

Social Media Best Practices

Social media is a public platform with high visibility. It gives us the opportunity to connect with people instantly and directly, but it can also have negative consequences. Every interaction, negative or positive, can be seen by reporters, critics, skeptics, and clients. It is important to consider the impact of our actions on social media and conduct ourselves accordingly.

Benefits of Social Media

Increase awareness of your business and attract potential clients

If no one knows who you are or where to find you, it will be difficult to maintain an active client base. According to a report by Statista, there were approximately 25.3 million social media users in Canada in 2018, and that number is projected to grow. That's 25.3 potential users of chiropractic – but they need to find your business in order to make the first call. Social media is a great place to reach people who could use your services.

Tip: Create a Facebook page for your business and make sure to fill out the About section with your location, hours, and contact information.

Build trust in the profession and humanize yourself

It's no secret that the chiropractic profession is in need of more trust from the general public. Oftentimes, people don't realize that healthcare professionals like chiropractors are people, too – ones that want to help improve quality of life, decrease pain, and improve mobility. Social media is the best place to deliver patient-centered, evidence-based information and show people a human side to your business.

Tip: Tell your followers something personal about yourself on social media, or post pictures of you and your colleagues out in the community. This will show that you are more than a business, you're a human!

Improve customer support and make it easier for clients to make an appointment

According to the Statista report, users spend roughly 136 minutes on social media per day. That's just over two hours. Many people go to social media to talk about their experiences (positive or negative) and that makes it more important for you to be available for customer support. You can even grow your business through social media, by giving clients the option to book appointments directly through Facebook or Instagram.

Tip: Set up your social media profiles with the option to **Book Now** so patients don't have to call the office to make an appointment – you'll be amazed at how many people will take advantage of this option.

Learn more about your customers/patients

People reveal a lot about themselves and their interests on social media. Perhaps your target clientele are middle-aged parents who spend their time picking up their kids, doing groceries, and cleaning the house. Or maybe your business is in an urban center and your clients spend their time walking to work and standing in boardrooms, giving presentations. In both cases, MSK pain makes it difficult to get through the day. If you know who your target audience is and what their needs are, you can communicate in a way they understand.

Tip: Spend time engaging with your followers on social media. Once you know how they spend their time and what they enjoy doing, you can create simple posts that show how chiropractic can help. Canva.com is a great tool for people who don't have graphic design experience.

Drawbacks of Social Media

Anything you post online is considered public (even if you delete it)

Once you post something online, you no longer own it. Even if you're posting on a private account, one of your followers can screenshot what you write and post it somewhere public. Be mindful of everything you post online and always err on the side of caution. Be professional.

Tip: Review every post to ensure compliance with your provincial regulatory scope of practice. If it's in breach of compliance or out-of-scope, don't post it.

The line between professional and personal is blurred

As a healthcare professional who provides a service to the public, people don't distinguish between your personal views and your professional views. Whatever you say online can be quoted back to your professional opinion and the chiropractic profession (especially by reporters).

Tip: Avoid posting opinions online and stick to facts that you can support. Before you post, ask yourself how a critic or skeptic of chiropractic could critique you and the profession.

Your reputation depends on your behaviour online

With all its benefits, social media is also a breeding ground for debate (especially Twitter). Critics, skeptics, reporters, and unhappy customers will often take to social media to spark a conversation and advance an agenda, but you don't have to engage in that behaviour. It goes back to points one and two above: whatever you say online is public and will reflect on your professional brand.

Tip: Just because someone tries to engage you in a negative conversation, doesn't mean you have to respond. Avoid heated debates and, when in doubt, contact the CCA for help in navigating the situation.

Social media is a wonderful tool for awareness, engagement, and business growth. But it can also damage your personal and professional reputation if you're not mindful of your behaviour. Here are a few guiding questions to keep in mind before you post anything online:

1. Is this the stick by which I want to be measured? If the answer is *No*, don't post it.
2. Is this post fact or opinion? If it's an opinion, is it out of scope of professional practice or in violation of provincial regulations?
3. If a reporter sees this post, could it reflect negatively on the chiropractic profession/decrease trust?

The CCA is always here to help. If you're unsure of what to post online or need support with a specific situation, don't hesitate to reach out. We're all in this together.

CONTACT

marcom@chiropractic.ca

Tel: 416-585-7902

Toll-Free: 1-877-222-9303

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/260710/number-of-social-network-users-in-canada/>

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/433871/daily-social-media-usage-worldwide/>