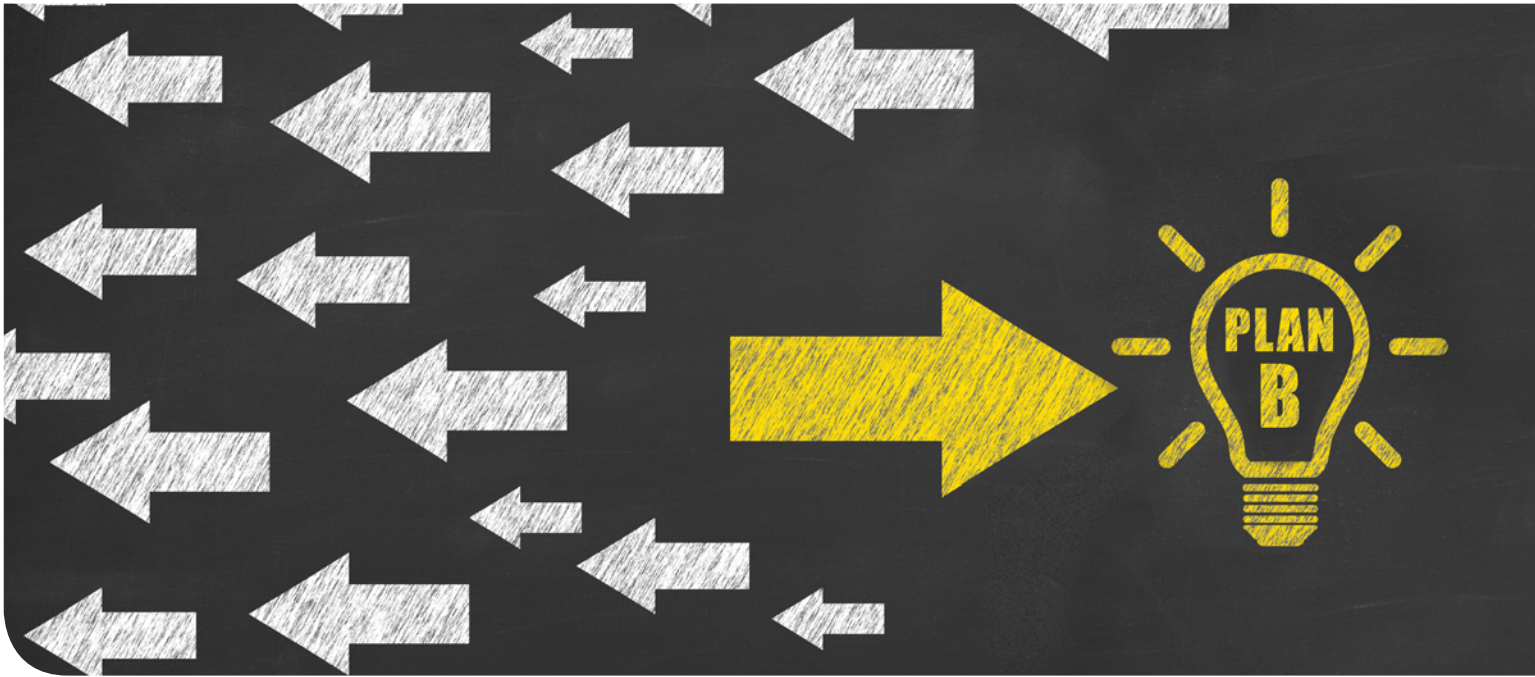


TROJANTODAY

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A NEWSLETTER FOR CLIENTS OF TROJAN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, INC.



On to Plan B!

by Wendy O'Donovan Phillips

When Plan A for marketing doesn't work for your practice, that doesn't mean marketing does not work. It means the strategy you selected is not working for your practice right now.

Internal functions are integral to making your marketing strategy work. The trifecta of internal functions includes: **Leadership, Systems/Processes, and Cash Flow.** The trifecta is your marketing foundation, like a tripod for a camera. With any leg of the trifecta out of whack, your marketing is less effective.

Leadership

Leadership starts with the dentist being clear about the overall vision and goals for marketing. The dentist must clearly and regularly communicate this knowledge to the team. The dentist must inspire the team to become a group of leaders, with shared vision and passion for the common goal.

A practice coach, rather than a practice management consultant, is the best professional to help with this. A coach focuses on improving people, while the consultant works on improving systems.



Systems/Processes

Internal **systems and processes** allow the practice to work for you, freeing time to focus on care. Are you still running payroll? Are you the sole person in charge of marketing?



Set up internal structures to automate these functions, and outsource other functions to experts to simplify business operations. Some necessary systems are obvious: filing, phone, billing, and bookkeeping. Other systems are more nuanced: a method for purchasing supplies, a plan for facility upkeep, a system for working with vendors.

Here are a few processes that are often missing: scheduling appointments, patient intake, and orienting new team members. When processes are missing, these functions feel arduous, and, as a result, marketing may fail to work.

As the practice grows, old systems break down and new systems replace them. A good practice management consultant can help guide this as an ongoing process.

Cash Flow

A **cash flow** solution is different from bookkeeping or accounting which reflect historical views of the practice's finances. What you need is a forward-looking "forecast" view on the finances.



Cash flow awareness allows you to hire staff, purchase equipment, invest in marketing, and otherwise expand with confidence.

A cash flow consultant can provide projections for the next six to twelve months. When cash flow is strong and marketing is a monthly investment, marketing efforts and results are consistent.

