

# Connection Directions

Are you using mobile technology and social media to engage with present and potential patients? These six tips explain how easy—and rewarding—it can be



Most orthodontists know that word-of-mouth advertising is the most effective kind, but how do you encourage patients to recommend their friends to you without straight-up asking them to do so? (Which likely wouldn't be very effective, anyway.)

Progressive practices understand that while word-of-mouth advertising is an organic process, there are still plenty of ways to foster and encourage it.

Today's orthodontic patients are tech-savvy and social. They keep their entire world at their fingertips via smartphone apps and services. Communicating with patients on the platforms they're comfortable with is the most direct means of getting their attention, and also impressing them. It all comes down to a simple equation: If they think you're cool, they'll tell their friends.

The following six examples, provided by the team at Dolphin Imaging & Management Solutions, illustrate great ways that orthodontists and their staffs have been using mobile technology and social media to connect with current and potential patients, encourage better patient compliance and market themselves.

## 1. Personally follow up with patients during off-hours.

When orthodontists are at the office, they're busy treating patients, with little if any time to make the personal calls that make someone feel special.

Dr. Andre Ferreira of Advanced Orthodontics in Anniston, Alabama, uses his practice management system's mobile app to follow up with patients on his way into the office.

**"I have a 30- to 45-minute commute every day, so I use that time to make 'care calls,'" he said. "If they've just had their braces put on, I call to ask how they're doing. Often, I follow up on personal things they've told me while in the chair, such as attending band camp or acting in a school play. It really impresses them that the doctor called them."**

Ferreira's Dolphin Mobile app, for example, gives him complete access to his database, which allows him to make the call directly from a patient's chart.



Dr. Andre Ferreira

## 2. Streamline scheduling with patient-facing mobile apps.

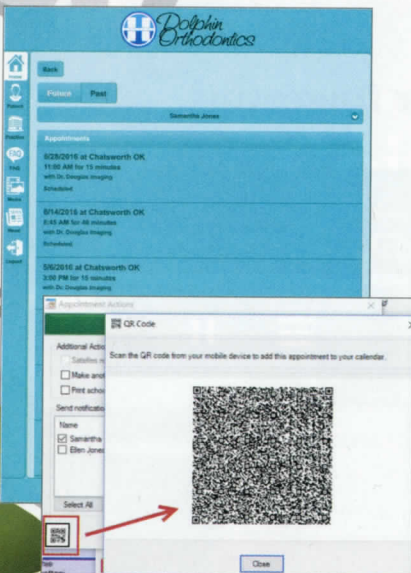
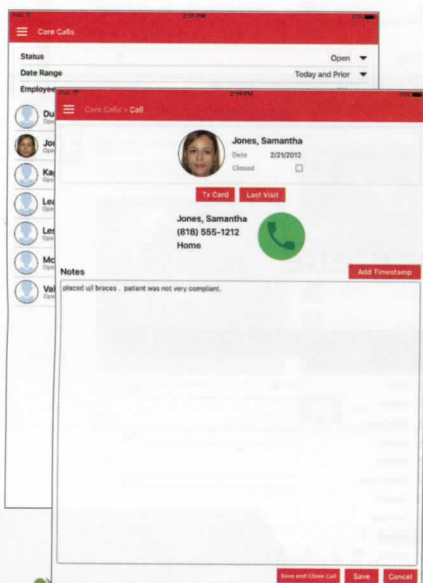
Mobile apps are great tools for inserting orthodontic treatment into the center of your patients' lifestyles. Most don't remember a time before mobile phones, and have learned to access information and services via their phone's apps.

Dr. Blair Barnett of Avery Orthodontics in Cedar Park, Texas, said the ease of appointment-making is one of the features he values most on his MyOrthodontist app.

**"Patients can just scan their generated QR code at the time the next appointment is made, and it enters the info into their MyOrthodontist app on their phone," he explained. "They really love the feature that lets them program the app to remind them about the upcoming appointment as many times as they want, leading up to the appointment itself."**



Dr. Blair Barnett



### 3. Reduce in-office waiting time by sharing questionnaires over the internet.

No one likes filling out paperwork—especially when they're anxious about seeing a doctor in a few minutes. Online records-sharing services used by health care providers offer a secure way to exchange health information while allowing patients to fill out the forms at home, at their leisure. They're better able to focus, and more likely to have better access to the information required. Yvonne Copet, office manager and treatment coordinator at Kildonan Orthodontics in Winnipeg, Manitoba, said it helps streamline their practice flow so they can focus on treating patients.



