

Transcript

Episode 33: Reducing Your Insurance Dependency with NFL Quality Mouthguards

Naren:

Hello everyone! Welcome to another amazing episode of the less insurance dependents podcast show. This is Naren, your co-host. I'm super excited to be joining today in this beautiful evening with my dear friend Gary. Gary how are you this evening?

Gary:

Hey Naren! I'm doing fantastic. Very excited about recording another podcast episode and we've got a fun topic today for listeners. This one I can hardly contain my enthusiasm because it's something that I have a deep passion around. I can't wait to ignite the passion of our listeners around this project.

Naren:

You love dentistry, so do I, and one of the things we share in this podcast is ideas on all the 38% the practices save giving to the insurance company, how they can use it in creative fashions. I know one of the ideas you use very successfully in your practice is to do NFL quality mouth guards for your local high school team. Can we talk about that today Gary?

Gary:

Absolutely Naren! And this is one of the very few analog marketing projects that we do. As you know Naren because you get to see you know behind the scenes of everything we do at life smiles, almost everything that we do marketing wise is digital and as it should be, right? We're in the era where digital marketing is most effective. You know when we first bought our practice in in May of 07, it was the opposite. Almost everything that we did in 07 was analog and today that that entire tide has shifted. Well one of the analog things that we do and I see us doing you know in well into the future because it works so well is we make NFL quality mouthguards for our local high school football team. Now you might be wondering, well Gary! Why do you call them NFL quality mouthguards? Well, for a very good reason. Naren, the team dentist of the Oakland Raiders and Golden State Warriors, so one's an NFL team the others an NBA team taught us how to make these mouth

guards. They're the very same mouth guards that he's making for the Oakland Raiders and also for the Golden State Warriors. By the way this particular Dentist, long-time client of mine is the only dentist that is the team dentist for both an NFL team as well as an NBA team. So, we can literally say quite honestly that these are NFL quality mouth guards. It's a dual layer mouth guard that provides custom protection for the boys because the mouth guard is made from their own impression and these are super high quality mouth guards and Naren, you will appreciate this, because what this does for us and if I may I'll get into the details of how we do this in just a minute but I want to explain why we do this, the why is really important. We and we do not charge for these we do that we make these custom mouth guards at no charge for our local varsity high school football team. There is 64 boys on the team, so we make 64 of these. We actually make them up in our office and Naren, do you think for a minute that I want to practice full of 16 and 17 year old high school boys? Is that is that the best demographic to market my practice to 16 and 17 year old boys?

Naren:

No! You want their parents! All the people who are going to watch that game.

Gary:

Yeah and by the way we do appreciate these boys, but what who who do we really want? We want their parents, their grandparents, their aunts, their uncles, the faculty at the high school, you know the alumni of the high school and what this does is it connects you to a community. Naren, you're a marketing wizard and isn't it cool when you are connected to a certain community in terms of how they support your practice?

Naren:

Absolutely, I think there's a lot of subconscious principles you are tapping into. One is I mean I mean I mean high school football team is kind of the centre of the town, right? I mean it like it brings everyone together. Something that people get behind. So, I really think on one level you are putting your flag on something that is so near and dear to the people you know who are involved in this, the parents, the grandparents the the teams, the spectators the whole nine yards.

Gary:

And by the way if you listen to this in your not, maybe you're in a community or maybe maybe the high school football isn't really on your radar watch the movie Friday Night Lights. Friday Night Lights it's about a community in Texas where everybody comes out to watch high school football.

Naren:

I've watched all 60 episodes of that, It's a show right? It's a

Gary:

It's a show yeah!

Naren:

It's seasons. I have watched everyone, it's just crazy!

Gary:

Yeah and that's how it is for us by the way, we're in a Phoenix Arizona and and high school football is a big deal

Naren:

Yeah

Gary:

Oh and by the way just as the side Naren! This can be adapted to any contact sport so of course where you are in Toronto what is the sport that comes to mind, I will put you on the spot here. We did not talk about this.

Naren:

Hockey

Gary:

What's the sport that comes to mind?

Naren:

Hockey for sure.

Gary:

Hockey for sure!

Naren:
Yeah

Gary:
So this this could be basketball, it could be wrestling, it could be a hockey of course because of the danger of that puck, it could be baseball the infielders wearing protection for their for their mouth, it could be soccer, lacrosse. There's many variations this. I'm going to, you know stick to the high school football example as I explained how to do this but talk about some of the other things are at place, so it kind of it puts us front and center on a subject that is really top of mind for many people in the community. What are some other things are at play?

Naren:
You mean in terms of from marketing standpoint?

Gary:
Yeah from a marketing span, I'm kind of thinking back to Chaldini as well

Naren:
yeah

Gary:
The principles but there's other there's other elements of the Chaldini you know fundamental principles of marketing that come into play this for sure, including the fact that we give these two to the boys. We don't charge for them, so that's a classic Cialdini principle number one.

