

Facebook: An Urgent Care Marketing Platform Like No Other



In this day and age of digital media and smart phones, every business needs a social media presence for connecting with customers and prospects. Facebook is by far the most popular, and for an urgent care center, a great platform to start with. So, if you've been debating whether your center should invest the time and energy in a Facebook page, the answer is a resounding yes. Because if your urgent care isn't leveraging the numerous marketing advantages of Facebook to connect with folks in the communities that surround your center, rest assured the competition is.

Facebook: Where Your Patients Are

The statistics are staggering: According the Pew Research Center, more than two-thirds of Internet users worldwide are on Facebook, with 70% of those users active on the platform each day. Originally a social media tool for college 20-somethings to share personal profiles, today's version of Facebook boasts 1.04 billion active daily users, and includes pages for companies, brands, products, and businesses of every stripe. In short, Facebook is where your urgent care patients are, and where you should be as well.

Social Media Home Base

The primary goal of your Facebook page is to build an online community of folks who are fans of your urgent care center. Even if you plan to eventually to branch out to other platforms such as Twitter or Instagram, you should definitely start with Facebook. While "profiles" are for individuals, "pages" are for businesses, such that Facebook can be thought of as the digital equivalent of the yellow pages. In fact, you should think of Facebook as your social medial home base, where people can quickly look up quick facts such as your location and hours of operation. Ultimately though, your task is to leverage the many Facebook tools at your disposal to promote your center, build relationships, and engage with the surrounding community.

Using Facebook for Engagement and Promotion

Urgent care is a fee-for-service business, which means it's about getting the right patient to the center as soon they need it. So, what are some of the popular built-in Facebook tools you can use to engage your "friends," build brand loyalty, and position your center top of mind? Many thriving urgent care chains have had great success

focusing on the following Facebook tactics:

Uploading Video – A Facebook page will allow you to upload and host videos designed to educate and entertain visitors. A brief introduction video welcoming the user to your urgent care featuring a quick tour makes for a good start. Additionally, brief interviews with providers and administrative staffers familiarizes patients with your team, which engenders a sense of pre-visit familiarity and trust.

Another video strategy that centers employ is creating and uploading YouTube videos about common conditions, and then embedding and linking those videos to the Facebook page. Providers have found that when they post short, educational videos like these, they effectively disseminate information, build rapport between the patient and the provider, and even help cut down door-to-door time.

Real-time Response to Patient Feedback – Everybody has a smart phone these days, hence waiting patrons have grown accustomed to whipping out their phone and doling out real-time feedback. By having a staffer monitor the Facebook page for comments, it gives the provider a chance to respond right away. If the comment was negative, for example, a staffer could immediately come out and speak to the patient. If the feedback was positive, the provider could offer a heartfelt thank-you – all in real-time.

Paid campaigns, advertisements, and promotions – Facebook offers a variety of paid marketing options that can target specific users, create cost-per-click ad campaigns, and “boost” popular posts, which increases their visibility in News Feeds. Don’t worry if you have a tight marketing budget; the platform features several low-cost marketing options for businesses that desire additional exposure but are budget-conscious.

Conclusion

Everyone from individuals to businesses is on social media these days, thus urgent care centers who aren’t using Facebook as their social media hub are, quite frankly, late to the party. The community engagement and reputation enhancement possible through a Facebook page cannot be overstated, and can result in an appreciable ROI when approached diligently and with enthusiasm. So as long as the primary focus of your page remains communication and engagement, the dividends your Facebook page will eventually reap may leave you wondering how your center ever got along without one.

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