

Ep #110: Optimizing Your Marketing Platform with Grace Rizza



Full Episode Transcript

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Dr. David Phelps

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

Ep #110: Optimizing Your Marketing Platform with Grace Rizza

Grace Rizza: It's a good balance. I'm happy with my life. I know that a lot of people have criticized me for what I do and how I travel. I think my success really comes from the fact that I don't care.

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

David Phelps: Good day everyone, this is Doctor David Phelps have the Freedom Founders Mastermind community and the Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast. Got a really fun episode and it's going to be, I think, a very intriguing guest interview today with someone but I really actually meeting or conversing with directly, for the first time, today. A little bit new to me but not new to me from the standpoint to what I know she is about. I'm not going to say I'm a stalker because I don't really stalk people in that sense. I follow people that I think bring real value, that are influential in helping our audience. Special practice owners, dentists, business owners in general to create better businesses, better practices, have more free time. How to do that, how to optimize what you already have in your life. Without further do, let me introduce my guest, the wonderful Grace Rizza. Grace, how are you doing today?

Grace Rizza: Hi. Very good, David. I'm excited to be here.

David Phelps: I'm really excited to have you here. We had a little chance to talk before we started this podcast and there were

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some things that I knew about you just from your Facebook come from your website that led me to believe certain things. You confirmed those and actually gave me some additional. First of all, let's talk about what you do. Let me give a little bit of your bio, here. I'm not going to read it word for word because I don't like to do that. Grace Rizza, I don't know how old you are, but I know you're very very young. You are very much younger than I am. You've got two girls. One and three. I know you graduated college in 2007. Just two years later, you started what is your current business, today, which is identitydental.com. You become, very quickly, I think very influential and prominent in the dental industry. I want you traveling all the time. You're speaking. You're international speaker.

You go to educate your audiences when you speak. Empower them and you entertain them. You show them how to achieve practice growth ethically and efficiently. You really challenge your audience, your dentist owners, to come to their own conclusions about what marketing solutions are right for their business. I see that you bring a very customized approach. It's not cookie-cutter. It's not one size fits all but you really like to engage with your clients and help them with where they are, where they want to go, and where best you can set in and help them optimize the practice in the assets and culture they already have. You started out, you told me actually initially in sales before you found a position with a multi-practice opportunity where you started marketing and tripled the number of the patrons were coming in to that practice in three short months. Same marketing budget that they had had all along.

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From there, you decide you would create a variety of sales focused training workshops you start attending lots of marketing seminars and literally just became obsessed with dental marketing and branding as a whole. You authored many articles. Recently, one in practice boosters insurance solutions. You have, really, with your innovation and everything marketing, as I said earlier, you've become a very prominent force. Let's talk a little bit about how this all started. You mentioned to me that you felt like it's been in your DNA. That God really had a place for you marketing. Talk to us a little bit about where that started.

Grace Rizza: Sure. I can remember my favorite advertisement on television. It was a Volkswagen ad. The screen and out and there was a grocery cart just hailing its way through a parking lot at a car. You hear the footsteps of the person running and they dive and tackle the grocery cart before it hits their car. Then the screen goes black and it just says Volkswagen owners love their car. I can remember that ad and I don't know when it came out. I was a kid. I was a very young kid. For me to be able to recall advertisements from my childhood to that level of detail, I've just always been obsessed with that. I've always been obsessed with influence and how people are influenced. How everything around you shapes who you are. The old nature versus nurture concept. It is powerful stuff that we're talking about here. It really is an obsession.

David Phelps: I love marketing. Marketing's something I didn't really become aware of and how it could ethically influence your patients, customers, clients in the right way versus just advertising, blasting stuff out there. Probably 10, 12 years ago, I really became a student myself. I really appreciate

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someone like you who is really a super fan and innovator in the space. Now, you also told me that you were initially pegged by people around you, teachers and parents and people., As actually someone who would be a great candidate for law school. You are heading that direction, right? How were you able to put the brakes on that and deviate from what everybody else said you probably should do because you have the skill set and the ability but you said, nope, not going to go that way. I'm going to follow this passion of mine. How did that come about?

