

Leveraging Technology for Practice Momentum

SONIA CHOPRA, DDS
BALLANTYNE ENDODONTICS

In the years since Dr. Sonia Chopra first founded Ballantyne Endodontics, she has seen it blossom into a highly successful practice, serving patients throughout the Charlotte, NC, area. Part of the reason for the practice's success is Dr. Chopra's passionate belief in the power of practice marketing. Her



philosophy of promotion is based on wisdom she received from a mentor years ago: *Imagine you are opening a new office across the street from yourself. How would you reinvent yourself to put your old self out of business?*

Game-Changing Practice Marketing

This bold approach to practice marketing means taking a look at all the ways one can differentiate oneself. Often that entails integrating new technology into the practice, which creates a new opportunity to get out in front of the public and steer the conversation toward your practice. Paradoxically, though, as more practices incorporate incrementally better technology, the playing field becomes level once again. It can take a true breakthrough to deliver a truly lasting advantage.

In 2012, for example, Dr. Chopra was among the first endodontists in her area to use cone-beam technology, and for a long time, she had a competitive edge as she educated her patients and referring practices. Now, cone-beam technology has become so common that it is no longer as meaningful to patients, and the playing field is once again leveled. "The general dentists have a cone-beam,"

she says, "all my neighboring endodontists have a cone-beam; even the corporate offices have a cone-beam. The public really doesn't know the difference if you have one or if you know how to use it."

The public's familiarity with standard root canal treatment (RCT) can also be a challenge for endodontists. Dr. Chopra believes that, to the general public, "a root canal is a root canal is a root canal." As a result, they may not fully realize the higher level of treatment endodontists can provide over general dentists who may also offer some form of root canal treatment.



Sonia Chopra, DDS

Dr. Chopra believes this can be countered when endodontists band together with a common message about the advantages of endodontics. "I want endodontists to look at one another not as competitors, but as collaborators," she says. "I want us to flip our mindset a little bit and realize that the majority of patients are being treated by general dentists and the big

corporate offices.” For Dr. Chopra, that means presenting endodontics as a unique discipline; one that provides its service at a level that others simply cannot match.

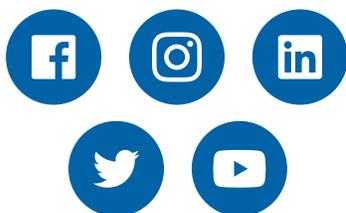
“I want endodontists to look at one another not as competitors, but as collaborators.”

In 2018, Dr. Chopra set her practice apart with the GentleWave® System from Sonendo®. The GentleWave System uses broad-spectrum acoustics and fluid dynamics¹ to safely and effectively deliver a powerful vortex of cleaning fluids throughout the entire root canal system.^{1,2} Through its breakthrough mechanism of action, the GentleWave System effectively cleans throughout the complex anatomies of the root canal system,^{1,2} removing tissue, debris, biofilm and bacteria² from even the most complex anatomies.^{1,2}

With her new technology in place, Dr. Chopra says she has “the perfect trifecta. We have the microscope, we have the cone-beam and we have the GentleWave System. We are almost superhuman. We can do heroics for our patients!”

Social Media: The New Channels for Practice Marketing

In order to spread the word about her practice’s incredible range of capabilities, Dr. Chopra relies heavily on online marketing, specifically Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn—or as she calls them, “your news channels; your ABC, NBC and CBS. This is really where all your patients are hanging out.” While each of them can be an invaluable aid in reaching patients, they have different demographics and need to be approached in different ways to achieve optimal impact.



Facebook’s audience is generally older than those of other social media platforms, and patient reviews are

prominently featured in these ads. According to Dr. Chopra, Facebook gives her practice an opportunity to directly target individuals who search for root canal treatments in the Charlotte area. Sonendo helps make these specialized campaigns simpler by providing a wide range of content for practices to showcase the GentleWave Procedure. In addition to this focused content, Dr. Chopra’s team takes time to create posts that are specific to Ballantyne Endodontics. “We try to keep it light,” she says. “We show the faces of our practice, and we show the value we add for our patients, like decreased post-operative pain and single-visit endodontics.”

Instagram attracts a somewhat younger demographic. “It’s where your millennials are hanging out,” Dr. Chopra says, “and a study just came out that says they only brush their teeth once a day, so they’re a perfect audience for you.” Instagram offers an opportunity to spotlight referring practices and team members, as well as a highly cost-effective way to drive traffic to your practice’s website.

Instagram and other social media platforms enable companies to develop targeted ad campaigns aimed at specific demographics, including geographic region. In one social media campaign, Dr. Chopra says, “we reached over 7,200 people—in my town, not in the world. I only spent about 66 cents per click; typically, people using Google Ads are going to spend two to three dollars per click. In total, I only spent about \$120 on the campaign, and well over 100 people called my office. Amazing!”



As a professional networking site, LinkedIn can be, as Dr. Chopra says, “a little more stuffy and serious.” LinkedIn has especially helped her as she hires new team

members, and it's an ideal place to post more scientific-based evidence about the efficacy of the GentleWave System. With referring practices and prospective patients taking advantage of the LinkedIn platform, it offers an excellent venue to promote the new technology—such as the GentleWave System—that sets your practice apart.



Ultimately, the goal with online marketing is to steer traffic to your practice's website, where your contact information should be loud and clear at the top of the home page. Here, Dr. Chopra speaks from experience. "In 2015," she says, "I was doing no online marketing, and Google was barely a factor in my referrals. In 2018, Google was my #3 referrer. Without online marketing, I would be missing out on \$90,000 per year."

The GentleWave® System: Impressive ROI and VOI

The year 2018 was also when Dr. Chopra first integrated the GentleWave System into her practice, offering not only an additional peg on which to hang her practice marketing efforts, but also transformative technology that dramatically impacted her practice revenues. "I'm now more confident providing single-visit endo for my retreat patients," she says. "My practice was primarily single-visit for the initial therapies; for retreatments, it was two visits—sometimes three. Depending on the month, that was about 30% to 50% of my schedule. With the GentleWave System, all my cases have become single-visit. In January 2019, we saw a 43% increase in production over January 2018, and both GentleWave Systems paid for themselves after six months."

Beyond an impressive ROI, Dr. Chopra also talks about the benefits of VOI: Value of Investment. "I see it," she says, "when I'm making post-operative calls to my patients—they're not in pain anymore. I haven't prescribed a narcotic in six months, and I've only prescribed antibiotics

occasionally for pre-operative swelling. I'm no longer contributing to the opioid epidemic in this country, and that's huge to me. It also means that people aren't flooding my office, coming in between visits, and they're not calling me after hours or on weekends, so I can spend more time with what matters most—my family."

*"Don't find customers for your products;
find products for your customers."*

- Seth Godin

Marketing expert Seth Godin says, "Don't find customers for your products; find products for your customers." In doing so, a practice can reinvent itself. That's a message Dr. Chopra has taken to heart. As she says, "the GentleWave System has been my most recent reinvention. With this breakthrough technology, the playing field is once again no longer level."



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¹ Vandrangi P et al. (2015) Oral Health 72-86

² Molina B et al. (2015) J Endod. 41:1701-5

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