

Lockdown Battle Plan - Ref 122NML

with Nicola McLennan

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TRANSCRIPT

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Steven Bruce

We've seen quite a lot of communication on Facebook and through our own email channels and elsewhere from people who are hopefully not as concerned as they were the first time around, but still nonetheless concerned about keeping their businesses busy keeping their patients coming in and doing everything they can to preserve their business and of course, to help people who need their services. And I think it's appropriate that we get someone in to talk to us about that to help you out, keep your business running. But don't forget that these lessons, the things we're gonna be talking about today will be just as appropriate when we're not in lockdown in many cases. So, I've invited Nicola McLennan back in to join me. She was with me a few months ago at the start of the first lockdown with Nigel Botterill. And we talked then about what we could do to help businesses exist and survive. And she's back with us today to talk about her 27-point plan. Nicola, great to have you with us. And I don't know why I'm seeing a picture of Kara on my screen. Nor do I know why I'm not hearing Nicola.

Nicola McLennan

I'm here, Steven.

Steven Bruce

Oh, there you are. Thank you. Technology technology. Thank you for getting rid of the picture of Kara. So, 27 points to save our businesses in the second national lockdown. Is it going to be that difficult?

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely, it shouldn't be. This session should give you a battle plan to walk away with that's specific to your practice, to enable you to have a plan going forward for the next quarter. So, you can come out with healthy numbers.

Steven Bruce

Good. Now, I should say before we start, that I have got a number of slides. And Nicola's got a number of slides that she's going to show, they will be coming up as a sort of an inset on the screen beside me, you will automatically get a copy of the handout sent, you will have a link to the copy of the handout in about an hour's time. If you click to download those slides, then we will let Nicola know you've done that so she can get in touch to find out how it's all going for you. And if you don't want that to happen, just send us a message or just tell Nicola when she calls you. But we're here to help you grow your business. Is that right?

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely.

Steven Bruce

Right then, Nicola, better get, it's 27 of these things, you better get started.

Nicola McLennan

Let's get started. So, a tip for everybody just now would be to, as Steven has just said, don't hustle to write all of these down, not every single point is going to be suitable for you and your practice, we'll have different people watching, you're going to have some one man bands or some one woman armies, as I like to call them. Larger practices owners as well. So not every single point is going to be suitable for everyone. So, I would suggest rather than writing notes, I want you to write a to do list and just pick the ones that you think, that could work for us or that's something we do but geez, we could do it better. And then you're going to leave this session with a battle plan going forward for your practice.

Steven Bruce

I love the idea of a battle plan speaking as an ex-marine, it appeals to me.

Nicola McLennan

So should we roll forward to the first slide,

Steven Bruce

Which I've got up, which is telling people that we're open.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So, we have got a potential of what we are calling assumed cancellations, which is going to be people that are going to assume that it's going to be the same as the last lockdown. We have been through so much as a profession, at risk assessments, PPE, putting procedures in place. And we often forget that the public are absolutely oblivious to all of that for all of the stuff that we're doing to keep them safe. So, your first part of your battle plan is going to be Operation: We Are Open, I'm going to go through six ways that you need to be sharing that with your patients. Let's go through to the next slide. The first way should be your Google My Business listing and making sure that that is populated and up to date. A lot of practice owners, this has got a layer of kind of dust on the top of it, make sure that it's populated, it's got images, it's got videos, it's got your correct opening hours, and that it's really, really up to date. And that is one of the best ways to be having it be crystal clear that you are open for business.

Steven Bruce

I think there's probably quite a lot of people who don't really know about Google business listings, Nikola, it's not difficult to do, is it?

Nicola McLennan

No, it is a free gift from Google. And it is the easiest way to make sure that your practice is showing higher than the cowboys down the road. It is very simple and will probably take most people, if you haven't even claimed your listing or you're not sure what I'm talking about, I would put aside 15-20 minutes tops and you'll be good to go. You'll dramatically increase the visibility of your practice on Google.

Steven Bruce

Tell you what, Nicola, I didn't say this at the beginning, I said you were on with Nigel Botterill, you weren't there just hanging on his coattails, you are an osteopath, but you now spend your time running your own business, Boost My Practice. You've got a lot of experience in this stuff and you work specifically with clinics and other medical practices to make this stuff happen. So, if people need to know how to do this, and they can't be bothered to find their way around the Google stuff, you could help them.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. We've also got a free course it's called Master Google My Business for Practice Success. You can just go to the website, hit free courses and as I say, 15-20 minutes is the longest it'll take you.