Grace Rizza: I've always been one of those people that my family has always told me you're an old soul, you're an old soul. I think at a very young age, I learned to listen to my intuition and that inner voice. There's a bit of spirituality connected to that but learning to trust myself is something that I accomplished at a very young age. That works to my advantage. I was studying for the LSAT and was well equipped to go to law school and ready to do so. I remember sitting in the class and letting the instructor drawn on about something that was somewhat boring to me. I was actually drawing added concepts at the time. It hit me like a ton of bricks. I was just sitting there and I was thinking, oh my gosh, if I'm sitting here in this moment, and this is where my brain is that, I can't do this anymore. I quit the class immediately and decided that that was my calling.

David Phelps: That's a tough thing to do. To give yourself permission to actually follow what you know in your heart's true and defy the external forces out there. The agenda of other people may have your best interest at heart, but they don't know, and you didn't do that and actually made that shift. I think that's huge. Not a lot of people will do that. A

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lot of people just follow that path, whatever it is, and not knowing for many years that, maybe, that wasn't really what was in their heart. With two girls, one and three and a business that you started back in 2009, and again looking at your website page and looking at this ... You've got this team. You got this whole team. I know there's other support people even behind that. You're running a real business and you're out speaking. I know you've got a major conference this year. You're flying here and there. With two daughters, one and three, how are you making this happen?

Something missing here? Are you sacrificing for today to build something for the future and someday you'll just the annual spend time with your family? How do you make this work?

Grace Rizza: Oh gosh. It's going to sound really bad. It's going to sound really bad how I answer this question but it's really simple. I do what I want to do. I don't let the opinions of other people influence my life decisions. If I start to feel, in my heart, like I need more quality time with my kids like I did a couple of months ago, I literally up and left. I took them to Orlando for three weeks and planned some real quality time. I could tell you that I take my kids to play places and stuff where there's other moms there with their kids and they are there, they've been with the kids all day long. You know what, I think it's the hardest job on the planet and the most important job on the planet by the end of the day, they're just getting through. I'm there, rejuvenated because I miss them. It's a good balance. I'm happy with my life. I know that a lot of people have criticized me for what I do and how I travel.

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I think my success really comes from the fact that I don't care what they think. I live for myself and my family.

David Phelps: When you built something that gives you that flexibility and that freedom, I think that's the important thing. Too many people build something that requires their 110% attention and time. You've obviously build something you could do it. When you took your daughters to Orlando, I assume that's to Disney, right. Obviously, you got things working in your business so you don't have to necessarily be hands-on eight, 10, 12 hours a day like most small business entrepreneurs. That's got to be a key here. You built a team. I know there's got to be a culture of vision. You talk about that. I know that you look for that with your clients who have practices or businesses. They are trying to take the next step to break through the plateau that. You've done that with your business. That's why I pose the question. I know you travel a lot but I also know how important your family is to you. You built in this opportunity so you can create quality time whenever you feel like I needed, I wanted.

Right now, you can carve it out and make it happen and your business does not drop was a thought on the floor.

Grace Rizza: No, it doesn't. I don't have my business to the point where I'm completely hands-off. I'm actually very hands-on but my systems in my time management is insane. Everything is intentional. Everything is strategic. There is no part of my business but hasn't been really critically evaluated. I spent more time, now, working on the business and working in the business. That's been a revelation for me is realizing that.

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David Phelps: Yeah, you're very astute. One question I like to ask a lot of people that I think and figure this out, and yes, it's always evolving. In any business, you're always evolving to work more on the business been in it. In making that transition, you must have coaches or mentors that you look up to that help you. Is that true?

Grace Rizza: Actually, no.

David Phelps: No?

Grace Rizza: I am at the point where I'm looking for one. I'm looking to hire one very soon. I read a lot and I digest a lot of information all the time. I'll be on a plane I'll have an audible book playing at 1.5 speed and I'll just be cranking through information. I would say this brand doesn't really try not. That's really my challenge is getting that down.

David Phelps: Hard to go to sleep at night sometimes?

Grace Rizza: Sometimes, sometimes yes.

David Phelps: How about at home. This doesn't apply just at home. Think for people in their businesses. Same thing. A lot of us tend to be, and I'll just raise my hand and say I've been one of those and I'm always trying to work on this but, taking on responsibilities and tasks that, maybe, I feel guilty because I can just do it. I'm physically capable of doing it but it's below my pay grade. It's really below my time value because you just talked about quality of time. One of the ways I know that you create quality time is you're not afraid. You give yourself permission to do things. Again, other people, might say, "Oh my gosh. You don't do this and this for your family." Can you talk a little

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bit about that? I think that's an important area that a lot of people miss.

