TNT Dental

MARKETING
CASE STUDY

HENRY FORD VISITS MICHEL DENTAL

Topeka, KS

01 INTRODUCTION

Established, successful practices present unique marketing challenges. In many cases, the forces of inertia keep them doing what they have always been doing. Afterall, it is what got them to this level of success in the first place. However, change is often needed. In fact, this is where a visit from Henry Ford (or at least his spirit) might be just the ticket to help these practices get to the next level.

This is just the type of situation TNT Dental faced when Dr. Michael Michel challenged us to come up with a marketing plan for his very successful, two-location practice in Kansas. He had a sense things were not working as well as they should along with some very specific objectives. Of equal importance, his Practice Administrator, Beth, had impressive facts, figures and reports to fuel our analysis.

One relatively unique, yet very important, aspect of Michel Dental is their commitment to set aside 4 days every January to establish specific objectives for the upcoming year. During this time, they meet with their financial advisors, gain insights from their team and practice consultant, and get direct input and ideas from the Growth Team at TNT.

2019 RESULTS AT-A-GLANCE

20% increase in new patients

55% revenue increase at satellite practice

24% increase in overall production

27% decrease in the cost per new patient



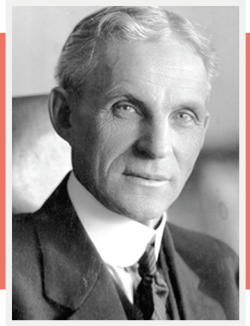
LINDSAY BIGGS, DDS • MICHAEL MICHEL, DDS, PA

02 THE STARTING POINT

Michel Dental was a pretty traditional, hygiene and restorative practice which had just completed another successful year. Their two-doctor, four hygienist team generated $2.6 million in revenue and attracted 692 new patients in 2018. They were spending around 3% on marketing and working to expand a new, satellite practice in Silver Lake – about 12 miles from their primary practice in Topeka, KS. Traditionally, they spent about 60% of their marketing budget on direct mail, and they religiously tracked the sources of all new patients.

03 THE OBJECTIVES

Along with the overall goal of growing production by at least 10% in 2019, Dr. Michel wanted to focus on some specific priorities. He believed there was a significant opportunity to grow the Silver Lake satellite, and he wanted to aggressively increase his treatment of sleep apnea and TMJ patients. In addition, he did not want to increase his marketing budget. In fact, it would be great if he could reduce it a little.



> *"If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got."*
>
> **Henry Ford**
> FORD MOTORS

04 THE ANALYSIS

The TNT Strategy Team found some immediate opportunities. First and foremost, direct mail was not working. In 2018, Michel Dental spent just almost $41,000 on direct mail to attract 38 new patients equating to a staggering $1,077 per new patient. This was in sharp contrast to the $78 per new patient cost of the 350 new patients attracted via the Internet and the 349 new patients generated from referrals – at almost no cost.

In addition, there was very little transparency in how their Google Ads campaign was performing. It was costing $1,600 per month, but there no clear connection between clicks, costs and new patients.

Another opportunity was found in Dr, Michel's desire to grow his sleep apnea business. Research showed patients not understanding how a dentist could help them with a "medical" problem, and this extended to the goal of building a network of referring dentists and physicians. We needed a way to establish Dr. Michel's expertise in treating sleep apnea.

The practice was very good at converting leads into new patients via the phone, but they were only converting about 25% of on-line, form requests. This conversion rate should be closer to 80% and represented an opportunity for at least 80 additional new patients per year – with no additional marketing expense or lead generation.

05 THE ACTIONS TAKEN

Held in-person, strategic planning sessions

Completed a zoned zip-code analysis of direct mail efforts

Launched multiple, fully-custom PPC campaigns with conversion tracking

Created a new website for the sleep apnea portion of their practice

Developed an updated, video-enabled website for their dental practice

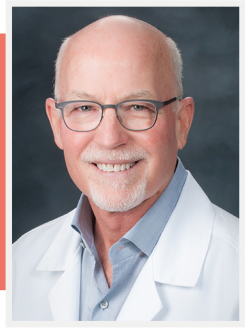
Dramatically improved keyword rankings in Google for Topeka and Silver Lake



TNT DENTAL WORKING TOWARD YOUR SUCCESS

We started by thoroughly analyzing their direct mail program. We found about 40% of the zip codes being targeted were generating more than 80% of the leads. This made it possible to confidently reduce the direct mail budget by 50% while monitoring actual results for future cost-reduction opportunities. Even at this reduced level of spending, the cost of direct mail leads was 13x's the cost of new patients generated via the Internet.

Parallel to this analysis, we launched a new website focused exclusively on the treatment of sleep apnea. It emphasized Dr. Michel's advanced training in airway management and connected the dots between oral appliances and their cost-effective, non-invasive and non-surgical benefits. The goals were to attract patients directly to the website and to support the dental and medical practices willing to become "screening centers" for patients.



> *"Our record-setting 2019 is a direct result of the work of TNT Dental. They listened to what I wanted to accomplish, and they made it happen. Most importantly, their entire team provided peace-of-mind and allowed me to focus on other priorities."*
>
> **Dr. Michael Michel**
> MICHEL DENTAL

At the same time, we launched an updated, video-enabled website for their dental practice. Its primary objective was to better convert the existing, strong traffic into phone calls and appointment requests. Also, we were able to quickly differentiate Michel Dental from all its competitors and to provide an updated foundation on which to build our SEO strategies.

In addition, TNT shifted the management of the Google Ads campaigns to its in-house team of dental PPC experts. We launched separate campaigns focused on attracting new patients to Silver Lake and to generating sleep apnea patients from across Topeka.

06 THE RESULTS

At a big picture level, Michel Dental spent less money on marketing in 2019 and generated $600,000 in practice growth (+24%) while attracting 169 more, new patients (+20%). This is really all anyone needs to know.

However, there is more to the story. Digging into the numbers, we found real progress towards Dr. Michael's goals of growing his Silver Lake satellite practice and his sleep apnea and TMJ businesses. Silver Lake grew from $419,000 in revenue in 2018 to $650,000 in 2019 (+55%). At the same time, the sleep apnea and TMJ business at the core Topeka practice more than doubled – from $90,400 in 2019 to $225,500 in 2019.

While everyone involved was pleased with the results, many of the core objectives left room for improvement in 2020 and beyond. That is the nature of this kind of shift in strategy. Change is tough, and it takes time.

1,031
new patients
in 2019 (up 20%)

$633,000
growth in
annual production

$8,800
reduction in 2019
overall marketing cost

24%
2.5x growth of sleep apnea
& tmj to $225,500

55%
growth in satellite practice
to $650,000

$24,900
savings in direct mail
& generated more new patients



"TNT is a refreshing change from all other dental marketing companies. Jordon is our single point-of-contact for everything we need, and she makes it incredibly easy to ask questions and get answers."

Beth
MICHEL DENTAL PRACTICE ADMINISTRATOR

07 THE FUTURE

Even with these amazing results, there remains plenty of room for continued improvement during 2020 and beyond. First and foremost, we want to expand the number of patients generated by referrals. Also, a community marketing program that includes an emphasis on social media makes sense. Continued refinement of the Google Ads and search optimization will occur as well.

Other points of emphasis for our future marketing include expansion of Michel Dental's Membership Plan, improvement in their conversion of "form leads" into patients, and enhanced brand awareness in both Topeka and Silver Lake.

Best of all, these improvements are going to be funded by a further reduction in direct mail spending. This will allow us to keep the overall marketing budget flat (or even down) for the third, straight year.