Steven Bruce

And I will get people who will send me messages saying is this just a marketing exercise? It's not, I'm not just marketing, Nicola's business here, Nicola's got loads of free stuff to help you grow your business. It's all really, really important. But I'd be remiss if I didn't let you know that she's there as a professional to help out with the more detailed stuff as well. So anyway, back to you, Nicola.

Nicola McLennan

No worries. So, let's go on to the next slide.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Got business posts on this one.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So, I'm keeping on that Google My Business theme. During the previous lockdown, there was a separate section that came up on your listing that was a COVID status. Now, about 60 to 70% of practices in the UK and Ireland, it's no longer showing. So, to make it really, really obvious, if somebody is googling the practice, simply have an image post, which will be like a We Are Open, like a sign that you pin on the door, you can get a graphic like that for free from somewhere called canva.com. And post that every single week, Google My Business posts only last for seven days. So once isn't going to do it, but just have that be just a super easy visual representation that bang, they're open.

Steven Bruce

Can you keep putting the same one up every few days? Or do they require it to be different?

Nicola McLennan

Google aren't too fussy about duplicate content for posts. But you know, you might want to just slightly rephrase the title once in a while. I wouldn't worry too much.

Steven Bruce

And actually, Canva is a fantastic resource if you want any help with any other sort of graphics, get in touch with us here because we're not graphic designers but we do have a lot of experience with using graphic design software. And we'll help you get some good stuff put together if you don't know how to do it yourself. There's an offer from me, which I'm going to regret when 1000 people call me later in the day and say, please design my stay open poster. So, what about social media posts then, Nicola?

Nicola McLennan

So, it's same again, a very, very simple social media post and a graphic to explain that you're open. It doesn't have to be War and Peace, you don't have to explain why it is that you are able to be open, we just want it to be really easy for people to see that you're open. You can do text, you can do a graphic image, you could even do a video once a week. Reassurance posts, really, we're not just open, but we're keeping you safe. These are the things we have in place.

Steven Bruce

I know that sounds easy to do, doesn't it but I suspect a lot of people who are shy in front of a camera, and let's face it, and camera is now just one of these things. How would you suggest they approach it?

Nicola McLennan

Video doesn't have to be a Steven Spielberg production anymore. People are used to things being sort of rough and real. So literally just recording and try and keep it under sort of 60 seconds. And just a little reassurance video once a week. If you're shy about video, don't lose sleep over this, a text or graphic image will do.

Steven Bruce

I have a dispute with, my wife particularly, but others. Certainly, in the past, I was always told do your videos with your phone in landscape mode because it fits a computer screen. She says everyone's reading on their phones these days, so have it in portrait mode. My point is they can always turn their phone sideways. So, which do you recommend?

Nicola McLennan

I would recommend holding it upright. So, I'm afraid I have sided there.

Steven Bruce

Okay, right, that's point 3. Point 4 is your social media page banners.

Nicola McLennan

Indeed, this is something that people never change and it takes up a massive piece of real estate at the top of your Instagram and your Facebook page. So just whatever your banner is now again, this isn't rocket science, you're just going to add a little single line of "We are open" to the bottom so that they don't have to scroll down to find the information.

Steven Bruce

And then our website and annoying pop ups.

Nicola McLennan

Yes. So please don't have the fact that you're open on a pop up. What's the first thing you do when you see a pop up, you just hit the close button. It's horrible and it's annoying, nobody likes them. So simply to just add a sentence very, very near the top, a reassurance statement. So COVID practice statement, "We are open" and if you want to add following strict guidelines, taking every possible precaution to keep you safe, etc. But it needs to be very clear and really bite them in the bum, so that they can't miss that you're open.

Steven Bruce

It's the same with those accept the cookies pop ups isn't it? If they stay at the bottom of the page, you can cheerfully ignore them but they drive you up the wall when they take up the whole page and get in your way and you have to click it to get rid of it. Anyway okay. So, what comes after that? Texting and email reminders.

Nicola McLennan

When you are sending out your text and email reminders for appointments, it can be worth adding a reassurance there, particularly as this week comes to a close, for next week's appointments, it's probably worth sending something out already now, to reassure them. And also with your new patients, I would be verbally just saying to new patients that are saying right, you need to see me three or four times just to let you know that we will be staying open for continuity of care, etc. Make sure that you're not leaving that stone unturned.

Steven Bruce

And actually, as we were watching yesterday's broadcast, we had a lot of concern there about patients might say they're not prepared to wear a mask, either because their principles or their underlying conditions, those emails would be a great opportunity to have that conversation in advance. So, you don't end up turning people away at the door. And if they say, well, I've got COPD, asthma, I'm exempt from wearing a mask, that's when you could have that conversation about whether actually, we can't cater for people without masks, I'm afraid and so on. So, yeah, useful to do that well in advance, particularly now. And there's our little summary has just come up of your six points there. Again, we will share that with the slides that go out in a little while. So, is that all we need to do?

