



Private Practice Marketing & Branding **Part Four**

A Guide to Basic Digital Strategies.

The content in this Learning Guide focuses on assisting private practice physicians to better understand the important role of digital and online strategies to strengthen their market position. It builds upon the information shared in the previous three Primers which, address establishing a unique marketing advantage, conducting research for insights into your community, and using public relations and community outreach for trust-building and thought-leadership. Links to these segments are below:

Primer 1: [Identifying Your Practice's Unique Marketing Advantage](#)

Primer 2: [Conducting Market Research to Gauge Community Needs and Patient Satisfaction](#)

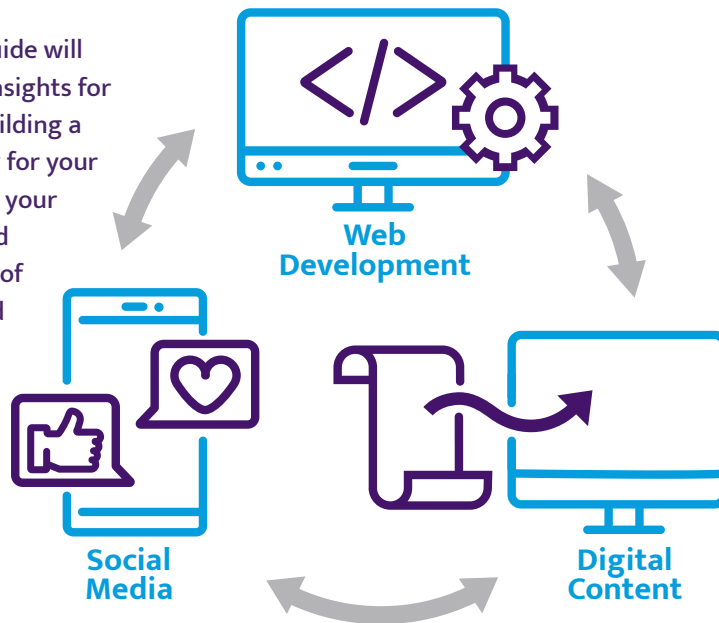
Primer 3: [Building Trust In Your Practice Through Public Relations and Community Outreach](#)

Defining Terms and Understanding Value

Digital strategies are becoming a “must have” for all organizations, including physician practices. A practice’s digital presence is often the “go to” for patients, prospective patients, those in your community, referral sources and other important audiences who want to know more about you!

While there is a lot to learn, this guide will provide you with knowledge and insights into the basic uses and strategies that can help your practice build a digital presence.

While there is a lot to learn, this guide will provide you with knowledge and insights for the basic uses and strategies of building a digital presence. A digital strategy for your practice is interconnected through your website, social media channels, and various forms of digital media. All of these platforms work together and help present your practice in a consistent, unified manner in the marketplace.



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PART I: The Basics of Website Development

Today, websites don't have to be overly complicated or expensive to develop—but it is important to have and maintain one.

The homepage, which is the first page of your website that your visitors will see, is the ideal place to highlight your unique story based on the work completed in terms of identifying your marketing advantage ([Primer 1](#)).

Your website should also feature your staff, their strengths and interests, and include brief biographies and photos of your team. It is recommended that the staff profiles include any clinical and nonclinical team members who will interact with your patients. Profiles of the team provide an opportunity for potential patients to get to know the people they are considering entrusting with their health and well-being. Infusing some personality helps patients feel a preliminary connection. If you have positive patient testimonials or quotes, these can be mixed into the website for credibility and interest.

As discussed in primer 3, which focused on thought leadership and community outreach ([Primer 3](#)), you should include your frequently updated blog as well as community events in which you participate. A blog is an article or other original content you develop that can be featured on your website and helps position you and your practice as a community resource.