Yvonne Copet

**“We use AnywhereDolphin as a convenience tool,” she said. “Sending the questionnaire over AnywhereDolphin before a patient visit helps keep our schedule on track here in the office.”**

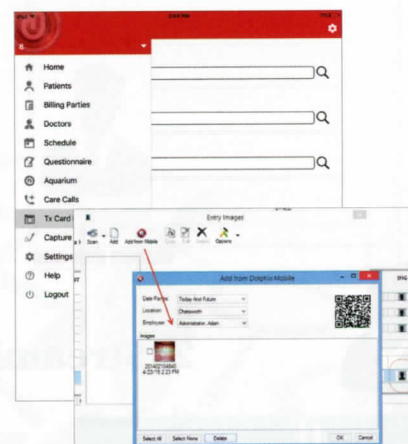
Sending the patient history and other questionnaires to the patient before the initial appointment lets everybody be prepared when the new patient arrives.



### 4. Motivate patients by instantly inserting hygiene photos into their chart at each visit.

“I use the image-capture feature in Dolphin Mobile constantly,” Dr. Ferreira said. “It lets me snap a photo and insert it directly into the treatment card in the patient’s chart. When I see a patient with poor hygiene, I tell him he’s not brushing properly, take a photo and put it in his chart right in front of him. He watches me do this. It serves as a great motivator, for one—plus I have the image to put in a letter and text to the parents.”

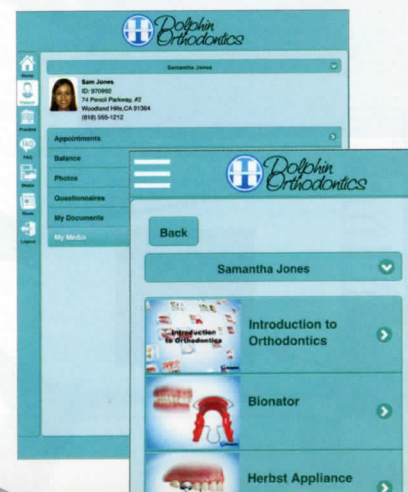
**“I do this all directly from Dolphin Mobile. Then at the next visit I take another photo, and 90 percent of the time the hygiene is improved. Seeing the comparison is very powerful and motivating for the patient. I do the same for poor elastic use.”**



### 5. Place case-specific education videos at their fingertips.

Mobile apps for patients often allow doctors to send content specific to the patient’s diagnosis and treatment plan. Because a lot of information tends to get thrown at patients during the initial consult, this is especially helpful for them as they can review it later, and show absent parents and even friends.

**“During the consultation we show Dolphin’s Aquarium patient-education videos, then send them to their MyOrthodontist app,” Copet said. “MyOrthodontist is a great tool for communicating these and other types of information to the patient, which in turn helps us by reducing calls to the office.”**



## 6. Reach out to patients in their online social spaces.

Many orthodontic practices use YouTube, Facebook and other social media platforms such as Google+ and Snapchat to engage with current and potential patients. They post educational and informational content, as well as entertaining photos and videos that feature the doctor and staff.

Content that features patients is also popular, such as “Congratulations!” posts on de-band day and candid shots from a recent patient-appreciation event.

Dr. Greg Jorgensen of Jorgensen Orthodontics in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, explained that certain types of posts are more successful than others.

“The posts that get the most attention are those that highlight the things that we do for our patients and the great things that our patients do on their own,” Jorgensen said. “We recently made more than 300 mouth guards for four local high school football teams. We delivered the mouth guards at a tailgate wienie roast, and our Facebook followers loved reading about and seeing pictures of that. One of our patients was recently named Miss Teen New Mexico. That was also a very popular post.”

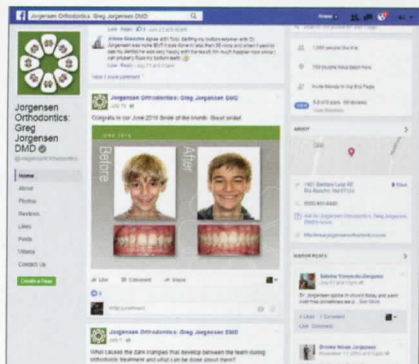
Showing your casual and fun side online will not only help patients feel more comfortable, but also will inspire them to share posts with friends.

**“The key to social media is not just posting things about your practice,” Jorgensen said. “Anyone can do that. The real value is when you can get your own patients to start posting things about you. That is when potential patients really sit up and take notice.”**

The mobile technologies and social media that continue to emerge are shaping society and directing the future of how we practice and do business, making it crucial to embrace technology when competing for today’s orthodontic patient.



Dr. Greg Jorgensen



Chester Wang

## Going Straight to the Source

Here's more about Dolphin Imaging & Management Solutions, the company behind the smart article

Chester Wang and the team at Dolphin began serving the worldwide orthodontic community in 1988. Since then, Dolphin has earned a reputation for grasping the latest technologies and, through constant interaction with the community, developing targeted software solutions for the orthodontist.

The company's product line includes 2D/3D imaging, diagnostic, practice management, patient education, mobile and cloud software solutions. It provides 24/7 tech support, of which 97.6 percent of survey respondents stated to be “excellent.”\* ■

\*Per data collected from January 2014 to present.



Check out why Dolphin is the best software solution for your ortho practice.

Visit [dolphinimaging.com](http://dolphinimaging.com).