

Welcome to *Mentor Solutions Insight*. This month *Mentor Solutions Insights* features a look at how our new **Practice Management Software** can enhance your internal marketing efforts. Mentor Solutions **Practice Management Software** is the core program of our new, fully-integrated Mentor Solutions software package. We are proud to provide you this month with a glimpse into its extensive customer relationship management capabilities.

We are also continuing our informative series titled, **Mentornomics**. This month you'll get an economic update and learn why now is the time to tap into the rising tide in consumer confidence and take action steps that can grow your practice.

Your feedback is always of great interest to us. So we hope you will take time to share with us your thoughts and opinions about this edition of *Mentor Solutions Insight*, as we strive to help you make your practice everything you've always imagined it can be.

Regards,

Layli Sobhani

Director, Marketing for Mentor Solutions



## Making Your Software Work for You

Last month we explored the impact of changing consumer expectations on cosmetic surgery practices. In this environment, your practice must differentiate itself with a well-defined communication strategy. To do this, your practice's software takes on much greater importance and must go beyond its traditional role as a data repository.

Manually maintaining communication with thousands of patients is a daunting task. This need for more sophisticated processes to manage customer relationships spawned numerous CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software programs in other industries. Unfortunately, most medical software developers do not understand these key patient interactions. INFORM&ENHANCE (I&E), introduced in 1995, was the first CRM software for cosmetic medicine and it set industry standards for managing the patient relationship process.

Now, Mentor Solutions is introducing its new fully-integrated software system that enables you to manage and grow your practice from anywhere. This innovative suite of five web-based applications center around our **Patient Management Software**, which serves as the base operating system for the entire program. Rather than restricting data to its traditional use, our **Patient Management Software** enables you to adapt to patient expectations by providing:

- **Sales Management:** Define a measurable communication strategy that maximizes the number of patients that utilize your services.
- **Process Management:** Gain control by evaluating strategies and tactics that predictably improve performance.
- **Internal Marketing:** Implement internal or web-based marketing campaigns to increase retention and referral.
- **Revenue Management:** Refine business strategies to pinpoint revenue opportunities and create predictable success.

### 1. Sales Management

At any moment, new patients are considering your practice and established patients are referring friends and family or contemplating additional services. In each of these slightly different situations, your goal is the same—moving appropriate candidates forward.

As you implement the suggested approach of the **Patient Management Software**, use your patient data to refine your sales and communication strategy. Your goal is to maintain appropriate contact with prospective patients by meeting their individual needs wherever they are in their buying process. The number of practice-initiated contacts varies by procedure, physician and region, but it is certainly a minimum of six and may be as high as twelve.

By defining repeatable processes, the **Patient Management Software** enables you to create predictable results from patient activity.

## 2. Process Management

Use of predefined processes to generate consistent outcomes is a concept that is used every day in surgery. This approach also applies to the business side of your practice. As you work to enhance practice performance, subject your business strategies and tactics to a rigorous evaluation process. You must be able to examine each patient decision point and make changes accordingly.

For example, if you are concerned about your augmentation no show rate, you may want to consider this strategy: After getting baseline conversion data, you can run a test by offering free consultations. Then, compare cases scheduled during the test period against your previous performance.

To evaluate any change, we recommend using a multistep approach: Test, Track, Refine, and Repeat.

- **Test:** Set a specific timeframe, i.e., two to six months.
- **Track:** Measure results. For instance, is your surgical revenue improving?
- **Refine:** Are your conversion rates dropping as your revenue increases? Do you need to make changes in your consultation or booking policies? Test solutions for these issues and track them.
- **Repeat:** Once you're achieving goal performance, continue with your strategy until your data shows the need to re-evaluate.

## 3. Internal Marketing

As traditional advertising options such as print and radio become more costly and less effective, many practices need fresh solutions to generate new activity. Internal marketing is increasingly important because it provides a quick and inexpensive way to communicate to existing and potential patients. In this environment, software takes on a central role. Once you define communication touch points and corresponding follow-up steps, the Patient Management Software enables you to distribute cohesive marketing documents that complement your branding and help patients move forward.

Tap into your database to implement your internal marketing program. The **Patient Management Software** enables you to email, eblast or mass mail materials. Announce upcoming seminars, injectable specials or send a link to a new blog posting. **Patient Management Software** makes it easy to filter criteria and send targeted offerings.

These strategies enable you to maintain contact with your patients and enhance the success of your promotional programs.

## 4. Revenue Management

I&E introduced the first conversion reports to the market in 1995. Later we added multistage capture reports for a less granular review. However, knowing the number of appointments that arrive at consultation or the number of consultations who have surgery is not enough information to enable you to diagnose and find solutions to issues that impact revenue.

