

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman



Full Episode Transcript

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Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](http://www.DentistFreedomBlueprint.com) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

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You are listening to the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast, with David Phelps and Evan Harris. Navigating you through the uncharted waters of a turbulent economy with straight-forward advice to, transform your practice into a self-sufficient cash machine, compound your net worth assets, and multiply, multiply, multiply your passive cash flow streams.

David: Hey everyone, this is Dr. David Phelps. I think you'll really enjoy today's podcast interview as my cohort, Mr. Evan Harris, interviews Mr. Lou Getman, the director of the western region of Progressive Dental, a firm that is focused on strategic marketing and practice development for dentists only. Listen in as Evan and Lou talk specifically about marketing tactics versus strategy, how you can differentiate yourself in today's crazy and busy marketplace, and finally, how do you convert leads to raving patients, raving fans. I think you'll really enjoy this podcast.

Evan: Podcast listeners, this is Evan Harris, and I have a guest on the show today whose name is Lou, and he is a director of the western region of Progressive Dental. Why I have him on the line is, I've been finding that a lot of my practices are wanting new patients, they want to grow. Unfortunately, they're not entirely equipped to do so. They do some components, they do mailer, they do some email type blast, they do some website work, but for some reason it feels very disconnected, almost as though we've got ortho not talking to general, and general not talking to the oral surgeon. It just seems like there's lot of parts and pieces that my doctors are coming to me about, asking how they all integrate, and then, how do we even get them to become a patient, in the door itself?

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

Lou, I want to be able to have you be able to explain a little bit about yourself, how you get into this industry, and maybe what sets you and your company apart.

Lou: Thank you, Evan. Progressive Dental Marketing is a very interesting company, and it actually is a very fortuitous set of events that landed me there. I've been in the dental industry for a long time. I used to own and manage a chain of dental imaging centers across the United States and Canada. I did everything from site selection, hiring, managing, installing the equipment, and learning how to market those facilities.

Throughout the years having started there, I've working with Nobel Biocare, the largest implant company. I've worked in laser a little bit. I've always worked in dental, but I love building dental practices. Progressive Dental Marketing is a very interesting company, because they focus on putting together a strategic plan for dentists, to help them accomplish a goal. Like you said, whether it be just to get patients in the door, whether it be to change the type of practice that they have, to attract a new type of patient via a new technology, laser, implant, serax, something of that nature, or if they just want to change their lifestyle.

Meaning, sometimes we have doctors who have successful practices, and they want to maintain their income, but maybe work a day less. We help build strategic plans to get more with less, so to speak.

Evan: It sounds much different than a lot of the marketing people I see out there. It seems like a lot of the marketing people have a one tool type bag, where they are the SEO experts, or they are the mailer people. How do you balance the many disciplines that can go into a successful marketing campaign?

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

Lou: That is the question, and what you were talking about as far as mailers or SEO, there is always the desire, especially with the new practice, or a practice that is desiring to grow, to employ some type of a tactic to bring in patients, and that's what those are. We want to be a strategist. We don't want to do tactics. Tactics are those individual items where we do SEO. We do a mailer. We do a magazine campaign. We do a grocery store advertisement.

Typically what happens is, it's not part of a strategic plan. Marketing has to be over time, with a tweaking of the message to get it right.

We focused on designing a plan based on the practices, goals, and then implementing the tactics necessary to achieve that goal. You will never get a call from somebody at Progressive Dental, trying to sell you a website or a mailing campaign. We get almost all of our business from joint ventures with laser companies, implant companies, serax, things of that nature, because there's the doctors who want to improve the practice, who are going to continuing education, who sit down "Ah-ha! I now want to incorporate a new technology in my practice. I want to have a focus message." That's kind of how we go about it.

Evan: Well, that seems completely different than what I've seen out there. That's what really drew me to you when I heard you speak at that meeting. It just sounded like you do things, I would say, more like a dentist. But, you look at the entire case rather than just one tooth that's having an issue. I feel like you look at the both arches, you look at all the quadrants, you look at the inclusion, you look at the any kind of sinus issues. It's more of a comprehensive doctor rather than just a tooth fixer.

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

Lou: You know what? That's a great analogy, Evan, because when you get a patient into your office, as a dentist, and you want to do a treatment plan, you have to do a complete analysis, not of the tooth that may be the issue, but the entire dentition and the entire health of the patient, right? No doctor is going to move forward without that. That's typically what we do. When we present our strategic plan, it's basically a treatment plan of getting you to where you want to go, and there may be an A, B, and a C option depending on a lot of factors, including budget.

Evan: Indeed.

Now that brings up a topic. The budget topic. I've heard of the doctor that has his patient do a website for trade, they do a couple of crowns, and they're going to get a free website. In my experience, Lou, it just hasn't turned out the way the doctor wants or maybe the website's created and then to update it, they've got to try to chase down this patient. It even creates kind of a frictional relationship where the patient ends of leaving the practice.

What's your experience been, both with those types of relationships. Kind of touch on the budgetary topic a little bit.

