your target audience

Do you know exactly who your target audience is? Do you know what their pain points are? Do you know where they spend their time? What their fears are? What keeps them up at night? Their dreams and aspirations?

Maybe you're thinking "I'm a doctor, why do I need to know these things?" Knowing the answer to those questions is so important because it allows you to craft content that will be engaging and relevant to your target audience. For example, let's say you're an endocrinologist specializing in hypothyroidism. You know your target audience are moms in their 30s and 40s suffering from hypothyroidism. You know they are more likely to be overweight, and probably lack confidence because of it. You know they don't feel like they can keep up with their children because they're always exhausted.

One of these moms is trying to find a doctor to help with their condition. Who will they choose? The doctor who is making content talking about hypothyroidism in general, or the doctor who is making content talking about hypothyroidism in moms, and empathizes with the struggles associated with it? They're going to choose the latter because they can relate more, and empathy builds trust, and trust creates loyal patients. Without understanding your target audience, it's a lot more challenging to create engaging content, and without engaging content, your messages will fall flat.

Mistake #5: You're not active enough on social media

What's your social media presence like? Do you post consistent, engaging content that is targeted for your specific audience? Do you post inconsistently? Maybe you don't have a social media account? Wherever you are on the social media spectrum, it can always be improved! There are a few main ideas you need to know when it comes to being successful on social media.

- You have to post consistently
- You have to post engaging content
- You have to be getting in front of your target audience.

All 3 of these are like legs on a stool; if you're missing one leg, the chair will fall over. If you post consistently in front of your target audience, but your content isn't engaging, they won't listen. If you post engaging content consistently, but you're not getting in front of your target audience, they won't listen either! Why is social media so important?

- Helps you stay connected and engaged with your current patients
- It's a wonderful way to get new patients.
- Helps you get your name out to the public and show them you're the expert in your field.
- Helps you build more trust because you can connect more with others, which will further increase the odds they will want to work with you.

If they don't know, like or trust you, they won't work with you. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, 41% of patients said that social media content impacted which doctor or hospital they chose. It's your choice. Are you going to take control of your social media presence to help build your practice?



Mistake #6: You're not creating consistent, engaging blog posts to help boost organic search engine visibility

Google will reward websites who contain engaging, consistent and relevant content by moving your website up the visibility list. This is what search engine optimization is, or SEO for short. Better SEO means more people will see your website, and this means increased odds of getting them as a patient. If patients can't find your website, then these odds go down. One great way to boost your websites SEO is by making amazing content. How do you make amazing content?

- The absolute first step is knowing your target audience! If you don't know who you're writing to and what their pain points are, then less people will read your articles, which means a worse SEO. The more you know your target audience, the better your articles will be, and the more people that read your article and the longer they stay on your website reading, the better your SEO.
- Once you know who your target audience is, how do you figure out what kinds of questions they're asking? We recommend using an amazing resource called [answerthepublic.com](https://www.answerthepublic.com). This resource allows you to find out exactly what questions people are asking about a given subject. This is so important because you can literally use those questions to create your articles! You want to write articles for your audience, not for yourself. This isn't about what you're interested in writing about, but rather what are the pain points of your audience and how can you help address them. Using the same key words that your target audience is using will boost your SEO as well. For example, we searched "Hypothyroidism" into the search bar on answer the public. Some questions that appeared include:
 - o Why hypothyroidism causes weight gain?
 - o How hypothyroidism affects pregnancy?
 - o Hypothyroidism with normal TSH?
 - o You can take these very questions and turn them into blog articles, it's that simple!
- In order to consistently create blogs, you want to have a content-creation schedule, and actually stick to it. The goal is to put out at least 1 blog article per week. Understand that there are multiple phases to creating an article, including a planning and research phase, a writing phase, an editing phase and a posting phase, so make sure you make time in your calendar for all those phases.
- The last tip we are going to recommend is take your articles that you create and turn those into social media posts. This is called content repurposing. Why create completely new content when you've already put in the work to make a value-packed article? You can either post your article link to your social media page, or you can post bits and pieces of your article on your social media page, delivering parts of your article over the period of a couple days. You can also take a quote from your article and turn that into a tweet or make quote card for Instagram. The main idea to remember is to always repurpose your content, it will save you a lot of time!

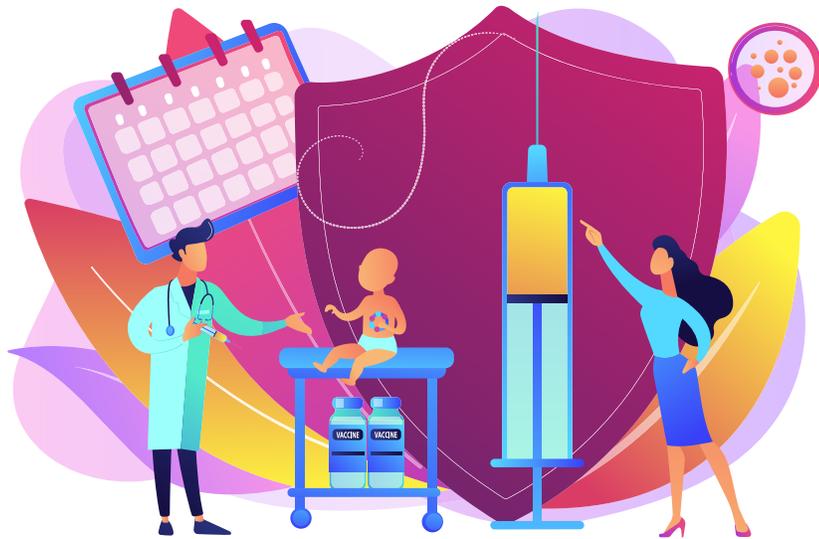
Mistake #7: You're not asking satisfied patients for reviews or testimonials

Social proof is one of the most powerful forces that influences human behavior. People want to feel a sense of certainty, especially when it comes to seeing a new doctor. Who is the patient going to trust more, the one who they find randomly, or the one a trusted friend recommends to them? Odds are, they're going to choose the latter. Having positive reviews and testimonials is a great way to provide social proof that you can be trusted and you're the expert in your field. Without testimonials and reviews, people will be taking more of a risk seeing you, and people don't like taking risks!

