

What Does a "Like" on Facebook Really Mean for Business?

Even if you have thousands of likes on Facebook, patients' loyalty and engagement might be a whole different story.

BY CARY M. SILVERMAN, MD, MBA, AND SHAMA KABANI

Let us say you have, by your own definition, a fairly successful Facebook page. It looks nice. You have a substantial number of likes, and the number continues to grow. There is one thing you are missing: new patients.

You are not alone. Both in the health care industry and in the larger world of social media marketing, many people have trouble converting those likes on Facebook into solid leads. If your conversion rate for Facebook fans is not very high, there are a few different tactics you can explore.

CREATE A SPECIAL OFFER FOR FACEBOOK FANS

Let your Facebook fans know that you value them as patients—whether they are current, former, or potential patients. Share information about how your fans can get a special discount on one of your services. Perhaps offer the special pricing just for being a Facebook fan or for referring a friend to your practice.

SHARE INDUSTRY NEWS

Look at your last five or six Facebook posts. Are they all specifically about you or your practice? If so, make a change. By sharing industry news and developments, you can change the monotonous "me, me, me" tone that develops when you only share links to your own content. You can also establish yourself as a trusted authority and news source in your specialty. This basic level of trust is important in a doctor-patient relationship, and you will be helping establish it before a patient even steps foot in the office.

Your Facebook page is an important part of your online presence and marketing strategy, but the ultimate

goal should be to direct people to your practice's main website. That location allows you to share far more information in a much more creative and flexible manner than Facebook. You absolutely should not be participating in social media before you have a good-looking, informative website. Ultimately, your

practice's website, not Facebook or any other social media site, is the best tool for converting fans to patients.

BE DOWN TO EARTH

Ask questions. With their permission, post patients' before and after photographs or their testimonials. Interact with those who comment on your wall or your posts. Facebook fans do not want to like and follow a faceless entity. They want to interact with another human being. If you bring

this human element to everything you do—not just on Facebook but on the Internet at large—people will notice. ■



Shama Kabani is a best-selling author, speaker, and president of The Marketing Zen Group in Dallas. Ms. Kabani may be reached at shama@marketingzen.com or via Twitter @Shama.



Cary M. Silverman, MD, MBA, a LASIK and refractive cataract eye surgeon, is the medical director of EyeCare 20/20 in East Hanover, New Jersey. He is a regular contributor to CRSToday's "Premium Practice Today" and the "Today's Practice" section with his Social Eyes column. Dr. Silverman may be reached at csilverman@eyecare2020.com or via Twitter @TheLASIKdoc.