If you're just considering the development of a website, WordPress, Wix, and Squarespace are easier to use platforms. However, developing a website is highly technical and we strongly encourage you to hire a consultant or firm to do it for you. Having a professional web developer work with you will also ensure that your website is optimized for those seeking a physician in your specialty and geographic area. If you're not sure how to find the right person, platforms such as Fiverr can connect you to experts in these areas.

PART II: The Basics of Social Media

Social media is a form of “owned” media in which you create personal channels of communications to those in your chosen network. Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, two of the more popular social media networks, are important elements of your online presence. Facebook is still very popular and tends to reach an older audience. Instagram, Reddit and Twitter are examples that are more popular among younger audiences.

It's important to understand the difference between a personal profile and a business page. A personal profile is intended to represent an individual person, so we recommend a private practice create a business page, which represents organizations and companies. Additionally, be sure you understand how to access and provide permissions to manage social media accounts. For example, Meta (Facebook/Instagram) permissions and roles are assigned to individuals and allow you to easily toggle between your page and profile without logging out and logging back in. Twitter, on the other hand, has a username and login.

NOTE: The physician owner of the practice should be the primary administrator of any professional social media account, and permissions to other staff should only be granted by the administrator. Be sure to establish a clear “exit strategy” for departing employees, be it to revoke their permission by unassigning their page role, or changing the password on an account that requires a username and login. Store your passwords in a digital password protector, such as 1password. Never store them on a sticky note or unlocked digital document.

Social media platforms have encouraged administrators to enable two-factor authentication. Using an authentication app such as Duo will provide your accounts with robust security.

Your social media posts should always:

- Align with the authentic and unique story that has been established for your practice's brand
- Link back to your website
- Include a call to action (CTA), such as “learn more” or “book an appointment”

Effective social media posts include:

- Introducing team members
- Announcing new services or locations
- Sharing important practice-relevant information
- Promoting your unique approaches to the patient experience and what patients can expect coming to you

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Over the years, social media platforms have tried to quell attention-grabbing clickbait call-to-actions (CTAs) by limiting distribution on posts that include phrases like “click here.” Using a different call to action will help indicate trustworthiness to the platforms, which will then more broadly distribute your posts.

Be sure to also consider accessibility, for example, avoiding CTA’s like “watch,” “read” or “listen,” because not everyone is able to do so. “Join us” or “learn more” are common alternatives.

While Facebook is both text and image based, Instagram is a “show, don’t tell” platform, where posts must be an image or video. Instagram also doesn’t allow you to link to a website in an individual post (put your website link in your profile’s bio). Explore additional options such as Linktree to help drive traffic to your website from your profile.

When it comes to creating visual elements to post, there are many ways to enrich the look and content of your social media posts. Canva is one example of an online tool that will help you create a more visual presence for your posts. We recommend you establish a consistent design for your social media presence and use similar graphics that support this approach. The service Embed Social offers free (or paid) tools to help you launch an effective social media strategy. As noted in part 1 of this learning guide, we recommend working with an agency or consultant to implement online strategies (at least at the start), so you benefit most from the right tools, content and frequency.

PART III: The Basics of Digital Media

Purchasing digital (paid) media is a bit trickier and we recommend hiring a firm to help you with these endeavors. There are many ways to go about it, but the most basic strategies include search (where your practice shows up when people enter certain search terms or keywords), digital display ads that appear when people are searching for categories such as “finding a family physician near me,” and paid boosts of social media posts.

When hiring a digital media firm, pick one that has expertise with medical practices. A firm with this type of expertise will be able to guide you on the right keywords and strategies to meet your needs and budget. There are many forms of paid digital media strategies. The right budget will depend on many factors including the cost per action you’d like to pay for (such as cost per click), campaign duration, target audience and geography. Work with a media expert who can guide you toward the right level of spend relative to your practice and competition.

Important to any contract with a digital firm are properly documenting deliverables and agreement on campaign goals and analytics. There are many ways to judge success of a digital program including patient conversions, downloads to content, views of your display ads and other outcomes. It’s important to determine these upfront with your media firm so strategies can be developed around them.

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