Nicola McLennan

Nope, nope, we've got 27 things to get through. So, let's get on to number seven.

Steven Bruce

All right, so we're talking about springing leaks with this one, don't let your clinic spring leaks.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So, the things that we're going to talk about now are basically best practices, and will enable you to really have a tight ship going forwards, particularly with regard to cancellations, which should be either the next slide or the one after that.

Steven Bruce

Right. So, these are best practice strategies: set up a cancellation register, it says is the slide.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So, every patient that is cancelling an appointment that doesn't immediately go back in the diary, you should be entering onto a cancellation register. So, think back to the last couple of winters and every patient that came in with a drip on the end of their nose and was full of cold and you thought, Thanks for that in advance, you're going to share your germs with me. All of those patients this year are likely to cancel. So, if you think about anybody that's got an upper respiratory anything is going to be cancelling. That can be not just a leak but a haemorrhage if you don't keep track of that, and it can be very overwhelming to keep track of it when you are getting a lot of cancellations come through at once because they all come through at once, they never come through spread evenly across the week, it'll always be half your afternoon gone, and then the last two still hanging on.

Steven Bruce

Always the last two.

Nicola McLennan

Always. So be keeping a note of everybody that is cancelling and then the next slide will be making sure that you are following up with those people consistently. So, follow up with them via phone and importantly via text message. So, if I leave you a voicemail, it's very easy on your device that does a zillion things other than as a phone to miss a voicemail. So, make sure that you send them a text message as well. Just checking in and seeing how they're doing, seeing how their shoulder is, do they need to rebook that appointment and how are they feeling?

Steven Bruce

Is there any way of making that easier for them? It's all very well to leave a text message and say, do you need to rebook? Is the technology available to make something clickable in messages that you can send? So that they can just press to say yes?

Nicola McLennan

Probably, it depends on the setup of your practice, doesn't it? You could put your online booking link in, but I would suggest that we want to make it as least kind of salesy as possible and it's a checking in, how you doing kind of message to make it as human and as personable as possible would be my advice.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Okay, so an inquiry register.

Nicola McLennan

So, most practices can dramatically improve their new patient numbers by just properly following up with the ones that they have. So, any inbound inquiry that needs to speak to you for any reason, that doesn't book in immediately, should be going on a register. And again, following up consistently three times in five working days is the next slide. And that will allow you to just, without really doing anything at all, to increase your new patient numbers by properly and consistently following up with new patient inquiries. Most of us are really, really busy and you ring Mr. Phillips about his bad back and you leave him a voicemail, and then you get on with your day and forget about him, just by putting in an extra few step, you will actually increase your new patients without spending any extra money.

Steven Bruce

And this is actually the hardest thing anyone ever has to master in any business. This whole business of following up. We all assume if we've sent one email or we've sent one text or whatever it might be, that people don't phone us back or don't contact us because they aren't interested. It's not because they forget all about it, isn't it Nicola? And the follow up is so important.

Nicola McLennan

And people worry that, Oh, I'm going to seem pushy. That human being has got a zillion other things that they are thinking about. They are not thinking about their perception of you. So don't worry about that. You're losing out on new patients that have put their hands up and said that they need help by contacting you in the first place.

Steven Bruce

And we've said this many times before, Nigel's a great advocate of this, you've said the same thing and I've learned it from you and from him, that actually, we need to stop thinking about contacting patients as being salesy and pushy. We're actually trying to help patients, yes, of course, it helps our business, but we're here to help them, if we don't tell them we're open, if we don't tell them that they can book, if we don't tell them what we can provide, we can't help them and we're leaving them in distress potentially. It's a good thing to do. Now, your next slide says we have to regularly post on Google My Business.

Nicola McLennan

Yes. So, a lot of people just are not posting on their Google My Business listing at all, the thing that matters with your listing is keeping it up to date and having new info and things on it. And posting is just a simple, easy way to do that. So, you can be posting about your reassurance posts about your procedures, posting that you're open, posting about osteopathic services in your town, very easy, quick thing to do, but helps to boost your presence in your area.

Steven Bruce

So, this is the second or third time we've talked about Google My Business. And probably worth emphasising again, it is probably one of the easiest ways of improving your profile and your presence, isn't it? It's not difficult at all, you just have to make that first step to get in there and use it.

Nicola McLennan

Such a quick win.

Steven Bruce

Double your Google My Business reviews by Christmas.

