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ADMINISTRATIVE EYECARE

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AFTER COVID-19

ADDING A NEW SUBSPECIALTY

*CONSIDERATIONS
FOR MANAGING*

REMOTE WORKERS

*NAVIGATING THE INS
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RETINA DRUGS

MARKETING ADVANCED DRY EYE TREATMENTS

Brandi Musgrave and Keri Layne-Tarman

A bottle of over-the-counter eye drops can cost anywhere from \$5 to \$15 at the drugstore—a seemingly inexpensive way to combat the symptoms of dry eye. However, what many people don't realize is that these drops are often just a "Band-Aid®." They do nothing to address the underlying reason for the dry eye symptoms, so it becomes an endless cycle of symptoms—eye drops—temporary relief that becomes costly and frustrating.

While this is not news to optometrists and ophthalmologists, dry eye treatments may be overlooked as an educational opportunity and potential revenue source. The dry eye disease market is huge—in fact, it's expected to reach 6,175.96 million in U.S. dollars by 2024.¹

Chronic dry eye isn't typically treatable with quick and cheap methods, but patients need to understand the types of dry eye and truly effective treatment options to justify the cost of advanced treatments such as LipiFlow® Thermal Pulsation System, PROKERA®, punctal plugs, RESTASIS®, Xiidra®, etc. That's where marketing comes in.

MESSAGING

It is possible to compete with over-the-counter eye drops if you

include hot buttons in your marketing messages. Hot buttons refer to words that spark an emotional response. For dry eye, that might be words such as "long-term relief for itchy, watery eyes," "eye fatigue after computer work," "eye irritation with contact lenses," etc. Focus your messaging around how dry eye affects patients' daily activities, what eyesight changes throughout the day could mean, and how your treatments can improve their quality of life. The trick is to choose words that break through the marketing clutter and entice people to take notice.

MARKETING TECHNIQUES

When you've gathered the right words, the next step is to decide how to share them. Dry eye can affect people of all ages, so using a variety of media will allow you to spread your message far and wide—without costing your practice a fortune. Here are five methods to implement.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., are not just for younger generations. People of all ages visit these sites—and many more—multiple times every day to connect with family, friends, and businesses. Use your practice's

social pages to relay information about dry eye in educational as well as entertaining ways. It's advisable to post new articles, fun facts, testimonials, etc., every day to boost organic connections with patients.

Advertising on social media is a paid way to have your message appear frequently on social pages of people in your target market. Social media advertising can cost as little as \$0.38 per click (CPC) or \$6.46 per thousand impressions (CPM).

2. PAY-PER-CLICK (PPC)

PPC advertising is also known as Search Engine Marketing or SEM. When people search for certain keywords or phrases that relate to dry eye, your ad can appear on the search engine results page. Your practice bids on the ad placement for specific keywords or phrases. With Click Campaigns, when a person clicks on your ad, your practice pays a small fee.

The cost of a PPC ad in Google Ads, for example, depends on many factors, including how much you are willing to pay for each click (your CPC Bid) and your Quality Score which encompasses the

- relevance of your PPC click campaign
- usefulness of your landing page
- quality of your keywords

If there are multiple advertisers vying for the same dry eye keywords, a type of auction will be held, and the practice with the best ad rank (CPC Bid and Quality Score) will win the ad space.

Simply tossing more money into your maximum CPC Bid won't necessarily help your PPC ads appear. The quality of your dry eye message and your unique dry eye landing page also play heavily into this process, which is why it's so important to have a strong dry eye marketing strategy.

3. PATIENT DATABASE

Your existing patient database is a goldmine of potential leads—especially because anyone can develop dry eye. Email and text message marketing are inexpensive ways to send different messages to segments of your database according to age, past procedures, etc. Your message will stand out if you use wording that hits the hot buttons of these segments. Including dry eye articles in your electronic newsletters is also highly effective.

Don't forget to promote dry eye symptoms and treatments within your office as well. Even if your waiting areas are different due to social distancing recommendations, showcasing posters, brochures, and video loops around your office can get your patients thinking about their symptoms and starting conversations with your staff. Just make sure your staff is trained to answer questions and pass the inquiries to your doctors during the appointment.

4. VIDEOS

Most people aren't aware that there are different types of dry eye. That's where educational videos come in.

Videos are a great way to educate the public about all aspects of dry eye and/or introduce your doctors to your target market. Allow them to speak one-on-one about this topic, showcasing their personalities and treatment philosophies. Videos can be showcased on your website and social media pages, in targeted emails and e-newsletters, and even during appointments to explain how different treatments work.

5. LANDING PAGES AND WEBSITE

You undoubtedly offer a wide variety of dry eye treatments—probably more than can be explained in an online ad or email. By directing people to a unique dry eye landing page for each new marketing campaign, you can describe the different treatment methods in depth and have specific calls-to-action (such as a dry eye self-evaluation) to allow people to take the next step with your practice.

Don't forget to include your dry eye messaging on the home page of your website and include a comprehensive dry eye page so anyone casually perusing your site can learn about dry eye symptoms and all of the treatments you offer beyond just eye drops.

BOTTOM LINE

The foundation of all dry eye marketing should be a true desire to help patients live a better quality of life. When formulating your marketing messages, put yourself in the shoes of someone who is struggling with these burdensome symptoms. Give them a reason to hope that your practice can help.

NOTE

¹Reportlinker. (2019, Nov. 18). The Dry Eye Disease market studied was valued at

USD 4,539.22 million in 2018, and is expected to reach USD 6,175.96 million by 2024, with an anticipated CAGR of 5.23%, during the forecast period (2019-2024). Retrieved 5/19/20 from <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-dry-eye-disease-market-studied-was-valued-at-usd-4-539-22-million-in-2018-and-is-expected-to-reach-usd-6-175-96-million-by-2024-with-an-anticipated-cagr-of-5-23-during-the-forecast-period-2019--300959849.html> **AE**



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IN A BLINK

1. Dry eye treatments may be overlooked as a revenue source.
2. Help patients justify the cost of advanced treatments.
3. Use a variety of media to spread your message far and wide.