- According to a study by Software Advice, 71% of people use online reviews as the very first step toward finding a new doctor, compared to just 25% making decisions based on reviews back in 2013.
- Another amazing statistic is 43% of people said they would choose a doctor out-of-network to see a doctor if their reviews were better than their in-network doctor.

Once you understand the importance of positive reviews, how do you get them? You have to ask for them! If your patients are experiencing positive results and are happy with their care, this is the perfect opportunity to ask for a review. You can ask them at their appointments, in your emails, or in a text if that's how you send patients information. Remember, you will likely have to ask more than once because they are busy people too! Set up a "testimonial goal," which is how many testimonials you want to ask for every day, week and month. Having a daily, weekly and monthly testimonial goal gives you a specific and achievable target to hit, which increases the odds of actually getting them. Make sure you get your staff involved in this process! The more people asking for testimonials, the higher the odds you'll actually get them.





Mistake #8: Your website isn't optimized

When it comes to your website, there are many possible things for you to focus on. Instead of focusing on everything with your website, you first want to make sure you have the most important things taken care.

- The first thing you want to focus on is having a clear and obvious call to action “above the fold” on your website. Above the fold means the first part of your website that’s visible when the website loads. You absolutely need these to be crystal clear calls to action. Things like “learn more” and “get started” are very vague. Instead, your calls to action should be something like “call us” with your phone number visible, or “schedule an appointment.” See the difference? Clarity is key. Odds are, the most important actions you want your prospective patients to take include calling your office and getting scheduled. Therefore, make sure you have your phone number visible on every page and a button to get scheduled on every page.
- The next thing you want to do is make sure your website is mobile-friendly. As of 2019, approximately 52.6% of website visits are actually viewed on cell-phones! If your website isn’t mobile-friendly, you are missing out on a huge percentage of prospective patients. Want to see how your website looks on a mobile device? Utilize this website to take a look: <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>.
- The next thing you want to optimize is something not many doctors think about, and that’s your websites upload speed. How quickly your website uploads impacts how visible your website is in 2 ways. First, if your website is taking too long to upload for a prospective patient, they may end up exiting the page, which actually negatively impacts your websites visibility. Second, Google actually takes into consideration your websites upload speed as part of your website visibility. The slower your upload speed, the lower down the search engine list your website will go. To assess your website speed, check out this website to see why it’s slow and what to do about it: <https://gtmetrix.com/>.

Mistake #9: You haven't claimed your profile on online directories

Online directories are a very simple way for patients to find you. The more online directories you've created a profile with, the more likely a patient will find you by essentially expanding your presence. This isn't the most important thing you can do, but it is a really simple one that is a no-brainer that will only help you. Claim your profile on the following directories: WebMD, ZocDoc, Google My Business, RateMDs, Vitals and Healthgrades.

Mistake #10: You are missing SSL certificate, HIPAA and ADA compliance

Your current and prospective patients' privacy are of utmost importance. They are looking to you for help, and you want to do everything you can to keep their personal information as safe as possible.

- One way your website can keep any information a prospective patient enters safe is by utilizing what's called Secure Sockets Layer, or SSL. Simply put, SSL is like a lock on any information prospective patients may enter on your website, such as on a "contact us" form. It's simply an extra level of security that keeps your patient's information safe. When you see a website URL, you may have seen "http" or "https" in front of the website name. The latter one has the "s" at the end of it, indicating SSL certification.
- Another important security measure for your website is ensuring HIPAA compliance. According to Compliance Group, "HIPAA is a national regulation that sets standards for the privacy and security of protected health information (PHI). PHI is any demographic information that can be used to identify a health care patient. Common examples of PHI include name, address, date of birth,



telephone number, email address, and medical records, to name a few.” In your medical practice, you know how important HIPPA compliance is; your medical website is no different. For more specifics on making your website HIPPA compliant, check out this excellent resource: <https://compliance-group.com/how-to-make-a-hipaa-compliant-website/>.

- Not only do you want to keep your patient’s information safe, but you also want to make sure your website is ADA compliant, which basically means making sure those with any disabilities have equal access to your website and medical care. What happens if your website isn’t ADA compliant? Unfortunately, legal action can be taken against your business. Should you be concerned about making sure your website is ADA compliant? Absolutely. From 2017 to 2018, the number of website-related ADA lawsuits increased by 177%, from 814 lawsuits to 2,258. Here are some websites that can make sure your website is ADA compliant: Boia.org, Accessibe.com and Audioeye.com.

Closing Thoughts

We’ve provided you with a lot of very valuable information that can dramatically impact your ability to retain current patients and acquire new patients. The more patients you have, the more lives you get to impact and the more financial freedom you’re able to achieve. If you’re making any of these mistakes, then it’s time to do something about it. Of course, you’re able to do this on your own, but it may take some time. The other option is to let PharMED help you so you can help more people and earn more money. We are here for you. When you’re ready, contact us and let us know what we can help you with.