Nicola McLennan

Indeed. So, in order to get people to leave you Google reviews, you need to ask for them. They're one of the things that the algorithm values most. So, you don't necessarily have to have an enormous number. But a regular flow of them will make an enormous difference and gets you into what we call the three pack which gets your practice onto the Google Map section if somebody is looking for you in your area.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, if that's not clear, next time you go into Google and you look for business, you know, just take a look at the right-hand side where you get three businesses which are more prominent than others and that's where you need to be because how often do you click on one of those? And let's be honest, I don't think I can remember the last time I ever went beyond the first page of Google for anything.

Nicola McLennan

Most people don't go beyond the first sort of top third of the page really.

Steven Bruce

How do you get reviews yourself?

Nicola McLennan

So, you want to try and put a system in place for getting reviews. So, whether it is requesting them perhaps at discharge, whether it's part of your onboarding process with new patients that you request them, a sign in reception, all the way through to you know, there are companies that can completely automate it for you. So, you enter a new patient's email address, and they give you a give us a score out of 10 type of email that comes through to them. If they give you a score that is a seven or eight or above, it'll invite them and take them straight to your Google My Business listing. So, it takes the legwork out but obviously that costs kind of money. So, you can do it for free by simply asking, whether that's by text, by email or in person, or you can put a system in place to do it.

Steven Bruce

Actually, I haven't done this for a while. If you're enjoying the content that we're delivering, all this content we're delivering over the Coronavirus period and elsewhere, please leave us a review at the academy. It's dead easy thing, you can do it on the website, you can do it, I think, from links after this video. But yeah, we really do rely on those, I'd like to double my reviews before Christmas, if that's possible. And it will also give you an idea of how our system works, which we can help you with if you want to. Thank you for letting me introduce that. Okay, so a follow up system to send reminders to relevant patients to invite them for top ups and mot sessions.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So, this is your Mr. Phillips, who gets up off the couch and says, Oh, my God, I feel so much better. I really must come more often, it has been getting worse, hasn't it? How often would you think I would benefit from like a top up treatment? And you say perhaps every three months. Yeah, I'm gonna do that, he says and then you don't see him for three years. And the next time he comes in, he can barely move. So, it's for people that you have that kind of conversation with, they're busy, they have other things going on in their lives and it will simply give them a reminder. I recommend text messages always over email reminders, even better, something out in the post is even better. But it's putting in a system where you're keeping track of those people that it would be appropriate to remind them and that can greatly increase your numbers on a monthly basis and also leads to happy customers because you remembered that conversation and you remembered that he's rubbish at looking after himself because he's too busy fixing boilers for people and living his life.

Steven Bruce

I have two things to say on that. The one is I agree that people take more notice when stuff comes through the post, but it's much harder to take action on something that comes through the post, you've got to physically go to a telephone or computer and press buttons and stuff. If it comes through on your phone or your computer quite often, you can just press something to make contact. So, there are pros and cons, aren't there? The other one is the whole business about you know, calling people back in for follow up treatment. Watch the broadcast on maintenance treatment, which we did a few weeks ago with Andreas, forgotten his surname, but he's from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, he gave us a fantastic presentation on who is best suited to follow up to maintenance treatment and who is not suited to it. So, you can actually suggest to people on an evidence basis that follow up treatment, maintenance treatment would be best for them. Well worth looking at. Sorry, glad you brought that up, too. So now you're telling us we've got to create the next three months of social content.

Nicola McLennan

Getting a cancellation. And this is something that's on our to do list, I really must get more organised about my social media content. If you get a cancellation, you can just have that, post it on your computer, sit down and plan next week's, sit down and plan the weeks after. And it becomes so much easier for you to become active. And now you know, you can also be planning your Google My Business posts for next week as well.

Steven Bruce

Where do you get your ideas from?

Nicola McLennan

So, you always want to be useful with your content, and always be thinking about what a call to action is going to be. If you're really stuck on ideas, you can have a look there's always something whether it's osteoporosis month or you know, there's always something that you can pull a thread from and get some strategies and some tips for people.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, it's almost as though those International Day of the Whatevers were designed for marketers, isn't it because nobody else knows about it. But it gives you a reason to make contact if it's the International Day of the low back pain or something.

Nicola McLennan

But don't forget to use hashtags. So, if it is international low back pain day, do use the hashtag that precedes it. So, it'll be #internationalallowbackpainday. Otherwise, you're winking at people in the dark.

Steven Bruce

Okay, every page on our website has to have a clickable phone number featured at least twice, it says here.

