

DentalMarketing.net: MAXIMIZING THE ROI OF YOUR PRACTICE

by Kyle Patton, Associate Editor, *Dentaltown Magazine*

You get just one chance to make a great first impression, and in the world of marketing, choosing the right company to help you do that can be tough. Many companies make claims about the success a dentist can have, but one company has years of results-based measurements to back the message. *Dentaltown Magazine* sat down with DentalMarketing.net's director, Shawn Rowbotham, and found out how this direct-mail postcard company has accelerated the growth of countless practices across North America. Learn how this company's extra efforts and analytical obsession can translate into growth for your practice.

Q: What would you say makes DentalMarketing.net unique?

Rowbotham: The primary difference really has to do with why we do what we do. To us, the whole point is to support the doctor so he or she is successful and meets any goals and objectives. With most companies, when you really pay attention to how they do what they do, it becomes apparent that their motivation revolves around their own success.

We believe that our success is a by-product of the contribution we make to a doctor and her or his practice. You can see the difference when you look at what we do in comparison to anyone else. We wrap our arms around all the variables that impact the success of delivering quality new patients to the practice. Other companies that say they'll get you patients with postcards will design, print

and mail a postcard for you, and then they all cross their fingers and hope for the best. Maybe they even put a tracking number on your postcard so you can go online after a full day of work and spend half the night listening to all of your calls.

In our minds, those aren't solutions. Those are gambles and extra work. We provide the full solution! We take ownership of the success of your marketing with direct mail. That's why we score every single call received from our postcards with our 16 key performance indicators. That way we can coach the staff to make sure the most calls possible turn into new patients. We provide 24/7 access to all the performance details of every mailing, from the total revenue for the practice and who the new patients are, to the appointment-closing ratios of each staff member. We capture all of the missed calls so they can be turned into new patients instead of lost opportunities. The list goes on and on of things we do that everyone else ignores. That is why we can guarantee results to our doctors!

Q: How do you know it really works and will actually grow the practice with the right kind of patients?

Rowbotham: If you're a dentist, think of all the different options available to you to increase awareness of your practice in your market and attract new patients. Are any of them guaranteed? Can any of them provide you with years of empirical results that are data-specific to dentists? Do they even do a demographic market analysis based on your patient data? Do any of them have experience getting you the right type of patient that you are looking for?

Case Study 1

Long time/consistent mailer currently at 700 percent ROI



Our practice has benefited from DentalMarketing.net (formerly 1-2-3 Postcards) since the fall of 2011 and we could not be more pleased with the success of our direct-mail campaign. We have more than 500 percent ROI and look forward to our phones ringing the day our postcards hit homes. We have gained more than 400 new patients; this is our biggest referral source to our office.

Their design team is fantastic to work with and customizes our cards to our specific needs. Our practice also benefits from DentalMarketing.net's call-tracking services. We are able to monitor calls closely and discuss in "real time" with our team the pros and cons to their phone conversations. DentalMarketing.net is a must-have for our dental practice.

– Drs. Fossom and Elmore, Richard F. Fossom DDS

Case Study 2

433 percent ROI, targeting cosmetic & restorative
More than 100 new patients

We have tried many different marketing options since our practice opened in 2012, but we never felt completely satisfied with the results. We have been using DentalMarketing.net (formerly 1-2-3 Postcards) since the end of 2013. We are extremely pleased with the results and the quality of patients who are responding to our mailings. The best feature about DentalMarketing.net that sets them apart is the ability to listen to all of our calls and utilize the online portal as a training tool for our team. We love working with Robbie, our account manager; he is always there to help and provides great suggestions to make each campaign the best it can be! We would highly recommend DentalMarketing.net to any practice looking to grow its patient base.

– Drs. Catherine Wilder and Lauren Shepard, Katy Smile Design



Case Study 3

375 new patients and 596 calls



We opened our pediatric dental practice about 18 months ago and knew we had to do some effective marketing to help jump-start our practice. After researching a few different direct-mail companies, we decided to use DentalMarketing.net. The customer service they have provided

has been fantastic since Day One. Our account managers have always been very helpful and have closely guided us to make decisions that have increased our success.

DentalMarketing.net's phone and video training has helped our staff become very confident in turning calls into new-patient appointments. Because we're a start-up practice, staying within our budget was very important to us. There were other companies that insisted we spend a large amount of money that we didn't have, but DentalMarketing.Net asked us what our budget was and worked to stay within it.

They have always been very patient with postcard changes and open to discussing new ideas. We have felt that they truly do have our best interests in mind. At no point did we ever feel pressured into anything we were not comfortable doing—and that was really the most important thing to us. Overall, their excellent customer service, well-designed postcards, and detailed demographics have helped us to grow our practice to levels we never thought we could reach so quickly. We recommend this company to anyone ready to make some changes and take his or her office to the next level.