Today, our **Patient Management Software** reports allow you to segment analysis by procedure, provider, staff member, source, and more. In our no show example, you might determine that:

- **Age/Procedure/Source/Time Frame:** Younger augmentation patients from the Internet no show when appointments are scheduled out more than one month.
- **Staff/Procedure/Stage:** A staff member, who has had an augmentation, has the highest percentage of augmentation patients who arrive at consultation and the lowest percentage of surgery cancellations.
- **Physician:** A younger or newer doctor has a higher no-show rate than a senior surgeon.

Now you must move to the solution phase.

- **Age/Procedure/Source/Time Frame:** Make sure your staff schedules Internet augmentation patients for consultations within three weeks.
- **Staff/Procedure/Stage:** Transfer augmentation calls and assign quoting to the staff member with proven results.

- **Physician:** Be sure the staff knows how to feature strengths of the new doctor when suggesting him to patients.

Clearly, Mentor Solutions' new **Practice Management Software** can play a significant role in practice performance in that it helps you more precisely track marketing and patient activity from consultation through surgery. Remember, failure to measure and manage can substantially reduce your number of surgical cases and associated revenue.

With our new **Practice Management Software**, you can also leverage our marketing pathways function. It helps you track referral data on a procedure level, so you can accurately discover from whom your patients heard about your services. This is yet one more way to further measure and manage your internal marketing efforts.

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# MENTORNOMICS

## Social Media As a Marketing Tool: How Social Should You Be?

*By Susan Hopkins, Senior Director, Global Marketing & Sales Operations*

In October, the Conference Board's Leading Economic Index (LEI) increased for the seventh consecutive month, rising 0.3% after a 1% gain in September.<sup>1</sup> Six of the 10 leading indicators were positive. In addition, U.S. consumer sentiment rose in early September to 70.2, its strongest showing in three months and greater than the 67.3 rating many economists had anticipated.<sup>2</sup> Most encouragingly, the real U.S. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) reversed the negative course it had taken in the last three quarters with 2.8% growth. U.S. personal income in September decreased 0.5 percent.<sup>5</sup>

However, there are still negative economic indicators, such as unemployment, which rose to 9.8% in September. The largest job losses in September were in construction, manufacturing, retail trade and government. Since the start of the recession in December 2007, the number of unemployed people has increased by 7.6 million to 15.1 million and the unemployment rate has doubled.<sup>5</sup>

### Economic Indicators That Impact Aesthetics

The two indicators that correlate most closely to your plastic surgery practice are GDP and personal income. So the good news on Q3 GDP isn't just good news at the macro economic level, it is also good news for your practice.

As I wrote last month, the time to simply hang on and battle through the recession is nearing its end. Instead, it's time to start thinking about growth and examining how you can position yourself to leverage what's expected to be a significant increase in demand for plastic surgery procedures.

Of course, growing your practice means marketing your practice. So let's take a look at social media and how this dynamic new medium can fit into your 2010 marketing plans.

### How To Make Social Media Work For You

Social media utilize easily accessible and highly scalable web-based technologies to transform broadcast media monologues (one person to many people) into social media dialogues (many people to many other people).

There are numerous social networking applications on the web. The three that are particularly relevant to your plastic surgery practice are Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

Why should you care about these programs? Because millions of people use them to share their experiences and opinions about businesses—including yours. It used to be that if patients had a bad experience with your practice, they might tell their immediate group of friends. Today, anyone can get on Twitter and Facebook and tell many people, who in turn can tell many others who may also share it with even more people. And, all of this can happen in a the fraction of time it takes snail mail to be delivered.

Your practice can also use these programs as a part of your marketing mix to establish an online voice and build collaborative relationships with a wide group of customers and prospects. In addition, there are services available to you that can track and monitor what people are saying online about your practice.

I asked Denver, Colorado-based Gregory A. Buford, MD FACS, a leading-edge social marketer himself, what works most

effectively for him and his practice. We've seen the biggest positive impact through our efforts using organic search engine optimization of our website. I recently implemented an integrated social media campaign that incorporates connections with a blog, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, and I have been able to reach current and prospective patients almost immediately. In addition, I have seen my organic rankings rise dramatically in a very short time.

Here are details on some of the social media vehicles Dr. Buford is using so successfully.