Grace Rizza: I would love to. I hope that the women are really listening to this because society puts a tire pressure on us to do everything for everyone. If you're like me, and pursuing business, and pursuing a career, you got to allow yourself to look beyond that societal pressure. For anyone that's listening, I'm proud to announce I haven't done laundry in three years. I don't do dishes. I don't cook. I don't dump all these responsibilities on my husband, either. I hire for the help that I need in a way that it makes sense. I'm sure several people have opinions on that and that's fine. It works for me. It creates a ton of time. When I got home from the office at five, I have quality time every single night with my family. I wouldn't have it any other way. Before I had someone that cooks for ... Now I have someone who cooks for my family but before I had that, I utilized Peapod, blue apron, all of the different apps and things that can really take some of that off your plate. There's different stages of automating the nominal tasks.

David Phelps: That's excellent. Good for you. Good for you for developing that mindset so early in life. I think it's very very important. Let's talk a little bit about the kind of clients, practice owners, that you work with. Just give our audience a little bit of a feel for is it all practice sizes and geographical locations, or is there some clients that you particularly like to work with? Give us some ideas on that.

Grace Rizza: I work with all different kinds of clients on many different levels of this business minded spectrum. Some of my clients I categorize is extremely business minded and some I categorize as less business minded but there's a

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lot of potential there. I guess it's really exciting for me when a new client that can talk to me exactly about return on investment, how many new patients they're seeing, and the effectiveness of different marketing campaigns, I get really excited because then I know we're going to be able to communicate and have the same expectations. It's just going to be easy. I also enjoy helping people who have no frame of reference, haven't been tracking, don't know where to start. I help bring them up to that level. Yeah, I work with people on all levels of the spectrum. That's how I categorize people in my mind, from 1 to 10, where are they on. How business minded are they?

David Phelps: Wherever they are on the spectrum, I think you said it well. If they're open, if there are open to be willing to gain more of a business mind, that you'll work with them, as well. Versus someone who, maybe, for whatever reason is just shut down on that and they just want to, quote, hire somebody, hire a firm, a company, to just, quote, give them new leads. Probably not your ideal client, correct?

Grace Rizza: No. Someone once asked me for a bid and I chuckled. I'm like, "I don't do bids." We're going to create a custom plan for you to reach your goals but first we need to talk about what your goals are. Yeah, it's a different mentality than a lot of the solutions that are currently available.

David Phelps: What's your intake process, if you will? Your interview process. Someone reaches out to you, they hear you speak, they go online and connect with you in Facebook communities and forums, go to your website whatever. They connect with you. What's the intake look like. Just give us some idea.

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Grace Rizza: Yeah, so there's always a reason that they're calling me. I'll start with that. What is it that you're looking to accomplish. What is it that you'd like to change. If they're open to explain that, then it's usually pretty easy from there. There's usually some change happening in their practice. Whether they're looking to retire in five years or they're looking at bringing and associate. We've had a lot of their children are graduating and they're bringing them into the practice and wanting to know how to build up new patient numbers to accommodate that. It's a lot of things. Sometimes it's we've got a lot of new patients but they're not our ideal new patients, so we'd like to attract a different kind of new patient. In order for me to create a marketing plan, I really need to know what it is on accomplishing, I'm looking to accomplish with the plan. I start there.

David Phelps: Good. You have different budgets based on what that practice looks like, what their ... New practice younger Doctor, versus a more established or multipractice. You basically customize based on what their goals are, their expectations, where they are, and what you see from a strategic overview of what you could help them with, is that fair to say?

Grace Rizza: That's very fair to say. I've had conversations with people and explain to them, if I don't recommend that you invest enough in this particular thing, maybe SEO or something like that, they don't have a high enough budget. We are really just going to load to appease their comfort zone, they are not going to get results in a short enough time. To where they're going to feel that it's worth it or that they can continue. There is a such thing is under budgeting. I'm more guilty of under budgeting then over budgeting

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because I'm always looking to get the new patient acquisition cost as low as possible. I have a more conservative approach to marketing than most people, primarily because I'm working with the less business minded people and they need actually to see the return on investment before the trust is there. So many of the people I work with have been ripped off or they have lost faith in marketing over the years.

I'm restoring their faith in something I know works but I have found a lot of success in doing that slowly and starting small and taking a small budget and turning it into showing a return on investment and then, they will naturally come back and say what else can we do. That's been very successful. I've been very successful with that.