Naren:
Reciprocity! Yeah! So you take care of the community football is important to us. We take care of you. So, you and you're playing at community, I mean reciprocity and at a level that is above everything else, like I mean like you said in that show you know the Friday Night Football you know

Gary:
The Friday night lights

Naren:

The whole community comes together. That's like the one thing that everybody looks forward to and the second principle of course is authority and you you talked about you know this is the same mouthguards that NFL the players are using because it's true you know it's made by this same coach who's one of your clients so I think that's the huge thing so I think authority comes in, reciprocity comes in at a level that you can't even believe and I think one of Cialdini's newest principles is called unity. So it's like belonging you know it's like we all part of something and I think this for example that

Gary:

If I can amplify that for example the our high school when we take the photo the team Fame bite us to come team photo day and we actually take our picture in front of the entire varsity football team and all the coaches. So we're part of this. So we're like part of their community. Well let me let me take a few minutes and talk about how we do this I don't get too deep in the weeds but let me talk about how we do this and then I want to circle back with you Naren and and talk about how in the world of digital marketing we can completely leverage this project in ways that weren't possible even just a few years ago. So let me talk about how we do it. The way we do it is, we do this in June every year and June for us is the right timing because it allows us to make the mouth guards before the boys start contact drills where they're putting on pads and and you know hitting each other and drills. So we make them before then and we do these in back to back to back evenings in our practice, we do them on a Tuesday night and a Wednesday night. So we bring in 32 boys on the Tuesday night they have to bring at least one parent. We need the parent there to sign a liability release but of course we also want the parent there for marketing reasons. So they have to bring in one parent and we stay open from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. we don't make appointments for the boys to have their impressions taken. They can come in anytime from 5:00 to 7:00 and they tend to kind of pace themselves throughout the evening. They come in. We turn our whole office and do impression a Rama that night every one of my we have six treatment rooms all six with treatment rooms were prepared to you know take impressions. We stay as a team that night to pour up the models, those stone models and then over the next two to three weeks our assistants actually make the mouth guards over the next the next two to three weeks. The next night we do the same thing with the other 32 boys. So our coach divides the team into two. 32 kids come in on Tuesday night. 32 kids come on Wednesday night. We invite the coaches to attend, we invite the booster club

to attend and we invite the cheerleaders. Now the cheerleaders we invite because guess what? You invite the girls and the boys will show up. It's funny how that works, but that's one of the things that we found increases our attendance. So we get really good attendance. My wife makes brownies for the boys. Paul's wife makes lemonade. Do not let the boys eat the brownies or drink the lemonade until after you've taken their impression. We learned that the hard way by the way. We learned that the very hard way. We had some very colourful impression material the first year we did this. The impression itself is were made out of polyvinyl material, It's three millimetres thick. You suck down the first layer over the stone model the the first layer is made in the school colours, in our case it's red and black. The second layer is a clear layer that you suck down over the first layer in between the two layers though, we put the school logo, we put the boy's name on the left buccal corridor and the boys number on the right buccal corridor. We simply print those on clear label stock. You gently a fix it you know lightly press it to the base model the base layer with the school colours and then when you suck down the second layer over it, it vacuum forms the logo the school logo the boy's name and his number and it looks like it looks very custom. We then trim those we do a gross trim rough trim with a heated lab knife and then our assistant will finish kind of polishing them and trimming them on a wheel on the lab in the lab, so we round off the edges so that it fits in the mouth very comfortably and it's a wonderful it's a custom mouth guard because it's made from the boys own impression. Now you might be asking how in the world would I get to do this. I literally called the coach myself I only knew his name from the newspaper. I called him and said something I knew him as Charlie Rangel. I said Charlie you don't know me, I know you from newspaper articles about your team. I own a dental practice that's two blocks away from your school. We would like to volunteer to make NFL quality mouthguards for your boys and we would do those at no cost. He said what's the catch. I said well Charlie there's no catch at all. We're doing this when I when I approached him 12 years ago, I gave him two points I'm going to give you a third today. Twelve years ago I said Charlie we're doing this for two reasons. Number one we want to protect the boys teeth. Football is a contact sport. Very dangerous for teeth. We want to protect them and secondly we want to we want to be involved in our local high school. You are our local high school. If I was saying this today I would add a third point. The third point that I would add is I would say Charlie there's some good research today that shows that if your boys will wear a custom fitted mouth guard and they'll faithfully wear that it will reduce the incident of concussions. I think if I didn't have him on the first two points. I

would have him on the third point given all the attention around concussions today. So that's how we do it, roughly and and kind of gives you the overview but Naren I want to switch back to you knowing what you know about digital marketing what are some ways that we could let people know that we're doing this in the community to sort of get more mileage out of that given the different digital platforms that we have today. What would you do to quietly and subtly you know let people know that we're involved with their local high school and we do this as a courtesy for them, what might what might you do?