## **Facebook** [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

According to a study released by Q Interactive, nearly 70% of the 1,000 women surveyed cite Facebook as their favorite online social network. The second most popular site, MySpace, received less than 20% of the vote, while Twitter received less than 5%.<sup>3</sup>

Here are some other key facts from the survey:

- Women are overwhelmingly turned off by brands blatantly hawking products and services on social networking sites.
- More than 45% of women say they have given up some of their TV watching time to participate in online social networks.
- This survey indicates 10% of women engage in product/brand-related activities like collecting product information and looking for coupons. Another survey from Performics and ROI Research cites 32% of consumers as being open to collecting printable coupons on social networking sites.<sup>6</sup> This higher percentage indicates that the majority of consumers are not using social media sites to look for coupons and sales. However, I think we can see a shift happening in consumer behavior in this respect. I expect this shift will continue as we see social networking sites dominate consumer site usage. I'm hearing more people say, "Hit me on Facebook," versus, "Send me an email."

What is easy to conclude from the Q Interactive survey is that Facebook has a large number of women with whom you can potentially connect, so it's a great place to begin your social networking program. It's also clear that, while women are spending a lot of time on Facebook, they don't want to be overtly advertised to through this form of social media.

An ideal strategy would be to create a Facebook page that engages women in a conversation about plastic surgery, while providing them with helpful tips and information from which they could benefit—without making a hard sales pitch. In short, Facebook is a great space in which to build your image and create an interactive voice with your prospects.

## **Twitter** [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

Although it ranked low in the Q Interactive survey with women, Twitter is a much talked about social networking site that's worthy of consideration. It is most easily described as a one-to-many messaging, networking and relationship building tool.

With Twitter, the simple goal is to build a list of followers with whom you communicate through messaging—tweets—that are each 140 characters or less. That's the length of the previous sentence plus another two to three words. As you begin to build followers, the Twitter interface can seem a bit ad hoc and disorganized—because it is.

What makes Twitter unique is the growing number of ancillary programs that do make it easier to find, organize and communicate with your followers. Some of these programs include:

- [www.twellow.com](http://www.twellow.com) Bills itself as the Twitter yellow pages
- [www.muckrack.com](http://www.muckrack.com) A newswire service for Twitter journalists that enables anyone to send out a Press Release at a low cost
- [www.tweetmixx.com](http://www.tweetmixx.com) Tracks what people are saying about your company on Twitter
- [www.tweeddeck.com](http://www.tweeddeck.com) Platform that allows you to organize your Twitter followers into manageable groups

## **Blogging**

Another way to create an online conversation with prospects and customers is to create your own blog. Here, you can post useful information, tips and commentaries about plastic surgery topics, and allow readers to post comments and interact with you online.

The good news about blogs is that they are easy to start through free online applications such as [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com).

The downside to blogs is that they are very time intensive. If you don't have the time to write three to five relevant "posts" per week and make a focused effort to drive traffic to your blog, you could be wasting effort in starting a blog.

In fact, many businesses have found that it's more time efficient to simply "tweet" on Twitter, which in affect now serves as a mini blog for thousands of businesses.

## **Social Media Can Help Your Pay-Per-Click Campaign**

A first-of-its kind study by GroupM Search and comScore Inc. establishes a strong case for creating a social media presence for your practice. One of the primary conclusions from this September 2009 study is that Click-Through-Rates (CTR) increase by 50% when consumers are exposed to social media and paid search.<sup>4</sup>

What this means is that consumers exposed to a brand through social media are far more likely to click on that brand's paid search ad—as compared to paid search ads for brands to which they have not been exposed through social media.

So, if you are currently running, or plan to run, Pay-Per-Click ads on the Internet, having a strong social media presence could potentially increase your Click-Through-Rates by a significant margin.

## **Key Points**

If you haven't already, it's time to consider adding social media to your marketing mix in 2010. Establishing a presence on Facebook is an excellent option. Here are some best practice guidelines to follow:

- Be helpful. Provide useful content. Don't sell.
- Make your content meaningful, brief and consumable.
- Encourage prospects and customers to join or subscribe to your page.
- Insert links to your social media page in your outbound e-mails.

Finally, if you are going to add social media to your marketing mix, you will have to invest your own time as well as have a designated staff member who oversees your social media efforts. It can easily take several hours a week.

Starting with a presence on Facebook may make sense because it's an easy application to use, and chances are a few people currently working in your office already have a personal Facebook page and understand how to use this platform.

Dr. Buford notes, "The downside of social media is that it can be very time consuming. To utilize it effectively, you really need someone in house who is an expert in social media. In my view though, it's worth it. My social media campaign has had a lot more positive impact than any changes to date that I've implemented solely to my website.

Social media as a marketing tool could play a key role for your practice in 2010. Done well, it can be a great way to develop a relationship with patients who have been considering plastic surgery and want to know more about you and your practice.

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