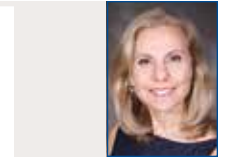


By Cynthia Matossian, MD



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How an on-staff Internet manager boosted our profile

A full-time hire can be a worthy investment.

Let's face it: medical practices without up-to-date web presences are endangering their own credibility. More and more, social media and information on the Internet is how patients are not only finding doctors, but, in many cases, also how they're evaluating those doctors before they make that first appointment.

Clearly, the Internet is no trend. It's a serious marketing and communication tool practices must embrace. With that in mind, we determined it was in our best interest to bring in a new hire to manage our web marketing and social media.

Nearly two years on, that hire has helped us grow our practice and enhance our online visibility.

WHY A NEW HIRE

We initially tried rotating web duties to different staff members, but soon found that the amount of work and the level of expertise required were too much of a burden. Taking the reins on the web needed to be someone's main priority.

Today, this individual handles more than simply posting Facebook updates. He is responsible for myriad social media outreach, online reputation management, e-blast newsletters and collecting analytics.

BLOGS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

We write at least three blog posts per week. Physicians write most of them, and our web marketing manager writes some but also edits and posts all of them. This takes a while since he updates a variety of sites with each post, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ and WordPress. He then also monitors our own website and acts as a liaison to our website design firm.

WEB MONITORING

In addition, our web manager is responsible for online reputation management. This means he checks sites, such as Yelp,

for any mention of Matossian Eye. In one instance, a patient complaint (thankfully, our only negative comment to date) was the impetus for us to create a policy for patients to be able to contact our billing supervisor more easily. Without our web marketing manager's watchful eye, we would have never caught the issue.

Together with our practice administrator, our web marketing manager reviews Google Analytics and helps measure the success of web campaigns.

We also have our web marketing manager scour the Internet for opportunities to make us visible at community-based functions.

WEB MANAGER QUALITIES

For this position, look for an extrovert with excellent diction, grammar and writing skills. She or he should be media savvy, with a background in communications or marketing.

As busy physicians, we rarely have time to update our websites or become versed in social media. Although it might come at the cost of a salary, our experience shows a web marketing manager can be an invaluable business-driver. **OM**

