



ORTHO2

Protect Your Turf

with **Internet** and **Digital Technology**

by **Mary Kay Miller**

Few, if any, orthodontic practices have experienced the aftermath of a major economic meltdown like we are witnessing today. Every area of business and commerce is affected globally. Not only are we navigating through uncharted waters, we are suffering from a tsunami of real time media coverage. Consumers and Internet media have access to every minute detail of a drowning economy as it's reported, fueling fear in the minds of our global society.

Advances in digital technology are occurring at lightning speed and turning life as we know it upside down. In the past 5 years on the Internet alone, popular forms of communication have surfaced in the form of blogs and social media to dramatically change information gathering in the 21st century.

- Consumers age 10–40 are watching less TV and spending more time on the Internet watching video and chatting with friends on social network sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube.
- Election analysts report the presidential election was won and lost on the Internet, changing forever how election campaigns will be run in the future.
- The yellow pages are dead. Yellow pages advertising in the past two years is reported at record lows and sales staff are shifting to yellow book Internet marketing services to offset losses.
- Gannett newspapers, one of the largest publishing firms in the country, is laying off staff due to reduction in newspaper sales.
- .com companies quick to venture into the Internet market such as Amazon.com, on-line retail stores, and eBay have forced out many big name players—slow to compete with an

The yellow pages are dead.

The Internet has replaced Gutenberg's printing press.

Internet presence—changing forever how businesses sell products and services.

The Internet is now considered the greatest communication tool invented since Gutenberg built the printing press in 1436. The traditional printed message of old—where businesses told consumers what they wanted consumers to hear—has been replaced by a virtual environment growing faster than its inventors and promoters ever imagined in their wildest dreams. This virtual frontier is the new marketing medium where the consumer has control. Blogging, social networking, and on-line comments offer consumers an entirely new perspective when searching for an orthodontic treatment provider.

- Gen X, Gen Y, and Global Tweens—your current target orthodontic market—are the most tech savvy and skeptical consumers in history. Understanding their personal preferences in information gathering and finding a way to get through all the marketing clutter and noise which surrounds us all today is a major challenge.
- They no longer respond to traditional marketing strategies of old.
- Their buying decisions are based on emotion, personal preferences, and latest trends.
- They rely heavily upon friends and family for referrals.
- Their favorite forms of communication are text messaging, cell phones, social networks, and the Internet.
- They have low tolerance for businesses they perceive as being outdated or “computer

Reprinted from
The Newsletter for Members and Friends of Ortho2
January 2009 - Volume 27 Issue 1

challenged." If you don't have a Web site to engage this group with content rich information, you might as well be invisible.

Ortho2 users have a distinct advantage over other orthodontic practices throughout the world. In a book released by Dr. Howard Choi this year, *An Evaluation of Orthodontic Practice Management Software: Maximizing the Return on the Investment of the Orthodontist*, levels of satisfaction were studied comparing the various orthodontic practice management software programs currently available. Ortho2 software was rated superior in comparison to other programs in the study and received high marks on most features. Since your practice management system is the digital hub of any orthodontic practice, Ortho2 users are already ahead in the digital game. Delivery of treatment and customer service, always has been and always will be the foundation of any successful marketing plan. Without reliable user friendly practice management software, customer service and treatment delivery is compromised. It reduces team efficiency, consumer satisfaction, and tarnishes the overall treatment experience, causing negative word of mouth comments.

Discovering how to maximize digital technology to its highest potential, not only in treatment delivery and customer service, but as an Internet marketing tool with an SEO (Search Engine Optimized) Web site and Web 2.0 Internet marketing program, empowers you to increase demographic visibility to prospective new patients and set your practice apart in an economy where many practices are floundering. Approximately 40% still don't have a Web site, and the majority that do have not begun to tap into their Internet marketing potential. Competition is greater than ever before, especially with pedodontists and general dentists competing for your orthodontic patients. *Protect Your Turf—Stake Your Claim* in Internet marketing real-estate now to build your practice for the future. ♦

About the Author



Mary Kay Miller is founder of Orthopreneur™ Marketing Solutions. With 30 plus years experience as an orthodontic business coordinator, treatment coordinator, and marketing coordinator, Mary Kay experienced first hand what it takes to make an ordinary practice... EXTRAordinary. She co-designed custom orthodontic software for practice management in 1983 and created her first orthodontic Web site in 1998. Mary Kay created the first orthodontic marketing blog in 2007 and video blog in 2008. Go to her Web site www.orthopreneur.com and download her FREE 90 page multi-media ebook on Orthodontic and Internet Marketing written for the entire team. She can be reached at 877 295-5611.

She will offering the course "Marketing Your Practice through Different Eyes—Your Patients'" at the 2009 Users Group Meeting.