– Drs. Amit Batra, Macomb Children's Dentistry

Case Study 4

More than 200 new patients in 10 mailings



The list of to-dos when you open a dental practice from the ground up can be incredibly overwhelming. Some things were very clear to me from the start, and those items were easy to check off of the list. I knew the dentist that I was, the dentist that I was trying to become, and where I wanted to locate my practice. As

the wheels started turning, walls started going up and items were being checked off the exhaustive list, one question became primary: How do you begin to inform people that this *great new dental practice that they NEED to visit* even exists?

I feel so grateful to have found DentalMarketing.net! The process has been seamless and efficient from the very beginning. We pushed hard to get our first campaign into homes to correspond with our opening day, and the team at DentalMarketing.net was able to make that happen for us very easily. The front-office training allowed my team to begin, on the first day, to develop excellent phone habits and to be very effective in converting prospective patients to appointments. Our mailer is attractive and eye-catching.

The process of design, and integrating unique and individualized offers and statements about our office was easy, and the proofing process efficient. Our mailer has done an excellent job of enticing prospective patients to call, and allowing me and my team to take it from there!

I am also very happy with the dashboard and the ability to utilize the information to learn how to improve our ability to convert calls to appointments, as well as what prospective patients in our community are looking for in a dentist. It is an excellent training tool that is allowing me to know where to make adjustments in scheduling and phone coverage. I am able to be a presence at the front desk, even when I am not physically able to hear the calls. The ability to review the calls after the fact is helping to keep my team committed to the goals we have set to knock the socks off of every caller, every time.

As part of a (very) young practice, I could not be happier about the return we have seen from our mailers, and I am excited about the future and the partnership we are creating with DentalMarketing.net!

– Dr. Rachel Gold, Total Health Dentistry

We specialize exclusively in bringing quality new patients to dentists, and we guarantee results. We can do that because over the years we have learned the critical components for success. We have developed the system to duplicate that success month after month, year after year. Finally there is an option that doesn't require you to gamble with your marketing dollars.

Q: How does staff training and coaching tie into your program?

Rowbotham: First off, it is vital to any practice's success to have a front desk that handles calls effectively. You could be the best dentist in America, but if your front desk is not getting people on the schedule, then nobody will know. I have seen it time and time again, how a front desk can make or break a campaign and even a practice. Every time that phone rings, that is a potential new patient on the phone, and the way that phone call is handled largely determines if that caller chooses your practice or not.

We believe our success is a by-product of the contribution we make to a doctor and her or his practice. You can see the difference when you look at what we do in comparison to anyone else. We wrap our arms around all the variables that impact the success of delivering quality new patients to the practice.

Regardless of how you get your phone to ring, the calls must be handled well. We learned that early and built a world-class phone training system and video coaching library into our program. Each patient adds \$1,000 of revenue to the practice the first year, based on industry averages. That means each call from a prospective new patient is worth \$1,000—to be won or lost. At that rate, it doesn't take too many calls to have a big impact on the revenue of the practice, for good or bad. We recognize that helping your staff refine their skills makes a tremendous impact on your practice.

Because of that, the staff coaching really comes from three avenues. Prior to a first mailing, an advisor will provide an initial staff training on the tips and techniques proven—in practices across the country—to increase closing percentages. This initial training instructs staff members in how to use proper techniques, phone etiquette, and ways to respond to tough questions. This way, they are prepared for new calls before the first mailing ever goes out.

But a one-time training meeting is not enough to change habits. Ongoing coaching is needed. Our staff listens to the recordings and

scores every single call that comes to the office. Calls are analyzed based upon the 16 key performance indicators we've identified that can make or break an appointment being scheduled. These indicators range from whether or not the staff member got the caller's name and gave pricing over the phone, to whether the staff member answered all of the caller's questions accurately and completely, and so forth.

These dedicated marketing advisors continually monitor the calls and provide the staff with coaching based on the individual staff member's strengths and weaknesses. That kind of focus and attention to the details is just one of the crucial elements of a successful program.

Q: Isn't sending postcards kind of expensive compared to other options?

Rowbotham: Expense is a really bad way to make a decision about how to spend your marketing dollars. Return on investment (ROI) is what matters. If the marketing you are considering doesn't track the ROI for you, then that should be a big red flag. One of the biggest reasons we started doing what we do is because we recognized that most marketing and advertising dollars are wasted. Most companies offer you all kinds of projections, commitments—even promises.

But at the end of the day, you're the one left holding the bag only to see that the results don't amount to much, if anything. Then they come back, telling you it takes time and you have to plow down more money that just doesn't deliver the results you need or anticipate. They're never proactive about determining your ROI, much less analyzing your results to determine how to optimize your ROI. That's why we created DentalMarketing.net, with proven results based on empirical data, so you know it works.

We've done it for so long and refined it so well that we are even able to guarantee it. You stand behind your work—why would you trust any company with your marketing dollars that doesn't stand behind theirs?