Naren:

Yeah! You remind me of another client of ours it was same thing but they're actually you know supporting one of the major league sports teams. So one of the things they did I'm sure you already do this Gary is you know how on the day those kids show up take tons of pictures. One on one pictures, group pictures even at the game you know take pictures with your team and so forth and and that could be an entire page talking about your commitment to the community and how you give back and when you give back to that number one team in the local area you are it. You become part of the fabric of the community and this applies to thousands and thousands of towns you know all across the US and you know Canada. So I do think digital pictures are important of course having a section highlighting what you do on the website and linking to it you know that's important and of course

Gary:

And you can say this the language could be something like "We are proud to in our case it's Cheryl high school we're proud to support the wonderful football tradition at Cheryl high school". So in other words we're we're not bragging you know but we're just using language like we're very proud to support our you know local high school football team.

Naren:

And the other thing is there can be a lot of fun stuff that can be done. Right? I mean they're playing games. before the game after the game you can guess what the score is going to be you can like pretty much become part of that mania that Friday night you know mania that that kind of

Gary:

Love it

Naren:

Before after and of course you can tap into Instagram you know Facebook you know there is so many things we can do on an ongoing basis throughout that you know calendar year to become part of the movement, become part of the community and the beautiful thing is how much did it cost you by the way this particular...

Gary:

Yeah so we spend about a thousand dollars a year on the materials. Now we it does require a higher quality thermal suck down machine. We use the Great Lakes orthodontics ministar. It's a thermal suck down machine. It's about twenty four hundred dollars. Now we've paid for that long ago and it's like iron it wears forever in a lasts forever, but it basically costs us about a thousand dollars a year which is in the marketing budget that's very minor but in terms of what it does for us Naren I am blown away at the number of patients that come to us because we are you know involved with their boys in the local community and this is just another insulator from insurance this is people choosing us for reasons other than were on their insurance. Moms and dads are going to that's why I want to tie it back to this podcast theme but moms and dads will say wow this is great. We really appreciate what you're doing for us we want to be patients at your practice and they're making a decision on a value judgment on want to being associated with an office like ours and they love the fact that we're giving back and they want to be involved in it. It's another insulator from insurance.

Naren:

And even the old boys right I assume even like the kids who went there like twenty years ago, surely, they will become supportive of your practice because of this.

Gary:

Oh absolutely in fact now we've been doing this you know for twelve years. You're absolutely right. The first you know the first year these these these kids I think of most kids now are in in their late 20s even hitting thirty years old now and they're patients of ours because they have the wonderful warm you know feelings of what we did to support their teams.

Naren:

Right! And it creates that lifelong bond which is much much much stronger than you know which insurance do you take.

Gary:

yeah yeah absolutely and you know many of these patients have insurance and of course they say well I have Delta Dental can I come to you? Guess what the answer is?

Naren :

yeah! Absolutely!

Gary:

we're happy to help our patients with their insurance although we're not contracted with Delta. You can use your benefits in our practice and we're happy to help you get every last dollar a benefit out of your plan and we even go further and say you're going to meet Meg when you come in now if they're there that night we actually introduced them to Meg and we say Meg's our insurance coordinator. She's going to do everything possible to help you maximize your benefits. Think of Meg as your own personal insurance concierge. Because she is going to everything possible to you get every last nickel out of your Delta dental insurance and those patients are thrilled to go out of network and come to us because of the fact that you know it's the school connection and the fact that we're friendly about it and they can use whatever benefit they have they can use them in our practice perfect.

Naren:

Perfect before we wrap it up I don't ask one last question. Gary so you've been doing it for 12 years. So let's say you spent 15 grand in that 12 years how much do you think this program has paid back.

Gary:

Yeah so on a typical year we will do about \$100,000 worth of Dentistry on the patients that come in and that's just first generation we don't count like if the other their spouse or other family members that come in just first generation activity from that project will do about \$100,000 worth of Dentistry. Now Naren, I'll put can I put you on the spot for math for just a minute?

Naren:

Yes!

Gary:

If I'm spending a thousand and we generate a hundred thousand what's my ROI?

Naren:

Compared a hundred to one and then compared to you know insurance which is it takes away 38% of every dollar you collect I mean this is like 38 times what you would with insurance.

Gary:

It's a radically different and and I have to say that if I can be encouraging to our listeners as we as we kind of come to the finish line here. Every single practice we've done this one in my consulting firm has reported like to use a baseball. We are in baseball season right now to use a baseball analogy, you know sometimes in baseball you hit a single, sometimes you had a double, sometimes you get a triple, occasionally you hit a homerun, sometimes you strike out and every once in a while you hit a grand slam. Every single office that has done this has reported back to me that this has been a marketing grand slam and that's before incorporating your digital tips that'll make this even better. I don't even know what the analogy is beyond the Grand Slam but whatever whatever it is beyond the Grand Slam if we incorporate what you shared, it's going to make this even more effective.

Naren:

Exactly because every game you can make it into this marketing bonanza like everybody comes around your practice. It's absolutely awesome. Thank you so much Gary for both working with us as a client and for sharing this wonderful insight today.

Gary:

This was fun I want to just encourage in closing encourage every one of our listeners to do this project because it will be that marketing grand slam that will enhance your practice. Thanks so much.