

VMD

S E R V I C E S



24 Key Questions to Ask (When Creating Your Marketing Strategy)

Develop a strategy that actually works for you and your practice!

Here's the thing:

You already know that you want to fill your waiting room—and the best way to do this is with podiatry marketing services that actually work.

Further, you're probably quite aware that you need a solid strategy so your marketing produces actual results.

But you went to school for podiatry, not marketing, right?

As such, understanding how to build a strategy can be a bit tricky.

We get it. After all, we've helped hundreds of podiatrists overcome the same struggle. And now we want to do the same for you...which is why we've created this guide.

In the following pages, you are getting two dozen key questions to ask when putting together your marketing plan. These questions will put you on the right track for practice success.

And as you go through the process of answering them, please feel free to contact us if you'd like assistance. Our team has a combined marketing experience of several decades—and we'd be more than happy to provide a helping hand.

With that being said, let's jump into it!

All Analysis, No Paralysis

Your starting point in developing a successful marketing strategy is to perform a fair amount of analysis—and especially what our industry calls “competitive analysis.”

See, a competitive analysis looks at everything that impacts your marketing plan, including what is (and isn't) happening in the field of podiatry marketing.

(When we incorporate marketing terms, we'll do our best to make sure you keep up!)

Further, it allows you to see what your direct competitors are (and aren't) doing.

At the same time, a competitive analysis is NOT about just going out and doing what everyone else is doing—it's about discovering what competitors are doing...and then doing it better, doing it bigger, doing it smarter!

(You don't want to copy what others are doing—who knows if it works!)

The ultimate goal of your competitive analysis is to **uncover opportunities to differentiate you from your competitors.**

And that entails asking the right questions, which brings us to the meat and potatoes of it all:

The 24 Key Questions to Ask (When Creating Your Marketing Strategy)

Let's break these crucial questions into two, complimentary segments:

Strategic Questions

1. Who are you targeting? Who is your competition targeting?

Understanding your target market, along with your competition's, is absolutely essential as you develop your messaging and plan for how to deliver it. For example, if you want to see more patients who are in their senior years, you probably don't want to invest a lot of effort into using the latest social media platforms (which are generally populated with younger crowds during their early years).

2. Can you reverse engineer any of your personas based on what you see in your online presence?

Before moving forward with your new podiatry marketing strategy, you want to determine where you presently stand. This is important because it will give you a better sense of direction moving forward. As an additional bonus, you might find that you're already doing at least some of the right things.

3. How do you differ?

In marketing lingo, this is known as your Unique Value Proposition (UVP). (Some marketers use the term Unique Selling Proposition, which is basically the same thing. Since podiatrists don't usually think in terms of "selling," however, it makes more sense for you to use UVP.)

4. What are your key messages?

This is partially defined by your target market, but it should also consist of what you want to say—and it's important that you maintain a balance between the two. Some podiatrists focus too much on only half the equation (often, the "what they want to say" part...) without the other.

5. What needs, pains, or aspirations are you hitting?

As you consider your target audience, you simply must spend time thinking about their circumstances and pain points. Again, many podiatrists don't...and that's a mistake! You need this information to make sure you develop messages that resonate with your audience and inspire action (such as scheduling an appointment with your practice).

6. Which opportunities are you ignoring? How about your competition?

When you ask this, keep in mind that "opportunities" can mean several different things. A couple, in particular, to be mindful of include market segments (potential patients) and services you offer. Your practice happens to be in a major college town? Then you might want to target your message to them. You offer products in your office? Well, are you featuring them in your marketing? (You should!)

7. Are you clearly prioritizing one key message (or its related persona) above the others?

If you know anything about marketing—or even if you don't—then you should know that the best practices are centered on a specific persona. The thing is, you want to have a couple (but not more than 2-4 or so...). And part of this means you need to prioritize them. After all, you can't be everything to everyone all at once!



8. Did you make any sudden shifts in your marketing recently?

Again, understanding your current situation is quite useful in deciding how to move forward. Part of this assessment entails evaluating changes you might have made. As you do, it's a great opportunity to possibly do some "A/B" testing (basically, comparing one effort to another) and analysis.

9. What campaigns did you end? Was it a long-running campaign, or was it new and short-lived?

Campaigns are a vital element in a successful marketing strategy. Because they are, it is especially beneficial to spend time looking at ones you've been running and assess their effectiveness. This careful assessment will give you an idea as to what's working and what isn't—and you can then take that insight and apply it to your marketing strategy for the best possible results and ROI!

10. Have you begun anything new or ended previous services (etc.) in your practice?

Either way—whether you're starting or ending something—it's important news that your target market needs to know. Plus, this will create opportunities within your marketing strategy to establish and maintain relationships, while at the same time promote and build your practice's brand.

11. What changes did you make to your product or services mix?

Have you recently started offering a new product when you provide fungal toenail treatment? Are you promoting orthotic therapy when marketing to your heel pain patients? Situations like these examples are great ones for marketing purposes—and can produce an outstanding ROI for you and your practice.

Tactical Questions

12. How much content, and what kinds, are you producing?

In creating your podiatry marketing plan, you should spend time clearly defining your existing content schedule and recognizing what media you use to share your message. As you do, you will start to identify gaps in your current practices and develop opportunities to make improvements—all of which can lead to better results.

13. Is there anything new from your more typical offerings? For example, have you just started offering webinars or reduced the number of eBooks you produce?

Some people mistakenly think that content marketing is just a matter of writing blog posts. Well, blogging on a regular basis can be an important part of your marketing strategy, but it definitely shouldn't be the only one! You want to provide greater value and offer more to your target market than that.