Lou: Well, first of all, if a doctor does need a new website, okay, it is so important that it is built correctly because that's not a place where you want to try and save a few dollars. The way a website is architected, with all the proper tags and all the backbone you'll never see, to be correctly built, is absolutely critical. If not, you're constantly repairing, modifying, and bandaging a system that really wasn't built to be equipped properly to do everything that you want to do going down the road because the website's going to be the foundational piece, no matter what you do.

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

Even if it's not internet marketing, if you do anything, external marketing at all, people will always--first thing, search, y'know, the website. So it's got to be built correctly and all of ours we have everything in house. We have a complete team, they do Microsoft DNS websites with all the proper tagging so all the architecture is done right. Plus, we have a department totally dedicated to unique content and that's another thing that is absolutely key because you cannot have duplicate content on your site or you're going to have a problem with rankings. That's the starting point and it's absolutely critical.

As far as budget, y'know, we're probably not that much more expensive for a website in itself than what you may pay at your gym to do it. It's absolutely key and it's the value built in because everything else is going to come back to it.

Evan: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah I see that.

It sounds to me that before you even present a treatment plan, you're gathering a lot of records. Can you kind of share, even if it's not your company that's going to be doing the gathering of the records, can you show with our practicing professionals, let's say they knew of a great company in their neighborhood, or they wanted to even reach out to you, what things would you want them to think about or what things would you be looking at within their practice, so that you could even have a guess as to the treatment plan you had present.

Lou: Well, let's just take an example, okay? You touched on it a little bit, Evan, when you said there are companies that are just selling a particular portion of a plan. Whether it be a mailer, SEO, whatever it is. How can you sell something that's a templated item, let's say, let's take an example. What do you think the radius of marketing would have to be for a dentist in

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

downtown Manhattan? How far are people going to go for a specialized procedure in Manhattan? What do you think?

Evan: I'd love to be optimistic, but, Lou, I've got to say, there's a whole lot of mileage range there. So, how about, I'll be conservative and say one mile.

Lou: You know what? That's very good! That's probably about as far as they would go.

Now, what about somewhere outside of Des Moines, Iowa or San Antonio, Texas, out in the suburbs a little bit. I've got a person that's outside of Charleston. How far do you think people would drive for a specialized procedure in that scenario?

Evan: A whole lot further, I'm guessing that they're going to find the doctor that really meets their needs and they may not even have a doctor that's within a half an hour of them, anyways. I'm guessing they're really going to [inaudible 00:10:12] search really, really tightly.

Lou: Exactly. In some instances, we are pushing out our marketing radius to 30, 40 or 50 miles. My point is, how can you build a marketing campaign that would be the same for both of those doctors. You can't. The key is we focus on doing our due diligence before we put together a plan. What's the area look like? What's the competition look like? What's the population look like? What does this particular practice look like? What are the goals of this practice? What are the marketing tactics that might work particularly well in this particular market?

We do a complete analysis of all of those things, even if a doctor doesn't move forward with us, we end up educating them quite extensively on things they may have not known or weaknesses that they may not have been aware of. Especially

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

when it comes to internet searches. There's just so much confusion about what SEO is and what goes on as far as a Google search. Typically, we're able to enlighten them a little bit and if they want to go do something on their own or with somebody else, at least they are aware of pitfalls and the proper questions to ask.

Evan: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I appreciate you touching on the Google searches. That's something that I do get asked about and I see these people promising that the doctor will be on the first page of a Google search. Can you touch on how important it is to be on the first page, for maybe, their name versus someone that says 'aesthetic dentistry' or 'cosmetic dentistry'? What do you find to be the best way to know how the client is to be portrayed on the web?

Lou: Well, that's an interesting question because in SEO, even if somebody was able to get you a first page ranking, if they're not able to drive patients to you, what's the point of being there? So there's a couple of different parts to doing internet marketing. It's having the visibility. What we call visibility is high-ranking, and make sure you're being brought up on all the proper searches, whether it be dental implants, missing teeth, gum treatment, laser gum treatment, one-day crowns, whatever it is, you want to make sure that whoever is searching for whatever it is you highlight, they're going to find you.

I can't tell you how many times, Evan, when I Google a doctor, they may be in a town, just pick a town within a town, like Glendale, California or Simi Valley, which is part of a larger area. If you don't come up in a search in your own little town, well certainly you're not coming up on a search of a greater area. There's a lot of work that's got to be done to create the right message, differentiate you from the crowd.

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

Let's talk about general dentists. If you're a general dentist and somebody just Googles 'general dentist Encinitas, California', what are they going to see on the listing page? They're going to see six or seven practices. How do you separate yourself from all of those other dentists on that page? That's what we specialize in. One of the things we specialize in is how working toward grabbing more of the real estate on that page with an impactful message and more listing items than just the domain of the practice itself. There's a lot of things that we can do via YouTube, via press releases, and via other items that can be brought up in a search.

Evan: Okay, I like it. I had a doctor that just recently, I would say in August, had one of his best months ever, when a lot of my practices were really slow. Even the neighboring practice was super slow. I went to the doctor and I said, "What are you doing right now that's enabling all these new patients to come flowing in?" I think he got 32 new patients, and he says, "Evan, it's not what I did this month. It's not what I did last month. It's what I did two months ago that I'm experiencing today."