Nicola McLennan

Indeed. So, these are very, very simple things that can improve the performance on your website. So, if your phone number on your website, either is hard to find or isn't clickable or isn't present enough, then you have a fire breathing dragon at the front door of your clinic. If you are expecting people to visit your website and then go get a pen and write your telephone number down and then navigate away from your website and dial on their phone, it isn't going to happen. It's often a two-minute email to your web person, please make sure that my phone number is clickable and it's at the top and bottom at least of every single page, not hidden away in the footer in tiny, tiny writing.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, and you see less of it these days. But there are still websites where you go to and you have to find a contact link somewhere on the page in order to go to a separate page to find the phone number. I think it's happening much less in health clinics and so on. But as you say, it's not difficult to keep the phone number element just floating at the top of the page is it, so that everything else scrolls underneath it.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. And most people hide away all the stuff that people are looking for on their contact us page. If you're looking for a chiropractor near you, you're really only bothered about two things. Where are they? Is it convenient for me to get to them? I've got to go through five or six different pages, your contact us page to find where you are on the map. That's a real drag. So, putting a map on your homepage is something that

hardly anybody does. They can then look and go Oh, that's right, by my nursery where I drop my kids, oh, that's really convenient for me. And the other thing is your opening hours they want to know, can they get to you? Is it convenient for them? Again, most people hide that information away on their contact us page.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, there are still sites out there where people are so intent on telling everybody that it's a regulated profession and I trained in whenever it was and I specialise in this and actually, most people already, if they're looking at your website, they know why they want you. They want to know where you are and what your number is. Okay. Ask for a website audit in the Boost Your Practice Facebook group and work on the suggestions. So, Boost Your Practice is your business.

Nicola McLennan

Yeah, so that's a free Facebook group. It's my online classroom. If you know that you should be getting more patients through your website and you're not sure where to start. It can be a very overwhelming task, improving your website's performance. Then we do audits for all new members and take them through some easy quick wins to improve their website performance.

Steven Bruce

Okay. I've just been told by one of the team that Andreas's surname is Eklund. He's the chap who was talking about maintenance treatments a few weeks ago, Andreas Eklund. Yeah, brilliant speaker and very well evidenced approach to maintenance care. Okay, and knowing your numbers, oh gosh, this is certainly one of Nigel Botterill's favourite, favourite topics and that nobody actually knows their number. What does that mean, Nicola?

Nicola McLennan

So, at the moment, most practices have had a very bumpy year, and there's going to be people watching this that quite frankly can't afford a lean winter with cancellations and such coming in. So, the instinctive thing is just to immediately just stop any paid marketing that you're doing, which can be such a mistake, it really is worth having a look at the different avenues, how much are you spending and how many new patients are you getting? And just spending half an hour to do that and figure out and get the numbers so that you figure out which bits of your marketing are working. Because then by all means, turn the other things off and put more funds behind that. It's often not until we look that we figure out what's actually working. So, most practice owners when I say where do your new patients come from, they kind of just say, well, mostly word of mouth and some Google. And when we drill into it and look at where their new patients are coming from, there's often like opportunities, things that they'd forgotten about, that local newspaper ad that's just been a standing order for seven years that they've forgotten about. There's opportunities, there are things that they can improve.

Steven Bruce

And one of the benefits of the coronavirus pandemic is that many people have stopped using Facebook and Google Ads suddenly, which means that the cost of pay per click advertising has dropped. It's plummeted. I

don't know if it's still way down low, but it's a lot cheaper than it was before. And it's still a fantastic way to get your face and business in front of people.

Nicola McLennan

100%. So, this quarter traditionally, is the most expensive quarter for Facebook ads, just because all the big boys come in and start screaming about Black Friday and Christmas. But for Google ads, certainly a lot of practices have just shut everything down, turned everything off. And the guys that are still in the auction are cleaning up and getting an awful lot of inquiries for an awful lot less money.

Steven Bruce

So, you probably know but if not: pay per click advertising is Google ads and Facebook ads, they both have their individual merits. And the auction that Nicola's referring to is that effectively you're in an auction when you go in there over how much you pay for the clicks on your key words, if it's Google particularly. And it's quite a science using those things correctly and I'll bet Nicola can help you with that. But they are very, very effective ways of advertising if you get them right. I emphasise that you have to get them right, because you can also spend a lot of money on the Google stupidity tax if you get it wrong.

Nicola McLennan

100%. Yes, they are ruthless with their application of it.

Steven Bruce

Well, just to reassure people then, Nicola, Google are not out to milk advertisers, because they know if advertisers get pissed off with them, they'll stop advertising. They want to deliver, don't they, what the advertisers want to achieve. But if you tell Google well, I want to click every time someone says the word "back" on Google, then you're going to get an awful lot of clicks. And what you want is a very, very niche market of people in your local area, looking for treatment for back pain. And you can narrow that down very, very tightly to people who actually genuinely want your service. If you get it right.