Q: Why not just use Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) and my local printer to send postcards? Isn't it cheaper?

Rowbotham: Yes it is cheaper, if we're talking about expense. If we're talking about results, it's exorbitant! Think of what goes through your mind when you lose a case to a cut-rate practice. You know better than anyone what can go wrong when someone gets cheap dentistry. Is it a better deal? It's the same with a postcard mailing. The list of benefits you enjoy with our system is as long as my arm, and you can check it out on our website. Let's take into consideration just one of our benefits and see how the value proposition stacks up.

The average practice misses 33 percent of its calls, between being busy, at lunch or closed. That's based on years of data and it's very consistent.

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With our program, all of those calls are captured, so those people can get on the schedule instead of turning into lost opportunities. If you mailed 10,000 postcards (on average) and got 30 calls, you would typically miss 10 of them. If only 5 of those 10 were scheduled, that's \$5,000 on average.

Even if you could save yourself \$0.20 per card and lose out on all the tremendous benefits of our system, you would have saved yourself \$2,000. Based on what you lost in missed calls, your savings would have resulted in you *losing* \$3,000. As you know, sometimes saving money on a cheap alternative can be very costly.

Our prices are listed right on our website and are some of the best available, averaging about a dime less than the cost of a stamp, including everything. You'll have to check out our site to see what "everything" means. You won't believe it.

Q: How do postcards compare to other marketing options like websites, search engine optimization (SEO), internal marketing, reputation management, etc.?

Rowbotham: Postcards have been proven statistically to be the most predictably effective external marketing for dentists. Over the years we have tracked all kinds of external marketing options, from the ads on the back of grocery receipts to movie screens, radio, TV, ballpark banners—you name it.

Nothing is as consistently effective as postcards. There certainly are anomalies here and there when a practice may experience a spike in success with something else, but the smart money is on postcards. Other things like websites, SEO and reputation management encompass both external and internal marketing, and every practice should be leveraging those media. Anymore, you really can't ignore the need for a good website, and we hear all the time the stories of success or failure of reputation management. Online reviews can have a huge impact on the success or failure of both your internal and external marketing, and it's becoming a bigger issue every day as more people look to reviews to make a decision about which dentist to choose.

Last but not least, you have internal marketing. Many doctors barely even differentiate their internal marketing from their external. They often bundle them together. They use any success of their internal marketing as a rationale for not doing external marketing, thinking that the referrals they get are free and it doesn't make sense to pay for new clients. The reality is that referrals come as a result of the huge investment you have made in your practice. The hundreds of thousands initially, and the tens of thousands every month that you spend, are what make referral business possible. Consequently, you should be doing everything you can to leverage that investment and get as many referrals as possible.

You should also recognize that internal and external marketing are apples and oranges. If you have open slots on your schedule, you're wasting money every month in the overhead you spend. If

you do have availability on your schedule that needs to be filled, why wouldn't you take advantage of external marketing?

Q: What sets you apart from other marketing firms or direct-mail providers in the dental market?

Rowbotham: The reality is that we have little to nothing in common with print shops, nor the majority of marketing firms out there, as very few are exclusive to the industry and it's almost impossible to find one that will stand behind its program with any guarantee of results.

We empower our practices with recommendations based on empirical data to make intelligent decisions regarding the success of their marketing. Our one-of-a-kind program, including call tracking, recording, scoring, and 24/7 access to performance dashboards, eliminates the guessing game. These dashboards provide extensive marketing insight. Not only do you know the number of calls per postcard, you know exactly how many new patients are on your schedule, who they are and who on your staff set up the appointments. You even know the total revenue to the practice, return on investment, your best-responding neighborhoods, your top designs, etc.

Another differentiator is how we control the variables to ensure success. What can be controlled to enhance your results? Over the years, we've listened to hundreds of thousands of calls and identified the keys to maximize success. For example, what size card should you mail? What offers should you advertise? What day of the week should postcards hit homes? And the largest common denominator across successful practices is the efficiency and effectiveness of how well the staff handles first-time callers. By controlling all of these variables, we put practices in the best possible position to succeed.

If you have determined that your practice would benefit from more quality new patients, why wouldn't you choose a partner that guarantees you results? We eliminate the guessing part of leveraging your hard-earned marketing dollars. With complete transparency, we track your results, report back to you, and provide you with our recommendations. We both will know at the end of the day exactly what we accomplished, so together we can make informed, educated decisions for continued success into the future.

Q: If practices want to learn more, what should they do?

Rowbotham: The best thing is to go watch our three-minute overview video and learn how our unique direct-mailing program works at DentalMarketing.net.

And you can give us a call at (855) 627-3200. Mention you are a Townie, and take advantage of a special offer just for Townies. We'll provide you with the following free consultation for your practice:

1. Market area/income analysis,
2. Exclusivity evaluation to see if your mailing area is available, and
3. A design/offer consultation based upon the success we've seen with specific postcards. ■