The reason I mentioned that is the doctor began to make a shift, really the shift started about six months ago, he said, is when he began to look at his practice in a way of, how would a patient find him and why would a patient choose him? When the patient chooses to call, how are the steps laid out to welcome them to become a patient of record? That was six months just when he became to look at it, kind of doing a deep dive, gathering the team together in a huddle and then they began to put things in place. Then the marketing piece, that like you do, began two months and they really didn't see a whole lot of change in that first month but then it began to come in and come in and come in. Now it's an avalanche of flow that really they're now able to take a look at some insurance plans, that

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

they're thinking just dropping entirely because there's so much abundance that's coming through

Can you touch on what you see as, kind of something to be expected when they put in action, when can they start seeing reaction in the form of flow of new patients and other benefits?

Lou: Well, that is dependent upon their situation, their current website, if we have to develop a new website, whatever. If they've got a good website that is not templated, that we just need to maybe add unique content to, we can start doing things that generate patients immediately. If we have to build a website, obviously, that takes time. One of the things you touched on is the success he had. Obviously, this particular doctor we're talking about had a targeted message and it's so important because there are so many websites that really aren't targeting a certain demographic or client base or patient base. It's basically a dissemination of information.

When you go to a website that's just, "Here's who I am and here's my practice," and it's just a lot of text on one page [crosstalk 00:16:00], that's not how people use the internet. They want something that's attractive to the eye that conveys a message quickly and gives them the information that they want. It's not only the backbone of the website that you don't see, but it's the content that you do see that drives behavior, it's very important.

In addition to that, you piqued me on one thing here. What was I going to say about ... focusing on ...

The type of practice. I guess the message there is, if you don't know what you're trying to attract for, your message may become somewhat confusing, and I don't think that's uncommon.

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

Evan: Mm-hmm (affirmative), I agree. Okay, we've got three minutes left. I'd also like to leave the listeners here with something also tangible. I find that people do lots of marketing, phones ringing, but things are not translating to new patients. In your own experience, what may be the one or two things that they're doing their sabotaging? The money is going out, they're catching fish, but they're not bringing them aboard. What do you see as the number one or two things that are keeping them from experiencing the financial abundance from these patients' responses?

Lou: Well, let's just say you did everything correctly as far as a website, your marketing, you're attracting the patient you want. Let's just say you wanted more large cases, large fee cases. That's, like you said, you had a client that wants to get off of insurance and you're attracting those patience, okay? The phone is ringing. Well now, is the staff properly trained and absolutely capable and ready to deal with those types of patience? Because if you've been dealing strictly with insurance patience and all of a sudden you're now dealing with high-fee, big cases. There's a different psychology, which we deal with. We teach certain psychology [inaudible 00:18:28] to deal with when dealing with phone calls coming in.

One of our big, big features is to make sure the staff; especially those answering the phone are trained correctly on how to bring those people into the office for the consultation. If you do everything right and get the phone to ring, but you scare, and I'll use the word 'scare', scare the patient because either you're quoting fees on the phone, you're not handling them correctly, then all is for not. When we put together our plan, that internal marketing and that training piece is so key to what we do, we actually spend many weeks preparing the staff if we're building

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

a new website, so when the website is up and we launch the marketing campaign, the staff is ready to handle.

It's a complete package of internal, external; everybody is on the same page. I'll give you a for instance. We do call tracking, like a lot of companies do, but we do it to make sure when our account managers are in contact with our clients, and we set up those calls on a as regular basis as the doctor wants. We actually have had calls where somebody called in from far away, which means the marketing worked because they're not in a real dense area, and we had recently had a receptionist tell a patient that they might find this service closer to home. Well, I don't know if the doctor would really appreciate that after spending a lot of money to get that phone to ring.

So the key, Evan, is there's a lot as far as bringing that whole aspect of internal and external marketing together.

Evan: And you even track that, that's impressive. Lou, tell the audience, please, if they want more information, if they want to get in touch with you or ask questions, what is the best way to do so?

Lou: Well, two things. If they want to go to OUR website, it is progressivedentalmarketing.com and if they want to get ahold of me, it's Lou, L-O-U, @progressivedentalmarketing.com (lou@progressivedentalmarketing.com).

Evan: Lou, I appreciate you being on the podcast today. Audience if you are listening to us on iTunes, please Like us, please leave a review, so we can be able to add more content that you want. If there are issues in your practice that you want resolved, let us know. We can be able to find a specialist that can talk to that issues and become even more relevant. My co-host David Phelps will be on a call next time as we are two men on a

Ep #35: How to Build and Execute a Solid Marketing Plan for Your Practice with Lou Getman

mission to help practice professionals grow and have the lifestyle of their dreams.

Thank you, Lou!

You've been listening to another episode of the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast with David Phelps and Evan Harris. The place to be to create your freedom lifestyle with more time off, security and peace of mind. Please subscribe, download the podcast, and share it with others who want to create real freedom in their lives and practices.