

Marketing Your Practice as Easy as 1-2-3

123 Postcards provides dental practices with proven, results-based measurements to ensure more new patients



by Benjamin Lund, Editor, *Dentaltown Magazine*

As far as marketing your practice, if you were to say direct mail is on its way out or it isn't as valuable as social media or other marketing initiatives, the team at 123 Postcards might have a few things to say about it. Since 2009, 123 Postcards has honed its processes and delivered effective marketing plans to dental practices focusing efforts on its unique direct mail program. *Dentaltown Magazine* sat down with 123 Postcards Vice President of Marketing Scott Edwards to learn more about the company and what it does to improve new patient numbers for dental practices.

If you were to run into a dentist on the street who didn't know about your company, how would you explain it?

Edwards: We are dental marketing experts that deliver new patients to dental practices across the country with a proven program that guarantees results. In other words, our entire goal is to bring you new patients and to track your marketing spending to ensure you get the best return on your investment.

As a result, our program revolves around being your marketing advisor. We partner with you in creating, deploying, tracking

and scoring direct mailing campaigns that will accelerate the growth of your practice.

Our process has been perfected through the successful delivery of millions of postcards and by analyzing hundreds of thousands of new patient calls to dentists across North America.

You mention direct mail or postcards as the way you deliver new patients. Why postcards?

Edwards: Statistically, direct mail has the highest predictability of success in getting new patients to practices. We have tracked and analyzed incoming calls from all sorts of marketing avenues – websites, newspapers, billboards, shared mail, marquee at schools, radio, TV, door hangers, you name it. Of everything we have done, nothing has proven more successful than direct mail postcards. That's why we focus on them.

But, our program includes so much more than mailing postcards. For no additional cost, we include staff coaching, metric-based dashboards and call tracking and scoring, just to name a few. And, you'll see us coming to market with additional services to drive growth in dental practices.

What do you do differently than print shops or other direct mail providers?

Edwards: We really have little to nothing in comparison to print shops. Here are four reasons why 123 Postcards is uniquely qualified to help dentists grow their practice:

- 1. Customized, High-Quality Postcards** – We deliver your custom postcard so it emulates the uniqueness of your practice, and combine this with proven methods and designs that maximize response. In essence, we do it all, from concept to print to mail drop.
- 2. 100 Percent Incoming Call Tracking, Recording and Scoring** – We've pioneered the most comprehensive marketing tracking and monitoring system in the industry. Every mailing includes a unique, local call-tracking number that rings seamlessly into your office. Not only is each call recorded, but it's also scored, graded, and analyzed by our team so your staff knows where they can improve. An additional benefit is missed call notification. The average practice misses one-third of their incoming calls due to lunch breaks, after hours, or just being busy. This feature alone could increase revenue by 33 percent.
- 3. 24/7 Access to Mailing Performance Dashboards** – All this call data is captured in performance dashboards so you can see your results 24/7. There is no guessing on the results of your marketing campaigns each month. You'll know your exact results at all times. Your practice-specific dashboard lets you see everything from marketing campaign metrics to staff performance to the new patients scheduled.
- 4. Optimize Your Conversion Rate with Personalized Staff Coaching** – We know your front desk staff is vital to the success of your marketing campaigns. That's why we take the time to listen to each incoming call to your practice from your mailing. This way we can provide ongoing training to maximize staff proficiency.

What is your business philosophy?

Edwards: Our focus lies in asking ourselves, "What's best for our clients?" That's why we promise 100 percent exclusivity to the dental practice as soon as they begin mailing with us. We'll help a practice identify its target market area and lock that area into our system to ensure that the practice is the only one being marketed by us. That way we help practices win market share.

Most vendors require practices to sign long-term contracts, or pre-print tens of thousands of cards/brochures. We have a different mindset. We believe a practice hires a marketing company to drive new patients and increase production dollars. The practice should be able to choose, based on the service received and results whether it wants to continue to do business with us.

Are you concerned about limiting yourself to one dental practice per mailing area?