Nicola McLennan

Google simply want people to find what they were looking for. If somebody is looking for shoulder pain treatment and you send them to your homepage that's talking all about you and all your different services, it's kind of like somebody's looking for a pair of black jeans and they go to Debenhams homepage.

Steven Bruce

Yes, they've clicked your advert and you'll pay for that, but they'll click away immediately because they weren't getting what they wanted, and they don't want to search through your whole website.

Nicola McLennan

And Google will charge as soon as they notice people doing that, hitting back, your cost per click will steadily rise. Because they'll happily take your money, but they'll penalise you because people aren't finding what they're looking for.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Okay, so set up a thank you message to go to all word-of-mouth referrals and you mentioned word of mouth a moment ago.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So a simple thank you goes such a long way. So, this can be amplified into developing like referral rewards relationships with people but simply if Mrs. Phillips sent you a patient simply sending her a thank you, you don't have to mention obviously the patient by name because of confidentiality, but simply saying we really do, we don't take it for granted. Just want to take time out to thank you. It can be a simple text message, I've got clinics that send a personal video message and make sure it's mentioned Mrs. Phillips name, so it's obvious it was recorded just for her. You can really go a long way and Mrs. Phillips is then more likely to refer you somebody else because you took time to send a personal thank you to her.

Steven Bruce

That's quite tedious recording a video for everyone who's refers a patient to you, isn't it?

Nicola McLennan

It is but it depends how many new patients you want.

Steven Bruce

Okay, so now you're telling us to update our About Us page on the website. Why?

Nicola McLennan

Because it is nearly always a wasteland of out-of-date information, there'll be team members on there that aren't with you anymore, there'll be new team members that aren't featured there. And it's also one of the highest loading. So, it tends to get a lot of traffic, and it tends to have no call to action, nothing that the person can do to go ahead and book. So go, get the dust off it, make sure it's up to date, and add a call to action of some kind, whether it's to book online, request to speak to somebody about your specific problem, add something that they can do.

Steven Bruce

Right, I would also say, one of my favourite things to recommend on pages like that, is to get some pictures of your actual people in your own practice on that page, not the stock images that you can buy from iStock or Shutterstock or whoever else, people will recognise as being just advertising images straightaway, but they'll instantly know if it's really you in the clinic, next to your name or the picture of the clinic, picture of the practitioner and all of that helps to engender a little bit of trust and confidence in the business, doesn't it? So, it's not hard. It's not hard to do. I mean, anyone with a phone can take a picture of someone else in their clinic. It's that easy.

Nicola McLennan

It's a human face to the practice.

Steven Bruce

Right, what does this say? Workout your patient visit average for new patients, for your team members to identify who might need help and support.

Nicola McLennan

So, this is another leaky bucket training for people that employ associates or subcontract associates. A real leak can become if somebody's patient visit average. And by that I mean, when we have a new patient in the door, the number of sessions that that new patient has before they're either discharged or they self-discharge. And working this out for each individual can highlight problems in the practice, particularly if there's one associate whose number is way, way lower than the practice average. And that will often be somebody that is just lacking in confidence, perhaps not communicating very effectively, like what's going to happen next time and what they're going to do, or just not building a rapport with people and people are often if somebody's got a low patient visit average, they'll often have a high what we call percentage no follow up, which means treatment two is cancelled by the patient. And that is going to be a problem going into what's going to be a difficult quarter anyway. And it's just an opportunity for you to flag that and be able to provide some help and support for your team member.

Steven Bruce

Right. Anji has just sent in a comment, word of mouth is the best type of referral. And good referrers tend to refer more than one patient. So that whole business of thanking them that you mentioned earlier on is doubly important because I'd be more encouraged to do it again, won't they?

Nicola McLennan

100%.

Steven Bruce

I think on that, you said earlier on that you talk to people and they say word of mouth is the way they get most of their patients. I always feel a little cautious when people say that because everyone makes that assumption. But actually, there's often more to it than simply the word of mouth. So all these other factors do matter, don't they?

Nicola McLennan

They absolutely do and drilling down into that even further and looking for opportunities. So often when you look at your list of who referred you in, there's often some opportunities there. If you've got somebody that's a personal trainer, if you've got somebody that's a pilates instructor- why do people do pilates? Because they got sore backs- got some obvious people that you could establish a relationship with by not just thanking them, but you know, perhaps taking it a stage further. So, word of mouth, if it's working for your practices is awesome, but there's always ways to amplify it.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Not least just asking people to refer. Do a series of Facebook Lives with ergonomic advice when working from home, don't forget a call to action.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So, some people would say, Oh, it's been done to death, we all know what we should be doing. There's plenty of people that will now be working from home consistently for weeks and months. And just some very short practical advice with regards to best practices for ergonomics is just useful, it can just give you something to tick off. That's a relevant piece of content for your social media for that week, very shareable and can actually then be kind of downloaded and perhaps used as a resource, you could easily turn that into a little free mini course for patients that gets sent out, stack them all together and here's our free pack for you know how to sort out your dining room table.