If your trifecta of internal functions is in tip-top shape and it's clear the marketing strategy is not working, it's critical to move to Plan B for marketing. I see too many practices neglect marketing altogether after one or more "failed" approaches.

There is no such thing as "failure" in marketing. Even if the strategy you chose didn't translate into the number of new patients you needed, it likely increased your exposure and built the practice's brand equity. Further, every "mistake" in business is a learning opportunity.

Consider your options for Plan B

Option 1: Do It Yourself

If you want control and prefer your team create the marketing, this is the right option for you.

This is *not* to say that you, the dentist, should do your own marketing. That is highly discouraged. Hire an office manager who has interest in marketing, and get that person trained on how to execute marketing for the practice.

With training, your team can easily handle these tasks:

- Developing basic website
- Asking for referrals
- Improving phone skills
- Strategizing for social media
- Optimizing search engine
- Developing internal marketing strategies

Find an expert who can provide detailed instructions and one-on-one sessions so you get everything needed to succeed.

Option 2: A La Carte

Perhaps you've been burned in the past or you're wary to invest more money in marketing. Maybe you would like to take baby steps with a new provider. If this sounds like you, then a *la carte* is the best option.

These marketing efforts can usually be deployed individually to work incrementally toward your goals:

- Custom website development
- Online advertising
- Direct mail
- TV/radio

Find a provider that offers market research so you are investing only in the tactics that are right for your practice. Keep in mind that a *la carte* marketing results are typically not as strong as those from integrated marketing.



Option 3: Integrated Marketing

Maybe, after your lackluster experience, you are ready to finally nail marketing. Perhaps you prefer to outsource marketing and focus exclusively on patient care. If so, integrated marketing is for you.

Integrated marketing encompasses everything you need for marketing and is highly strategic. An integrated dental marketing agency will complete market research (surveying patients, competitor analysis, etc.), develop a strategic marketing plan based on their findings, and deploy that marketing plan.

There are essentially 35 different marketing tactics that a dental practice could deploy, yet only a handful of those are right for the practice. A reputable integrated marketing agency will determine and document which dental marketing tactics are right for you right now, as shown by the market research. Investing in integrated marketing means you will get the biggest bang out of your marketing buck.

No matter what happens, never stop marketing. Marketing is the oxygen to your practice. With it, you keep a steady flow of new and happy patients loyal to your practice.



Wendy O'Donovan Phillips is president of **Big Buzz**, a full-service dental marketing firm. Her book, **KABOOM!: The Method Used By Top Dentists for Explosive Marketing Results**, helps dentists build thriving practices with marketing backed by strategy.

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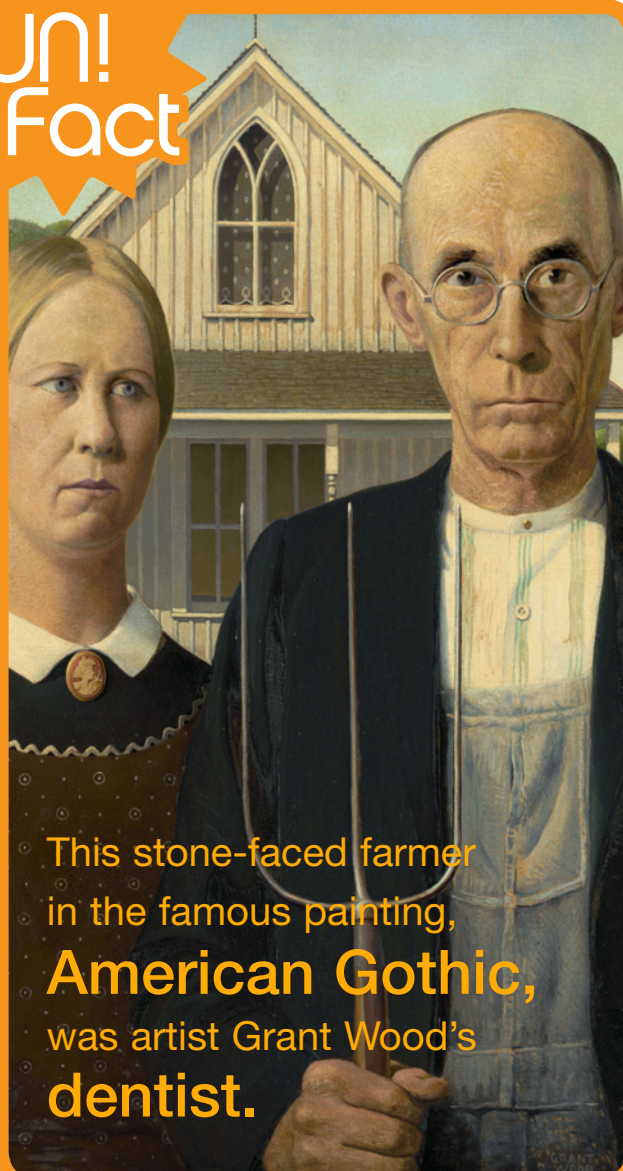
What Clients Say

"We have used Trojan Services for several years. Unfortunately, there are times when the attempt to collect by office staff is unsuccessful. Most of the time an official letter outlining the possible effects of not paying their bill is enough to spur payment. It tends to get the patient's attention and communication back open. Trojan is simple to use and highly successful. I would highly recommend Trojan Professional Services."

— Sherri D.



**FUN!
Fact**



This stone-faced farmer in the famous painting, **American Gothic**, was artist Grant Wood's dentist.