

# Successful Interactions on Dentaltown's Message Boards

## **A VENDOR'S GUIDE**



## **Welcome to Dentaltown's message boards!**

This guide is designed to be a resource for vendors who'd like to build a positive relationship and reputation with the members of Dentaltown's online community by participating in our message board forums. The information provided summarizes details about our community members and the best ways to interact with them online.

### **WHO IS THE AUDIENCE ON DENTALTOWN'S MESSAGE BOARDS?**

Only verified members of Dentaltown can see and respond to the posts in our online message boards. Everybody in our active online community has some connection to the dental industry, whether they're a dentist (owner, associate or retired), a dental school student, a dental laboratory technician, a hygienist, a dental assistant, a consultant or a dental vendor like you. Regardless of their title, everyone visits Dentaltown.com message boards with the intent of discussing a variety of issues — some for fun, some for help and some for research/information.

### **WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT IS LIKELY TO BE FLAGGED AS "SPAM"?**

Nobody likes getting junk emails every day, but if an email contains information you requested, that's different! Our online message boards are similar in that regard: If a member has *asked for* information or help with something, then providing that content will be very well received. However, unsolicited posts that try to sell a vendor's products or services are not helpful, which is why they're considered spam and violate our terms of service. This type of content is poorly received by our members — in fact, it's actually a big turnoff for them.

Invitations to "contact me" or other forms of helpful posting are allowed in the body of a post as long as you're contributing to the discussion and the "contact me" is included within the post giving helpful information. However, the "contact me" should not be repeated in the post.

### **HOW CAN MY COMPANY BUILD A GOOD REPUTATION ON THE MESSAGE BOARDS?**

Dentists receive a lot of high-pressure sales tactics, and at some point, many have also been victims of scams. In general, they appreciate and value when people are helpful and provide useful, relevant information without also trying to simultaneously "sell" something. So spamming, self-promotion or disparaging other vendors will never be beneficial to your company's reputation on Dentaltown's message boards.

Dentaltown's message board audience pulls from a full, varied community of members, so it does take time to really understand and become part of that community. Don't try to win everyone over and get all your information out in one day or one week! Instead, learn and familiarize yourself with the message boards, and subscribe to forum categories that are relevant to your business. In those categories, identify members who make posts you find interesting and follow them.

## **HOW DO I DEAL WITH NEGATIVE COMMENTS?**

Always remember that many more people are reading the message boards than posting on them, so don't feel the need to respond to every single negative comment. If you *do* choose to respond, be sure to do so in a professional manner and provide information that other readers will find useful. (The original poster might not be a prospective buyer, but many other readers will be.) Your response may address any incorrect information about your company in the original post, as long as it's done respectfully and professionally.

If you see a post that is truly a personal attack toward you, click the "Report Abuse" button and wait for the moderators to take care of things. Remember: A negative opinion is not a personal attack! Over time, if you and your company have developed a good reputation, you will notice other members coming to your defense and offering input, instead of you needing to provide that response.

## **SHOULD I START A THREAD?**

It is against the rules to start a thread for the sole purpose of self-promotion. That said, if you're knowledgeable in your field, there are plenty of ways to start useful, productive threads that aren't against the rules. For example, if you sell X-ray equipment, you could start a thread with a post that discusses current guidelines on radiation exposure. (You could not, however, create a post that just promotes the fact that your product has low radiation exposure.)

## **WHAT SHOULD GO IN MY SIGNATURE AREA AND PROFILE?**

As a member vendor, full disclosure of your business interests is required in your signature and profile. This space is also a great opportunity to provide your contact information so members can find out what you have to offer! Put all your contact information, logos and clickable links to your company website in your signature and profile; do not include them in the body of your posts.

## **HOW CAN I USE KEYWORDS ON THE MESSAGE BOARDS?**

The message boards are very expansive, and it can sometimes feel impossible to keep up with all the threads in the categories that interest you! To help you stay updated about relevant information being posted, go to the "Keyword" feature and add words and phrases specifically relevant to you — things like your name, your company name, your product names and any other specific words. Then you'll be notified any time one of these words is posted and can immediately locate the post in question. This is a great way to be active in supporting your present and future clients!

## **WHO FROM MY COMPANY SHOULD POST?**

Just like having the wrong person answering your phones can be a negative for your business, so can having the wrong person posting for you. To best convey your messaging, identify someone on your team who is not only knowledgeable about your company but also adept at communicating with others via the written word.

## **HOW CAN I GET HELP ON THE MESSAGE BOARDS?**

For more insights and guidance about Dentaltown's message boards, reach out to our message board manager, Dr. Stephen Glass, via email at [stephen@farranmedia.com](mailto:stephen@farranmedia.com). You can also contact the moderators of each specific forum with your questions or issues.

## **HOW CAN I GET MY COMPANY MORE EXPOSURE ON THE MESSAGE BOARDS AND MORE TRACTION WITH THE DENTALTOWN READERSHIP AUDIENCE?**

There are many ways to accomplish this! To find out what is best for your company, please reach out to our sales director, Mary Lou Botto, via email at [marylou@farranmedia.com](mailto:marylou@farranmedia.com). The Dentaltown team and all the members of our online communities truly value the site's sponsors and appreciate their participation!