Steven Bruce

This is a load of rubbish, Nicola, because I know if I do a Facebook Live, I'm going to fluff my lines.

Nicola McLennan

Do you know what a Facebook Live is good for two reasons? Number one is that it gets way more exposure than when you load prerecorded video. Number two, it's over quickly. And then you just go and get on with your day. If you sit and you've got the option to pause, I promise you it'll take you half an hour to do that two-minute video. If you go ahead and just press live and just imagine you're talking to Mrs. Phillips, who has said I'm working from home, I don't know what do. You say this stuff all day long, just be talking to her, thinking about the person that's watching, don't think about your hair, or, oh, I said that word wrong. Don't worry about yourself, just think about the person that's gonna find it useful.

Steven Bruce

What you were meant to say is, it doesn't matter if you fluff your lines because it makes you sound human. Because it does, doesn't it, and if you've got some slick video that's been designed by a marketing company, people will say, well, that's very professional, you must be very expensive, potentially. But actually, if it's obviously you really live-in front of a Facebook camera, I think it has a huge amount of credibility to it. And I'm also told that the Facebook Lives even when they stay on even though they're now recordings, they're no longer lives, they still get higher hit rates than other prerecorded videos,

Nicola McLennan

100% because it's absolutely, what you've just said, it's you being you, it isn't the best polished version of you, it's just you being you. And you're the reason they chose you in the first place. So again, it's reminding them of that.

Steven Bruce

And I'd say to you don't be frightened of being live on camera. If you watch our shows, every single show, I fluff my lines when I start these things, and I have to back up or mutter or stumble or do something, don't worry about it. And it is horrible being in front of the camera if you're not a natural camera person. Just get on with it because the public will love you for it. They really will. So where do we go from here? I've lost my slide control. So, what comes after 21? I don't know. I'm saying that loudly so that my techy can sort this out for me.

Nicola McLennan

Grab my version if that helps.

Steven Bruce

Here we are: reach out to pilates and yoga instructors and massage therapists who are currently closed in your network to offer them a referral reward programme.

Nicola McLennan

100%. So, if you've already got patients that are in those kinds of professions that are going to be shut right now, they're going to be very available to talk to you they're going to be appreciating just a call, Hi, how you doing? How are you managing? And if they've been somebody that's already been referring business and that's a great time to kind of have a chat, whether it's that you're going to be sending them a nice voucher for a thank you for every patient that they send in whether you just, I used to, in my practice, have little VIP cards that were given to my top referrers and every time our prices rose, theirs stayed down and it was nothing fancy, Steven, it was like an old fashioned card like your blockbusters video card, showing my age now. That's what it was, but people loved it. And when they were at the front desk, they'd get it out and say, Oh, don't forget I'm Nicola's VIP. Yeah, they really did like it. So looking for opportunities to build relationships.

Steven Bruce

And then rent treatment space to practitioners currently unable to work from gyms etc.

Nicola McLennan

Very easy, quick win, lots of the Facebook groups have got places where you can advertise if you've got space. I had somebody last week that I suggested this to because she has a massage therapist that brings a fair amount of income in, that isn't going to be able to work and she was like, oh, I don't really have enough time. If you are in a commercial premises and you've got no restrictions on when you can work, if you think about your practice as being available from seven in the morning to nine at night. You're going to have some time and some space that you can rent out and they may actually prefer, you may actually get yourself a long-term tenant and a source of income.

Steven Bruce

Record a welcome video for your website.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely, there is a drought of welcome videos. A welcome video is a real benefit because it increases the amount of time that people spend on the page. And the more time that they spend, the more likely they are to enquire. Again, puts a human face to the business. But plenty of people don't read text, most content that people engage with online nowadays is video. So, keeping it super short and talking maybe 90 seconds. People don't want war on peace. But literally just calling out why they're there, what they're looking for, and draw attention to your favourite call to action, whether it's to book online, to call, to fill in a form, let them know what it is that they can do to get in touch.

Steven Bruce

And again, it's not hard to do, is it? And frankly, if people are stuck for what they should say in their welcome video or whatever, go find someone else's page, see what they say and say something similar or say it better. But you know, it's easy to get the ideas. Just a talking head really, isn't it? We have another we got another thing here about a series of Facebook Lives about stress, anxiety and posture.

