

Where in the world?

Globalisation has shrunk the world and enlarged your reach, so what does that mean for your marketing strategy? **Shaz Memon** explains

Thanks to the digital revolution, small businesses are now competing on a global stage – and dental practices are no exception. Whilst a weighty and frequent presence online is not necessarily going to garner new patients from the other side of the world, it will raise your profile massively.

An all-inclusive approach is key, which means engagement with anyone and everyone who engages online with you – no matter whether or not they will eventually walk through your practice doors.

Globalisation has shrunk the world and enlarged your reach, and what you say and how you say it matters, so it is important to speak consistently, with clarity and honesty, and across all platforms – whether it is about your brand, a new product, treatment modality or on a topical news story.

Anyone in your audience is potentially your next VIP (very important patient), so do respond to all genuine enquiries, however far afield they might hail. Remember, this wider setting still has at its heart the refer-a-friend principle, and referrals can come from anywhere.

BIOGRAPHY



Shaz Memon is the creative director of Digimax and Digimax Dental and has worked with leading dental and non-dental names. Digimax Dental uses non-dental industries to infuse creative expertise into dental marketing. Some of Digimax's clients include House of Fraser, Mcdonalds, Formula One, James Caan and Caffè Concerto. Shaz specialises in offering bespoke, creative, high-end design solutions that encompass branding, website design, top Google rankings, e-marketing and more – just for dentists. Learn more at www.digimax.dental

All the world's a stage
So, plan a digital marketing strategy that consistently taps into the imagination of potential patients with informative and entertaining posts that link back to your practice website, which will boost traffic and improve your popularity with Google.

Apply the same logic to your website, too. Keep visitors interested with well-written, easy-to-assimilate copy and high-quality images. Make their first experience of your business a worthwhile one and employ dental SEO techniques to help your website grow its organic search traffic.

Invariably, the internet is a potential patient's initial experience of your business and, as any good dentist knows, first impressions count. An online search for dental treatments or oral health products might just be the starting point that leads patients-to-be in the direction of your practice website and, ultimately, into your chair.

Economic globalisation has opened the eyes of many small enterprises, which means businesses look further afield than their immediate locality for clients – in this digital age, there are no boundaries to a catchment area.

Successful digital channels, such as online stores and mobile apps, enhance the shopping experience of the consumer, so apply these principles to your own business.

Social media is a major factor in the architecture of many a successful marketing campaign, with information now shared exponentially.

Twitter is particularly a favoured tool for quick messages – its design that allows for immediacy and encourages creative thinking, coupled with the easy-to-search hashtag strategy, offers a host of options to a dental practice looking to promote its services.