Edwards: Think of it this way – if you hired a lawyer, you would never stand for him to represent the person you're suing! That would be a gross conflict of interest. What's strange is that marketing vendors represent both sides of the competition every day. We understand that loyalty and trust are vital to a successful business partnership.

What sets you apart from other marketing firms in the dental market?

Edwards: We empower dentists with metrics and information to make intelligent decisions regarding the success of their marketing. Our one-of-a-kind program, including call tracking, recording, scoring, and 24/7 access to performance dashboards, eliminates the guessing game. These dashboards provide unique marketing insight, including number of calls per postcard, number of new patients per postcard, cost of new patient acquisition, total production per new patient, etc.

Another differentiator is how we control the variables to ensure success. What can be controlled to enhance your results?

Over the years, we've listened to hundreds of thousands of



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Case Study 1 – From 15 new patients per month to 70-80 new patients per month!

"I used 123 Postcards for the first time about 10 months into my startup. At the time we had little money and were getting about 15 new patients each month. Six months later, and after five rounds of 123 Postcards, we were hitting 70-80 new patients per month. I'm

a big believer in direct mail now. It's by far the most reliable external marketing I've done (and I've done quite a bit now).

Overall, I've had a wonderful experience with 123 Postcards. First, they went through area demographics to help me pick my mailing routes and target households. I then worked with them to craft a custom-designed postcard to highlight my practice. And before the card went out, they conducted initial training with my staff on how to answer the phone when the new calls came in. The 123 Postcards process has been the most reliable marketing I've done."

– Dr. Eric Peterson, Peterson Dental, Alabama

Case Study 3 – Achieved 370 percent in marketing investment and obtained 143 new patients!

"Our practice opened in 2005 with a focus on comprehensive preventive, restorative, cosmetic, orthodontic and implants dentistry for families in the Houston area. Our practice has grown during that time, and by 2012, we were averaging about 60 new patient visits each month.



We started with 123 Postcards at the beginning of 2013. Since then we've done seven consecutive mailings, and the results have been phenomenal. We've been able to add 143 new general patients during that time, giving us a return of our marketing investment of 370 percent! In addition, we just did a trial run with an ortho-specific card and were able to return more than 8.4 times our investment, bringing in 10 new patients to date.

We enjoy working with our marketing advisor, NiCole, who stays in touch with us continually to help us improve our marketing efforts. They are experts in knowing what offers will draw in new patients. Their ability to track, record and score each incoming call sets them apart. And their ongoing staff coaching based upon those call recordings has helped our staff achieve an 80 percent close ratio of first-time calls to new patients.

Needless to say, we're extremely happy we've partnered with 123 Postcards to assist in our marketing efforts and look forward to working with them in the future."

– Dr. Ryan Oakley and Dr. Ron Miller, Spring Creek Dentistry, Texas

Case Study 2 – Increased monthly production by \$60,000!

"After working in a practice that focused on pediatric dentistry, I decided to open my own family practice in July 2011. I struggled for months to bring in new patients and tried many marketing methods, including flyers, sponsorships, Facebook, parades, freebies, billboards, newspapers and the Internet. I always felt like I could do it myself and save money.

Then I decided to try 123 Postcards because they specialize in dentistry. I sent out 5,000 postcards and immediately started getting results. A month and a half later after only two mailings, I had received more than 100 calls and had scheduled more than 50 new patients! In the following two months I increased my production by \$20,000 and \$30,000, respectively.

Since those first few months, I have increased my monthly production by approximately \$60,000. Need I say more? I have continued sending postcards every month, rotating between three different mailing zones that 123 Postcards has reserved exclusively for my practice. I also continue to bring in a steady flow of new patients from the postcards. I've even had to hire another hygienist to accommodate the new patients.

Of everything I've tried, the 123 Postcards' method has, hands down, made the greatest impact in the growth of my practice."

– Dr. Brent Martin
River Rock Dental, Washington



Case Study 4 – Reached record high 75 new patients in one month!

"Drs. Kane and Kerper have been providing the city of Oxnard, California, with great dentistry for the past 30 years. They are general family dentists who have just recently begun doing orthodontics via Invisalign.