Nicola McLennan

Yep. So again, moving away from ergonomics, people are overwhelmed with uncertainty right now. Stress and anxiety is just sort of part of everyday life and you can do some live thinking about kind of posture, breathing exercises, etc. Easy series of content for you to do as well.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, and it'll be useful for people if they wanted ideas about that to look back at the recordings that we did certainly during the first lockdown, we had lots of stuff there breathing techniques, Anji Gopal, Kerry Dowson, and others about how to overcome stress and so on. So, there's lots of stuff that you could just take for your own use and using your own practice. Nick Burns says, isn't there a problem with professional ethics with the general councils over issuing rewards for referrals?

Nicola McLennan

So, you're not going to be approaching somebody cold and saying, I want you to go ahead and refer me business. That's very different. You're not going fishing. What you're doing is thanking people. Now, I would advise you certainly to have it be something that's going to be internal. You wouldn't be rewarding somebody with John Lewis vouchers, you're going to be rewarding them with perhaps a discount to see your massage therapist or something. But it's a thank you. The referral rewards, perhaps you want to call it something else. But you could call it a thank you voucher system instead. But it's a simple thank you. It's not you're not soliciting.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. As you said, it's in response to, it's not to pay people to refer people to the clinic, which would be a completely different thing. Georgina says how much would you spend?

Nicola McLennan

So, I mean, that depends how many new patients you would like or who the person is.

Steven Bruce

I think she means per person per referral.

Nicola McLennan

Yes. So, you know, it depends on what your fees are, I would say a minimum to get somebody's attention of 10 to 25 pounds, depending on what your fees are. If you do send out a thank you voucher, a really good tip can be to have it have an expiration date, and send them a text message a few weeks before it's gonna be expiring, because if they're anything like me they want to get their money's worth and if the voucher is going to expire, they're going to use it.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, okay. And send a thank you video to everyone who has referred your patient in the last three months and check in to see how they're doing.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So, this is just an opportunity to acknowledge that people are having a very difficult time at the moment. And if you're not doing any kind of thank you whatsoever, and you've time, if you have cancellations at the moment, then this is a really nice use of time. Again, if you're not confident on video, we've got that point earlier that we covered, which was just to send a thank you text or something else. But it's a nice reason to touch base with people and see how they're doing.

Steven Bruce

And your final slide, I think, reach out to local business owners likely to be affected by lockdown. Would they like a free posture workshop for their staff?

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So really thinking about where are the opportunities just now. And there are plenty of businesses that are going to be having their staff working long term from home and will be looking at ways to be able to be supporting their staff from the point of view of health and wellness. So, it's an opportunity there, if you've done those Facebook Lives, you could perhaps package that and it's something you don't even have to put much effort into. But certainly, getting on Zoom with people and enabling them to go through best practices for ergonomics, again, it's it's a way of supporting local, a really easy thing to promote on your social media, that you're not just asking for locals to support you but you're supporting local as well. And we're offering these free workshops. If you're a small business owner, and you've got people that are working from home, let us help you.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Nicola, we were worried that 27 slides was going to take us way over our time, we're almost bang up to the deadline and we've just got through 27 slides. There is one here that talks about getting a copy of 27 ways to boost your practice during lockdown. And I presume that people simply go to that web address and they can fill in a form?

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So, if you go along to boostyourpractice.co.uk/apm and you can get all of those 27 ways in a simple three-page PDF.

Steven Bruce

Fantastic. Well, that's it, thank you. And it's really kind of you to have offered to do this for us. And I know you're trying to get the word out to as many practitioners as possible. And that I think was a really good list of things to do. And there are lots of people producing lists, and they all have their value but there's some real sort of focused targeted stuff in that list, which I really hope people will, particularly those who are frightened of cameras, I hope they'll bite the bullet and get on with it because it'll make such a difference, won't it?

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely and if you do nothing else, even if you're camera shy, it would be the cancellation register and the inquiry register. That can really, really help you take control and take the reins back on what is going to be a difficult winter with cancellation rates and just stops you having that kind of, where was that piece of paper I had in my hand yesterday? Who was that person that cancelled that I meant to call? And just helps you track of it and puts you back in control.

Steven Bruce

Thank you, Nicola. As I said I will share your handout with everybody. In fact, it will probably be landing in their email boxes right this second and hopefully you will be able to help them out as they get through this difficult period. And best of luck to you as well during this difficult period

Nicola McLennan

And yourself. Thank you so much for having me, Steven.

Steven Bruce

Our pleasure.