David Phelps: A lot of business owners or practice owners seem to look for the bright and shiny object. Just give me the latest fad, the latest tactic, whatever they've heard up. You and I both know that there's not just one way to ... The next ideal, ideal set of patients that you want, you got to do multiple things. Not everything all at once, and certainly you can budget and you can strategize as to what things that give someone the most leverage for the dollar. The greatest return on investment based on the situation. My question to you is, as you're assessing a practice for a client to work with, there's a big difference, obviously, between marketing, which to me, and you can correct me if I'm wrong here because you're so much more the expert, but marketing, to me, is like lead generation. What the practice of the business does with those leads is very important to what the actual return on investment looks like. In other words, you can turn on the final based on what you do, Grace, and have lots of leads coming in

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through phone and you can do direct mail, and Facebook campaigns and forms.

All kinds, you could have a lot of leads coming in but what if the systems and the intake on the conversion process to sales, if you will, I'll just use that word sales in an ethical way, what if that's broken in the practice? How hard do you have to look at that and see where the brakes are? Because then, if you're able to turn on the marketing machine but the practice and the doctor aren't set up to convert the opportunity, then they are going to look back at you or anybody else and go, well that marketing, that didn't work. I just wasted my money. How do you keep that from happening?

Grace Rizza: It's pretty obvious to me when that's going to be the case. Even in my initial conversation, I asked the doctor if their team is equipped to convert. If they received formal sales training, and I'm not afraid to say the word sales. I think it's a great word. There is a function of marketing, though, beyond simply lead generation when you get into the depths of a brand. Connecting with people on a deeper level. There's a lot of marketing companies out there that promise ask amount of leads but then they're not quality leads because the branding isn't high quality. For instance, I could put up an ad today that says free dentistry and I could get you 30, quote unquote, leads and I could guarantee 30 leads tomorrow and you don't need to worry about it because I'm going to keep track with my special tracking number. I'm going to get you 30 guaranteed. At the end of the day, you're going to pay your team, you're going to pay the marketing company, and the leads are not going to be quality no matter how

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well-trained you are because the marketing message didn't match your goal.

To articulate how we are different, if I first understand your goal, the messaging is correct and it tees up the right kind of leads. Yeah, I could even hand-deliver the right new patients, and if the team is entrained properly, the conversion isn't there, none of it matters. It is all a process but when I call the doctor on the phone and the front desk goes, "dental office," I know there's a problem there. That's why I recommend, of course, that they also look at these other things.

David Phelps: If the doctor has the right mindset but that's what you see on the face of the practice, dental office, would you still potentially work with the doctor if that Doctor committed to doing the other things necessary to set the right culture and have the right people there?

Grace Rizza: Those doctors actually do get a positive ROI. It's just less than what it would be if they were also trained. I had a similar situation where the doctor was happy with the ROI until he found one of his colleagues 20 miles away was seeing with the same marketing budget. He came to me, "Hey, Grace, I talked to my body. She's doing the same thing. I was happy until I found out how she's doing." I said, "I told you five times already. You need to invest in your team. This could be even better than what it is." He's still with us, but he's putting that priority of getting the team on board. You don't know what you don't know, I guess, until you see a comparison.

David Phelps: Quite true. Do you recommend mystery shopping? I'm saying maybe you do it, maybe you don't, but do you recommend that your clients have somebody mystery

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shop there practice from time to time just to get outside eyes and let them know, really, what's happening there?

Grace Rizza: I don't mystery shop. I don't like it. I've got a different perspective on that because remember, I was a team member at one point in time. I saw how it affected my team that I worked with when someone would record their calls without them knowing and then grade it and all this stuff. It really upset the dynamics of the team. I've found that if you just talk to people and ask them what their weaknesses are or how they think they could be stronger, people are actually pretty into and with what they need to do. My perspective's a little bit different on that.

David Phelps: Okay, fair enough. Couple of more questions on the marketing side. Online presence, today, very very important. That's where a lot of verification, that's where social proof happens. If I ask you, today, Grace, a prospective patient who is looking for a new dental office, maybe they been given a referral, maybe they're just typing in keywords. With your experience, what in your mind, their eyes, what they're taking in, what are they looking for? Typically, there are going to go online today, to do some research. What are they seeing with that website? What needs to be there, what are dentists practices doing wrong with their online presence?

