

## Marketing Tips After Reopening Your Practice

I have been privileged to join some of the virtual study groups hosted by IDOC this spring and have learned that most practice owners are primarily focused on developing safety protocol in preparation for reopening their practices after temporary closures due to Covid-19. Most of you plan on seeing fewer patients per hour after you reopen to allow for social distancing and are concerned about how to safely accommodate patients in the optical which may mean less browsing and handling of frames by your patients.

At least in the beginning, the former marketing goal of *increasing the number* of existing and new patients is no longer a primary concern. Instead, most practice owners are concerned about accommodating patient demand due to the backlog, training staff on new protocol and keeping themselves safe, too. I acknowledge the shift and would like to share a few tips on marketing during the next few weeks to few months post Covid-19 temporary closure.

### Online Reviews

- If you have a patient relationship platform which enables you to automatically distribute texts to all patients which contains the link to your Google listing to acquire online reviews from patients, *consider pausing this outreach during the next few weeks.*
- All of us are stressed right now, and there is considerable controversy regarding wearing masks, having temperature taken, schools being closed, etc. Your patients may not be in the best frame of mind, and you and your staff will be learning how to incorporate new safety processes after you reopen – so that means at least initially, you may not receive the great feedback you'd become accustomed to receiving prior to the closure.
- Consider distributing an internal survey instead to capture patient feedback. That way you can understand how they feel about the new experience and use the feedback during staff meetings to identify areas for improvement. Once the feedback from the internal survey is mostly positive again, you can “turn on” the automatic requests for online reviews.

### Social Media

- Let patients know you have reopened the practice for annual eye exams and all their eyewear needs, but also share you are seeing fewer patients at this time to maintain social distancing.
- Work with your website administrator to create a landing page on your website which outlines your safety protocol, including new requirements of your patients, then link to the safety protocol landing page from social media.
- If you plan on continuing telemedicine for now, let your social media followers know how they can access this service and virtually consult with you.
- Continue promoting how people with current prescriptions may reorder contact lenses from you without coming into the practice – an online ordering platform or calling the practice to place an order.
- Use social media as a platform to educate your followers on keeping their eyes and vision healthy without the “call to action” to book an eye exam. May is Healthy Vision Month, and you may find your audience is more receptive to information about maintaining good health at this time.

- Look for ways to promote other small businesses in your area, and let your followers know you appreciate their support. People are very interested in supporting locally owned businesses right now.