

Marketing Your Practice in Cyberspace

WHETHER YOU'RE A NEW or established optometrist, you should consider marketing your practice online. Why?

"You could bring in as many as 30% more new patients than a practice that doesn't have an Internet marketing strategy," says David M. Pearce, NCLEC, president of Responsible Marketing Consulting Services in Plattsburgh, N.Y. Plus, says Pearce, who recently was the featured speaker on a Webinar hosted by ODWire, titled *Marketing Your Eyecare Practice on the Internet*, you won't risk losing existing patients to the more Internet savvy competitors that offer online appointments, registration forms, bill payment and product ordering.

About 147 million American adults use the Internet. And it's estimated that consumers search for eyecare-related terms, such as eyeglasses, optometrists and eye doctor, 2.2 million times per month or once every second, Pearce says, giving optometrists access to another huge, po-

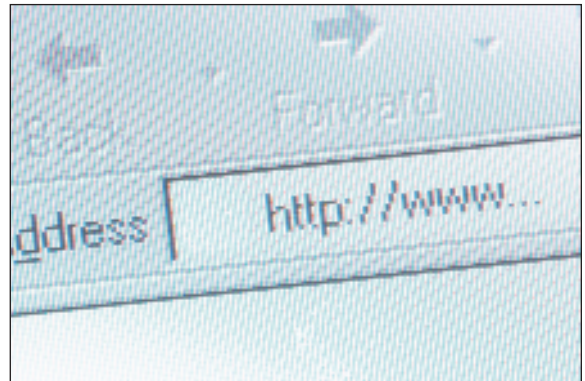
tential patient base.

Here's how you can begin marketing your practice online:

1. List your practice with Google's and Yahoo's local directories. This service is free and doesn't require that you have a Web site to market your practice.

2. Submit news releases about your practice to online newswire services such as prweb.com. Include information about new associates, new products or services you're offering and free screenings. And make sure you include your practice's phone number and a link to your Web site in the press releases.

3. Get published online. Anyone can submit articles for publication for free at ezinearticles.com. Topics could include information on how new contact lens technologies can keep presbyopes out of



spectacles or the benefits of premium ophthalmic lens coatings. Make sure you include links to your practice's Web site in your byline.

"Only an estimated 30% of the private eyecare practices today have a presence on the Internet," Pearce says. "So developing an Internet marketing strategy today will give your practice an advantage over a competitor that puts off setting up a Web site for a year or two."

For more information on marketing your practice online, go to David Pearce's Web site at resmarkconsulting.com.

CL SAVVY

Why Didn't I Think of That?

One of my elderly, hyperopic patients reported problems applying his silicone hydrogel contact lenses. He removed and discarded them each month, but became frustrated when he tried to apply a new pair because he couldn't see well enough. He also reported leaving the lenses in overnight because he wakes up frequently. I suggested he replace the right lens on the first of each month and the left lens on the second. This way, he always has at least one lens in and is able to give his eyes a break from contact lens wear once a month. He was excited that this worked so well for him and wondered why he hadn't thought of it.

Christopher Paulus, O.D., Medina, Ohio
For more great fitting tips, visit CLToday.com.

Kid-friendly Site About CLs

MENICON Co., the world's largest manufacturer of GP contact lenses, has launched the first educational contact lens Web site for children ages six to 12. Menigame educates kids and their parents about the need for regular eye exams and contact lens wear through five short videos. The site also features four interactive games. It's currently available in English and French, with other languages to follow. Go to menigame.com.

Perception About Vision Care is Reality

WHILE MOST AMERICANS visit their general practitioner annually and their dentist twice a year, a recent survey shows that many adults don't make vision care a priority.

More than 3,700 Blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Caucasians expressed their attitudes toward and perceptions of vision care in the nationwide *Americans' Attitudes and Perceptions about Vision Care* survey, conducted on behalf of The Vision Care Institute of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care Inc.

Among the groups surveyed, 72% of Blacks strongly agreed that maintaining proper vision care is an important priority, yet they were most likely to report they don't have a regular eyecare professional (21%). Twenty-seven percent of Hispanics strongly agreed they're concerned about their vision getting worse; howev-

er, they were the least likely to have seen an eye doctor in the last year (43%).

Ninety-four percent of Asian Americans agreed that maintaining proper vision care is an important priority, but more than a third (36%) said they don't need an eye exam unless they're having vision problems. The majority of Caucasians believed they should receive eye exams at least annually (71%), but more than 25% haven't seen an eyecare professional in the past 2 years.

These survey findings reveal ample opportunities for you and your staff to educate patients about the need for regular eye exams and the diseases that affect their particular ethnic group. This information will help prompt them to schedule yearly eye exams that could lead to early diagnoses and treatments that will save their sight.

Resource for Recruiting, Keeping Great Employees



MANY O.D.s

would agree that one of the most challenging aspects of running a successful practice is hiring great employees — and

keeping them. In a new book called *222 Secrets of Hiring, Managing, and Retaining Great Employees in Healthcare Practices* (Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Sudbury, Mass.), author Bob Levoy offers practical advice and techniques for recruiting, interviewing, compensating, managing, motivating, training, evaluating and retaining employees in proven action steps you can share with your staff and implement immediately.

These simple, easy-to-use tips are based on the research findings from a wide variety of healthcare providers, clinic administrators and practice managers. They're geared to help you uncover the synergistic connection between employee and patient satisfaction and practice growth so you can thrive.

Bob Levoy is an internationally acclaimed seminar speaker on human resource and management issues and an editorial board member and monthly columnist for *Optometric Management*. To learn more about the book or place an order, go to snipurl.com/HiringSecrets.

¿Habla Usted Español?



TO INCREASE AWARENESS of eye health among Hispanics, encourage them to go to yonosabiaeso.com, a new Spanish-language Web site developed by Transitions Optical.

The site contains information about the importance of eye health and the principles of vision. It explores subjects, such as eye conditions, tips on how to determine if you need eye-

glasses, "fact or fiction" about the eyes and resources for parents and teachers.

The information is geared to educate Hispanics who have high rates of visual impairment and are at greater risk for certain eye diseases. What's more, the site serves as an important avenue to spark dialogue about eye health between school-aged children and their parents who are more comfortable having a resource in their native language.