

10

Ways to Build Trust with Your Patients on Social Media

In a perfect world, we could all just say “Here’s what I do and here’s who it’s for. Book an appointment if you want to,” and all the right people who need our services would make an appointment. However, most of us have become cyber savvy and very skeptical.

Instead of trying to sell your services through social media, focus on building a dialogue that leads to a trusting relationship with the public and with your colleagues.

Here are 10 ways to start to build trust with your patients on social media.

Know how trustworthy you are and how you can improve. In the book, [*The Trusted Advisor*](#), David Maister, Charles Green and Rob Galford construct a way to measure trust based on the trust equation.

$$\text{Trustworthiness} = \frac{\text{Credibility} + \text{Reliability} + \text{Intimacy}}{\text{Self-Orientation}}$$

Credibility rates “what you say and how believable you are to others.”

Reliability measures “actions, and how dependable you appear.”

Intimacy considers “how safe people feel sharing with you.”

Self-Orientation refers to personal focus. Too much self focus will lower your trustworthiness.

Assessing your own trustworthiness is subjective but done in the spirit of self-improvement, it can be an informative experience. You can take the trust quotient assessment [here](#) for free. There are 20 questions and will take about 5 minutes. At the end of the assessment you will be given your score and told your greatest strength (mine was intimacy) - you can pay to get your full report.



Choose a platform where you know your patients hang out. (All statistics were taken from the [Pew Research Center](#)).



72% of adult Internet users
62% of entire adult population

Facebook continues to have the highest number of users among all social media platforms. There is a good chance that many of your patients have a Facebook profile. There are two options to engage with your patients on Facebook:

1. Create a professional [Facebook profile](#). The Facebook profile is what you get when you sign up for Facebook. If you already have a Facebook profile, keep your personal Facebook profile and make a new one that is clearly professional by adding ‘Physiotherapist’ next to your name.
2. Create a [Facebook page](#) - a business account that represents your clinic or yourself as an independent contractor. A Facebook page allows you to share content, promote specials and business information with those who have “liked” your page.



23% of adult internet users
20% of entire adult population

While these numbers look small, they are significant. Twitter has become the go-to-source for news. As Dwight from the TV series the Office [explains](#), Twitter is like an amoeba of news. Start using Twitter by following [these](#) instructions.



28% of adult internet users
24% of entire adult population

Instagram users tend to be younger (18-29 year olds) so this may be a good channel for you if you tend to see younger patients and you enjoy taking pictures. Instagram is a social media platform where you share pictures and write a short description. If you want to learn more and how you can get started, check out this beginner's guide [here](#).



25% of adult internet users
22% of entire adult population

LinkedIn is most popular among professional, working-age adults and university students. According to the [This is PT Now](#) study, LinkedIn is the most popular social media platform among physiotherapists in Ontario. It is particularly useful for connecting with colleagues and potential employers. You will find your patients on LinkedIn as well, but they are often on this platform to connect with their colleagues and employers; however, they may be following businesses and reading the LinkedIn articles which are growing in popularity and can be published by anyone. Find out how you can jump on LinkedIn [here](#) and some useful tips to get started [here](#).



Create a meaningful experience on the social media networks you choose to be apart of.

More is not necessarily better. It is more useful to your patients to choose one or two networks and engage on them regularly. Just because a practitioner or organization has a Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts doesn't mean they're building a meaningful experience for their patients.



Show your personality, be authentic.

Be human, because you're dealing with humans. Have emotions, empathy and understanding just like you do in clinic. Your online voice should be no different.



Learn to highlight the positive and manage the negatives.

Just like you should show your human side online, other will too. This can come in the form of positive reviews of your service and sometimes poor reviews. Whether these are true or not, these can damage your reputation. Take it as an opportunity to respond and mitigate the situation instead of ignoring it. Others can see how you respond online so it's helpful to heal with the situation in a timely, respectable manner.



Don't just create content, create relevant content.

There's no substitute for high quality content, even on social media. There are millions of social media profiles and accounts bombarding your patients with content. In order to stand out and be trusted, provide consistent quality.



Focus on content that answers readers' questions

Keep a document shared between practitioners in your clinic with frequently asked questions from patients and potential patients. Create your posts around the answers to these questions. Patients will identify with this content and it will help convey that you listen and understand what they want to know about you/your clinic.



Let your patients know you care for others.

Demonstrating social responsibility helps your patients know that you aren't only interested in gaining new patients and referrals, but that you're also interested in giving back to your community. Social media platforms can help spread this message.



Follow and follow back.

Social media is a two way street and it's important to show interest in what your patients, other practitioners and healthcare organizations are talking about. When someone follows you or likes your page, do the same in return.



Engage in a fun way.

Social media is informal by nature. Enjoy the interactions that you have with your patients online and notice if it changes the interactions you have with them in clinic. Share their joy, enjoy their events and create content that suits their mood. Even when you're posting knowledge based content (for example, how to do eccentric calf raises), share it in a variety of interactive forms like images, videos and infographics.

Trust is essential to developing relationships with our patients in the clinic and online. Start building trust today with your patients by deciding on **one new social media** platform where you would like to engage with patients.

Once you've established yourself on a new social media platform or have updated information on an existing platform (if you feel like you've reached your social media limit), find **healthSwapp** and say hi! We love hearing from the physiotherapy community. Give us a 'like' or 'follow' on any of the following platforms:



<https://www.facebook.com/healthSwapp/>



<https://instagram.com/healthswapp>



<https://twitter.com/healthswapp>



<https://linkedin.com/company/HealthSwapp>



Maggie B.
healthSwapp

Maggie is a physiotherapist in Toronto and the co-founder of **healthSwapp**. In her clinical practice she provides one-on-one care and uses a variety of tools and techniques to educate, treat and create value for all of her patients. She built healthSwapp to complement clinical sessions by improving the education process and to demonstrate to patients that we have the knowledge and skills to assist them on their journey. Dr. Google may provide the initial diagnosis but we should have the last word.