14. What topics are you talking about? Which topics are gaining traction? On which platforms?

If you recall from earlier, we talked about the importance of knowing *where* to reach your target audience. In the same spirit, it's a mistake not to know *what* to share with them. And, taking this a step further (to combine the two considerations), you should have a plan in place for *where* you share *what*. Make sense? If not, think about it this way:

Your prospective patients might prefer to read about lighter topics via specific social media platforms, while perhaps they would rather read educational material on your blog.

15. What is the quality of your content? What level of engagement is it inspiring?

The simple truth of the matter is that your content will shape and influence how others—including your target market—perceive you and your practice. If for no other reason, that means your content needs to be of the highest quality.

Looking beyond the obvious here (your writing needs to be grammatically sound and free of errors), you should be inspiring a high level of engagement with your brand. The best situation is when your stuff is so good that people cannot wait to share it with

16. How much of your featured content is your own? Or are you reprinting or otherwise piggy-backing on someone else's content?

Hopefully your answers here are that your featured content is all yours and you're not piggy-backing! There are several excellent reasons for this, but (for the sake of brevity) let's highlight three major ones:

- 1) Google frowns *heavily* upon duplicate content—and they're constantly checking.
- 2) Writing your own pieces of content allows you to better establish your authority and expertise in podiatry.
- 3) A big part of your brand is your "voice," and borrowed content simply won't have it.

17. Where do you rank (especially in comparison to your competition) in search results for different keywords?

Your ranking in search results has a direct connection to the success of your digital marketing plan. Remember, your website is actually the keystone in your marketing—the ultimate tool to convert visitors to patients. But, much like a hammer lying on a bench, it's not providing a whole lot of value unless it's in use...and it's not being used if it's not being found!

But if you are ranking well, that doesn't mean you can just kick back. Rather, think of this like the childhood game "king of the hill": your competition is trying to take over your position and you need to hold your ground.

18. What social media profiles do you have? What's the size of your communities on the different channels?

Love it or hate it, social media ain't going anywhere. It will remain a popular way to stay connected with family, friends, and even brands. And, if you do your social media right, one of those brands could be your practice's. But what's the benefit of minding your social media accounts? Easy—growing your social community gives your brand optimal reach within your target market.

19. What's the level of your engagement? What are you talking about?

It's one thing to have a Facebook account for your practice, and quite another to actively use it. See, you can have all the social media accounts possible—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.—but it won't make one iota of difference for your practice if you don't engage on a regular basis.

And here's the thing about that—you don't need to spend countless hours writing Shakespearean posts to see a healthy ROI. That brings us back to the second question because *what* you talk about is a hundred times more important than how long (or short) are your posts.

20. Did you join or drop out of any new social media channels in the past year?

If you want your marketing plan to be successful, you need a firm grasp on exactly what you have with regard to social media profiles. Having long-forgotten accounts—that people can (and will!) still find—is detrimental to the consistent branding you're looking to establish. At the same time, newer accounts require a fair amount of finesse and understanding of best current practices in social media marketing.

21. What is your blogging frequency? Do you run more than one blog? If so, how have you segmented your blogs?

Part of your practice's marketing strategy will be centered on how often you update your blog(s). And, as with knowing what you have in the social media world, you need to be certain as to what's happening on the blogging front. This includes matters like how often you post new content, who is the intended audience, and what kind of action you're trying to influence.

(As you might expect, this all becomes a bit more complicated when you have more than one blog!)

22. Have you introduced any new tactics in the distribution of your content? For example, have you increased or decreased how much content is gated?

Earlier, we noted the importance of knowing where your content is hosted. In a similar vein, your marketing strategy needs to establish how it's being distributed, and part of this is identifying both your current and ideal distribution channels.

23. Have you started running paid ads for your content, where before you only ran them for your services (and perhaps in-office products) or brand?

Online ads don't only have to be for products and services. The information your content provides should have enough value that you can use compelling ads to draw in new audiences and site visitors.

Don't forget—online ads are highly effective (and often deliver impressive ROI). That should make sense since the ads are specifically targeted to an audience that has shown explicit interest, instead of merely listening to the radio or watching television at a random time.

24. How sophisticated are you in marketing technology? What marketing tools are you using?

Sure, there's a certain amount of digital marketing you can do by using very basic technology. For even better results, however, you will want to use advanced technological tools...for the creation, implementation, automation, and monitoring of all marketing elements.



So, What's Next?

Now that you have the questions you need to ask (and taken the time to answer them!) what are your next steps?

Fill out your:

- Competitor index
- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) worksheet
- List of competitor keywords
- Keyword analysis sheet

And audit your:

- Website (for SEO and performance)
- Email marketing
- Marketing content
- Social media marketing
- Online ads
- Graphics and visual branding
- Video performance

Does that sound like a lot? Well, it is—trust us, we create strategies for podiatrists like you all the time!—and you're not even done yet.

Marketing strategies aren't easy. But nothing worthwhile is easy. And your marketing is definitely more than "worthwhile." After all, we're talking about an investment you make in your practice.

Of course, there is some good news:

You don't have to do it by yourself!

(You can if you want to—but keep in mind it all takes away from time you could otherwise spend treating patients, managing your practice, relaxing with loved ones and friends...)



Get the Results You Want (Without the Headache)!

If you decide you want marketing that works for you and your practice—but would prefer to leave all the work for someone else—give us a call.

We've been able to help hundreds of podiatrists, and we're more than happy to do the same for you.

You can have our podiatry marketing experts develop and implement a strategy to bring in more of the patients you want to see and help you achieve your practice goals. Please feel free to contact us for more information by calling (833) 823-3335 or filling out the contact form on our website.