

# Chris Brogan Gives Good Advice to Small Businesses (and Medical Practices are Small Businesses)

☒ I have been a fan of Chris Brogan's for quite awhile now. He is a superstar on the social media landscape and I almost got to meet him once when I lived in Seattle (sigh.) Today I came across his post "5 Things That Small Businesses Should Do Now." Many medical practices are small businesses (privately owned and operated, with 100 employees or less), but may have not considered any of these options.

Here are Chris's suggestions and my commentary:

- **Start a blog** "" I can't think of any simpler website technology to start and master, and there are cheap and free platforms readily available. Why a blog? Because they're easy to create, because they're easy to update, because they encourage repeat visits, and because you can use them in many flexible ways.

My comment: Most practices have websites and it is easy to add a blog to a website. Some administrators and/or physicians would gladly take on a blog, and if not, there are some great writing professionals who can create and write a blog for you. Professional bloggers get to know your practice and your patient demographic and create a voice for your practice that uniquely fits you. A blog extends and enhances your relationship with existing and future patients. It's all about the communication.

- **Start listening** "" People are talking about you. Find out where they are and who they are.

My comment: It has been hard for physicians to come to terms with the fact that patients are publicly rating them. In some cases, physicians are requiring consumers to sign gag orders before becoming patients. The truth is, patients will not be stifled and physicians need to monitor the bandwages for commentary about them and take it seriously.

- **Try Twitter OR Facebook** "" Let's not rush things. Facebook has many more users, but it's a bit harder to find customers, prospects, partners and colleagues. Twitter is easier to use and faster to connect with people, but there are far fewer users on there today. I'll let you choose. If you go with Facebook, make a personal account under your own name, and then start a fan page for your business.

My comment: Does this seem too far out? It's not! At the very least, practices should be learning about the technology and preparing for the time when they will need to jump in. Businesses (who want customers) can no longer hold themselves aloof. You need to be part of the conversation, or at least know where/what the conversation is.

- **Get the word out** "" If you're going to spend time building these social sites, let's presume that you want more people to contact you and interact with you through them. Print business cards with the company name, and/or the request for people to join your fan page or follow you on Twitter.

My comment: Your website and your social sites should be on everything you print that patients take home or receive from you, and can also be communicated to patients via automated communication: appointment reminders, messages on hold, emails, and electronic newsletters.

- **Try moving the needle** "" now lets *really* get crazy. See if you can fill the place up with social-media minded

folks. Okay, this won't work for every business, but don't be too quick to count out the idea. Let's try inviting them to a store-only special event, or let's give them a discount code. You know, the stuff you already know how to do. Any difference in the results? See if you can do some kind of really special one-day-only push, and what that brings to you.

My comment: This won't work for every medical practice but it's ideal for practices with elective services – plastic/cosmetic surgery, allergy, complementary & alternative medicine, sports performance, vision correction, cosmetic dental services, infertility treatment, etc.

[You can read Chris's original article here.](#)

[More information on Chris's book Trust Agents here.](#)