The power of unity

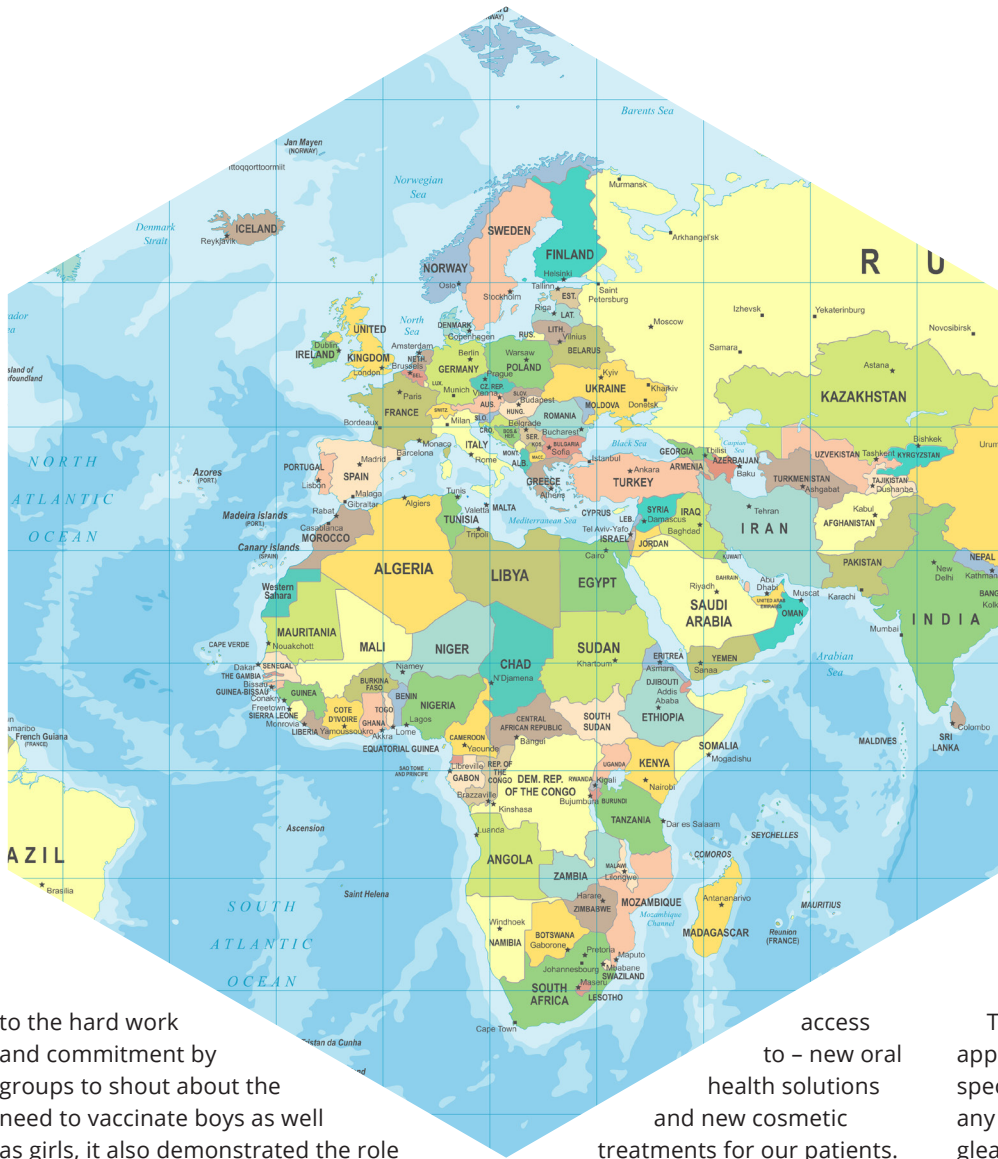
Political globalisation has meant a driving up of standards within the profession, primarily because the internet has allowed the instant sharing of research results and new thinking, which encourages faster adoption of new treatments, technologies, and products.

Those involved with campaigns now turn to digital media in an effort to put governments under pressure, and an increasingly digitally networked society can raise awareness of key public health issues like never before.

The success of the profession's call for a gender-neutral HPV jab, for example, illustrates the power of a social media network that can link up interested parties and give strength to voices quickly and effectively.

The government U-turn on the 'jabs for boys' issue was testimony not only

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to the hard work and commitment by groups to shout about the need to vaccinate boys as well as girls, it also demonstrated the role the internet plays in mobilising groups, thereby effecting wider participation and enhancing the whole process.

For dental professionals not directly in the political arena, it was as much their battle as those on the frontline. Adding a voice to such a campaign demonstrates an understanding of not just the dentistry profession as a whole, but also of the wider implications on the general public that, for some patients, might just be the 'hook' with which you reel them in.

And, if we accept that globalisation raises the bar when it comes to professional collaboration, it follows that it may also improve awareness of – and

access to – new oral health solutions and new cosmetic treatments for our patients.

World-class website

As the business world becomes more sophisticated in its online engagement, website design has also had to develop. In a world in which 49.73% of us browse the internet on our mobile devices, the shift has been towards less text and more image-led content.

Clean pages with carefully composed short sentences ensure that key information is easily assimilated. Additionally, dental practices with a consistent and recognisable visual identity or branding reassures patients that they are on the right site.

This is not advocating a blanket approach to dental marketing, rather, a specific application to all of the above to any marketing. Use what information you glean from the internet in a creative way – and tailor it to your patient base whilst designing it in such a way that it dovetails with your brand.

Suffice to say, individualism is important if a business is to stand out from the crowd – unique branding is key, even if the key messages are the same as your competitors, whether they are in your hometown or across the water.

But by sharing these messages and innovations and reiterating them on your dental website design, it not only makes the world a lot healthier, it raises the profile of your business around the globe as well.

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