Grace Rizza: A lot. It's rare that I come across even a B website online for in the dental profession. You really have to look at what you're looking to accomplish first. What kind of patients you're looking to attract. Then build your brand around that. Build your website around that. There's a lot of disconnect between the doctors and their marketing. For instance, I could meet a doctor who is just so

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educated and has invested so much in technology and they've invested so much in their team, and then you look at their 10-year-old website and it just crushes you. New patients, that's the only way of judging you and what you're about, and they completely neglected it. Having a website that matches your brand is very important. Your brand is just your reputation. Making sure that your website is putting the right first impression out there for you is crucial. It's just up one, really. From there, obviously, making sure people can find you.

Making sure that when they look for a dentist, you come up. If you're only looking to attract a handful of big cases, then look at what those services are, look at what those keyword searches are. Again, you don't want a company who is just going to promise leads and get you write for free dentistry. That's not going to serve your purpose. Making sure all the pieces fit. Then, in today's world, reviews matter quite a bit. People look at Google reviews, obviously. You want to have an effective review generation strategy in place and that could be one of many different things. There's a lot of ways to go about just about anything.

David Phelps: Grace, what is trending today as technology advances as the world continues to become more interdependent on technology? I'm leading this way because something I saw that you blogged or something on this but it was about ... Let's just call it what it is. Voice search. Talk just for a minute about voice search and how that's happening, why it's important for practice owners to understand how they need to be relevant in terms of that kind of search today.

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Grace Rizza: Great question. You did read my blog.

David Phelps: I did. I read at all.

Grace Rizza: Obviously, right now, and several times throughout my day when I'm talking, anytime I say, and I'm afraid to say it because my phones right here, anytime I say, are you serious, my phone beeps and Siri thinks that I'm talking to her. I do a lot of my online searches and things just by saying those two magic words. A lot of people do. There's a trend in that direction. That affects keyword searches. People are still primarily searching for dentists near me, dentists in my town, town dentists, those are still a lot of the main keyword search terms that people are also saying who's the best dentist in my town. They're looking for a longer ... it's called longtail keywords approach. The way to accommodate that and the way to accomplish that is to just have a lot of new content all the time on your website. You need to have an on-site blog and to be updating it with different topics all the time because then you'll eventually have those long keywords. If you just have a website that sitting up there with the same couple thousand words, you're not really expanding your reach.

The on-site blogging is very important.

David Phelps: That's where those longtail keywords are picked up is what you're saying. Having a dynamic website with new content being updated versus static site that someone creates for you and just puts it up for you and looks pretty, maybe, maybe it looks pretty. It's not really a functional site in today's world, correct?

Grace Rizza: Absolutely. A lot of people don't realize that SEO starts in the design process. They don't realize that. It starts at the

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very earliest stages of creating the website. There are so many ranking opportunities in the way that the page is laid out and how the load speed, the way the pictures are formatted. Even the way that the phone number and address is tagged. There is SEO strategy in all that. It's very challenging when someone says, "Well, I didn't want to invest in a nice website, but I want this hunk of junk to be first on Google and work your magic." I'm looking at it like, that'd be like you guaranteeing somebody else's crown. That just doesn't work. It all has to work together.

David Phelps: Grace Rizza, we have barely touched the top of the funnel on marketing today but you gave some great insights. It's really been fun to get to know more about you. For those who are connecting with us today on this podcast, what are some of the best ways for them to contact you or, maybe, follow you, or read your blogs. Let's give website, any other contact information that you would like to give them because I know that's what people want to do. They want to follow up and learn more about you and the company that you have today.

Grace Rizza: Thank you so much. I live on Facebook so look me up on Facebook. Grace Rizza, or send me an email. Grace@identitydental.com or you can always give me a call.

David Phelps: Very, very good. Awesome. Yeah, grace@identitydental.com. Grace Rizza R I Z Z A Facebook. Yeah, you do put a lot of good stuff out on Facebook. That's where I first found you and it's part of the interconnectivity of the Internet today. Good to meet you, sort of, in person today. I know we'll have a chance to actually meet lives sometime, so I look forward to that.

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How about coming back and doing another podcast with us and we can delve into some of these other areas of marketing and go a little bit deeper.

Grace Rizza: I'd love it. I'd love it. Thank you so much.

David Phelps: Thank you, Grace. Have a great day.

Grace Rizza: You too.

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