

Madow February Article On Social Media Seminar

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I admit it – I drank the Kool-Aid. Last August I spent two days in Baltimore with Rich and Dave at their first ever seminar on social media marketing. The experience was rewarding and transforming. The consensus opinion of every attendee I spoke with was the same – this conference was one of those special continuing education events that happen only two or three times in your professional career.

I honestly didn't know what to expect. Social media – web 2.0 – Facebook (isn't that for teenagers?) – I had no clue. But after two packed days of intense and stimulating new material, my views on the practice of dentistry in general, and dental marketing in particular, were dramatically changed.

If you attend, prepare to be challenged and overwhelmed – but don't be intimidated. Even if the limit of your present knowledge is sending an email, you will be fine. You do get through the material with the aid of a number of friendly and amazingly patient technical gurus who circulate through the room offering assistance.

My reason for attending the seminar was different from yours. I am a dental practice management consultant, and not a practicing dentist. I wanted to be able to learn the material so that I would be able to coach my clients. I decided to implement what I learned at the course into my own business. If I could make it work for me, it would follow that I could help others. The purpose of this article is to share some of what I learned.

Website positioning – Creating a website is the very first step to competing in the Internet space. But if people can't find your site – or if it looks dated or generic or is hard to navigate – then you should not expect your phone to be ringing off the hook with new patient calls. At the seminar, you will get a lot of good information about websites. For years, my website used to be found in the middle of the first page from a Google search for the key words for my business. I was happy with that and thinking that was about as good as I could do. Most SEO companies will try but won't even guarantee first page positioning.

Four months after the seminar, I was DOMINATING the first page coming up in the top one or two positions of the search engine results page (SERP) for my key words. Check it out – Google “dental practice management consultant New England” and see what happens! At the seminar I learned about the use of key words, especially important in your mission statement on your home page. I learned how to write content, the proper use of pictures and where to use and where not to use video, how to add a blog page, and how this all contributes to making your website **relevant**. The main objective of Google is to bring the most relevant material to the top of the page. Relevant means new, innovative and creative. If you build a website and never change it,

Google says you are not relevant – and so eventually you end up buried on the third page somewhere – and of course nobody can ever find you. Not good!

Blogging – Blogging is the easiest way to change and add content to your site. And it is so easy to do. Believe me – if I have learned to post blogs – so can you. You can have your web master create a blog page. It has a separate url, but it can be designed to look exactly like the format and color scheme of your website. Whenever you post a new blog, the blog page changes – and Google recognizes that. But the magic is installing an rss feed on your site because that causes EVERY page of your website to change whenever you post a new blog. Wait until you see what that does for your positioning!

Social media marketing – Once you have a blog page set up, you are well on your way to being able to use social media to market your practice. Social media marketing is the new word of mouth advertising. Time spent on social media sites is growing three times faster than the overall Internet rate. Social media will gain you name recognition in your community. What is the image you want to convey?

At the seminar you will learn the importance of having a clear idea of your “brand” so that patients can refer to you. Branding in essence will make your entire marketing program easier. At the seminar you will learn about Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and You Tube and how each of these might benefit your practice. Facebook is probably the easiest and best way to get started in spreading information about you in your community. You will learn how to create a professional Fan page to market and promote your practice. You will learn and understand why social media marketing is so powerful and impressive. And the best part about this marketing is that it is free!

Now let’s talk about the challenges of implementing the knowledge you will gain and what my experience has been in spreading the word to my clients – dentists just like you.

1. **You need tech support.** The average doctor can not do this alone. You need to have a web master and an SEO company that can make changes to a new or existing website as your expertise evolves. Adding video patient testimonials, a blog page, an rss feed, perhaps another link that will allow people to sign up for your blog and have it go directly to their email address, and adding back links between your site and others - these are all important steps to insure success with positioning your website – but these things require technical support.
2. **You need time.** I know how much time I am devoting to becoming expert and facile at all of this, and while I maintain a busy consulting business, it is not the same time demands of someone delivering clinical dentistry all day long and still having management and leadership responsibilities as well. In my opinion, successful people in any business are successful and stand out because they have excellent time management skills. There are only so many hours in each day, and we all need a life outside of dentistry. So the key to making this work is to try to delegate a lot of the responsibility to staff members who might actually have ability and an interest.
3. **You need to stay the course.** It is probably a year’s worth of effort and commitment to really master and get comfortable with Internet marketing and social media marketing. So be patient and keep the momentum going.

I invite all of you to visit my [website](#) and do two simple things. Click on the orange reader Icon on the navigation bar that asks you to subscribe to Jodena Consulting by Email. By doing this, you will automatically have my blog posts (I try to write two or three each month) sent to your email address. I also invite you to become a Fan of Jodena Consulting on Facebook. On the navigation bar of my site is a button that says “contact me”. If you open that, you will see my Facebook widget that asks you to “Become a Fan”. Then I will be able to share information with you.

I want you to do this so you can see how easy it can be for you to add these features to your own website and improve your positioning dramatically.

I hope this information is helpful to you – and this is just a small part of what I learned. So if you were considering going to this seminar – stop considering – and just do it! You will not be disappointed!

~Mayer

Dr. Levitt has been a great friend of The Madow Group for many years, and is one of the best resources for practice management efficiency tips in dentistry. He is the president of Jodena Consulting, offering personalized advice for business and practice management since 1989.

Dr. Levitt also trains successful dentists who are at, or near the end of their clinical careers to become consultants in their area of the country. For more information, call him at (401) 421-3615, email him at jodena@cox.net.