Over the years we have made several marketing attempts, but it seemed as though none of them really fit our office. We were not seeing a return on our investments, and it seemed like we were remaining steady with no real growth in the practice. We were averaging about 25-30 new patients a month.

123 Postcards was introduced to us in May 2012. The doctors were very hesitant, since they had done mailers in the past and had not seen any results with them. During the first month with 123 Postcards, we increased our new patient numbers by more than 50 percent (66 new patients). The best part about 123 Postcards is the tracking reports for each mailing, which allows the doctors to see the return on their investment. The doctors also have the capability to listen to all calls received from the 123 Postcards' mailers, and the staff is able to see where improvements can be made. With all of our marketing efforts and the help of 123 Postcards, we reached our record high of 75 new patients in May 2013!

We have been very pleased working with 123 Postcards and look forward to the continued success that we will have with them. We would recommend them to any practice looking to grow and ready to double their new patients.

– Trina M. Ayala, Patient Coordinator
Kanes & Kerper Dentistry, California



Disclaimer: These doctors were given no financial consideration for these case studies. These stories represent just a few of the hundreds of practices who marketed with 123 Postcards. For more information, visit www.123postcards.com/moreinfo

calls and identified the keys to maximize success. For example, what size card should you mail? What offers should you advertise? What day of the week should postcards hit homes? And the largest common denominator across successful practices is the efficiency of how well your staff handles first-time callers. The skill level of your staff makes a huge difference on the outcome of any call coming into your office. By controlling all of these variables, we put practices in the best possible position to succeed.

How is this training delivered?

Edwards: The coaching really comes from three avenues – by assigning a dedicated marketing advisor to each practice, providing initial staff training before postcards go out, then through ongoing monitoring and staff coaching for continual improvement.

Each dedicated marketing advisor is committed and focused on monitoring practices results to ensure their success.

Prior to a first mailing, an advisor will provide staff training on the tips and techniques proven in practices across the country to increase closing percentages. This initial training instructs them to use proper techniques, phone etiquette, and ways to respond to tough questions. This way, they are prepared for new calls before the first mailing ever goes out.

But, a one-time training meeting is not enough to change habits. Ongoing coaching is needed. Our staff listens to the recordings and scores every single call that comes to the office. Calls are analyzed based upon 37 Key Performance Indicators we've identified that can make or break an appointment being made, ranging from did they get the caller's name, did they give pricing over the phone, to whether your staff answered all of the caller's questions accurately and completely. These dedicated marketing advisors continually monitor the calls and provide staff coaching based on the individual staff member's strengths and weaknesses. To aid in this coaching, we've created a library of short videos based upon the 37 KPIs. To see an example of one of these coaching videos, visit www.123postcards.com/moreinfo.

Staff	10/21/13	10/22/13	10/23/13	10/24/13	10/25/13	10/26/13	10/27/13	10/28/13	10/29/13	10/30/13
Average call score	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%
Was an appointment scheduled?	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	45%	40%
New patient appointments	10	8	6	4	3	2	1	1	1	1
Identified self?	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Identified the practice?	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Asked 'how long I have your'?	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Asked for caller's name	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Asked for a valid number to call or email address	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Asked how they learned about practice	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Said 'please' to get this information	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Said 'Thank you' to get this information	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What kind of guarantees can you offer your clients?

Edwards: Most marketing vendors will tell you there are no guarantees in marketing. We beg to differ. Because of the program we've developed based upon the data we've collected over the years, we know what works, and we're confident we can deliver. In fact, 95.7 percent of our dental offices return two to 11 times their investment each mailing. That is simply amazing!

As a result, we stand behind our program and offer a double your money guarantee. We guarantee our practices will receive enough calls to at least double the money they spend on their first three mailings, or their fourth customized mailing is free!

If practices want to learn more, what should they do?

Edwards: Best thing, go watch our overview video and learn how our unique direct mailing program works at www.123postcards.com/moreinfo.

And, you can give us a call at 855-909-0123. And when you mention you are a "Townie," we'll provide you with the following free consultation for your practice: 1. market area/income analysis, 2. exclusivity evaluation to see if your mailing area is available, and a design/offer consultation based upon the success we've seen with specific postcards. ■

