

# How to Market your Physiotherapy Telehealth Practice

## Whitepaper



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# Marketing Your Digital Practice

Once you have chosen your telehealth software, set up your account and become familiar with how to host video consultations. You may feel as though the hard work is done and your online practice will suddenly be inundated with appointment bookings.

This could not be further from the truth.

Time and again we see physiotherapists fail to realise their new video consultation practice needs to be appropriately marketed to patients. This is arguably the most challenging aspect of setting up an online practice, and many practitioners become discouraged when patients don't simply 'flock' to their telehealth service.

So, the question remains:

## How will you attract patients to your new service?

While successfully marketing your business isn't as hard as it may seem, it does require a little time and effort to get it right. This whitepaper will take an extensive look at all the paid and unpaid marketing tools at your disposal. It will discuss, in simple terms, how to implement each tool, how they benefit your physio practice and what challenges are associated with each method. If you would like to understand the tips and tricks of the marketing world, increase your reach and attract new patients to your telehealth service, keep reading.

If, instead, you would prefer a quick and simple crash course in marketing your online practice, you can click here for our blog post: [How to Market Your Digital Practice in 5 Easy Steps](#).



Before we begin, there are a few things we must mention:

### 1. AHPRA Guidelines

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency has compiled a set of advertising guidelines that reflect national law. Some of these guidelines include prohibiting false and misleading advertising or encouraging unnecessary use of health services. Any breaches to these laws can result in financial penalties or other disciplinary action. This is something to keep in mind when you are formulating your marketing strategies and tools.

A full list of the guidelines can be found [here](#).

### 2. Consistent Brand Message

This whitepaper will not discuss the ins and outs of building a strong brand identity, but it is important to understand that your brand and its message will need to be incorporated into every aspect of your marketing strategy. Everything from your logo, font, colour choice, brand voice, vision and values will need to be consistently applied to your various marketing tools to improve your brand identity and distinguishability.

A great Hubspot article on building your brand can be found [here](#).

## Digital Marketing Tools

As of 2018, **88% of Australians were active Internet** users, with a recent Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) report finding that a large portion of these users are searching for health information online, or are even vetting specific providers and practices via the Internet. Such mounting evidence proves your patients are online, and you need to meet them there.

Other reasons for digital marketing include that it is highly adaptable and easy to track its effect through metrics such as website analytics, ad conversion trackers and customer relationship marketing tracking. Digital marketing can take many forms, and there are various paid and unpaid options available to you depending on the objectives, size and budget of your online physio practice.

## Unpaid

- **Updating your website**

Did you know **83% of Internet users are searching for health information online** and **41% of patients would actually prefer to book appointments online instead of phoning the office?** There is no longer an excuse to avoid setting up an aesthetically-pleasing and informative website.

If you already have a website for your practice, you need to create a new section exclusively for telehealth that lists the services offered and clearly presents the 'book appointment online' button. If you choose CoviU's telehealth software, we will provide you with an easy-to-use, customisable link for you to embed this button on your web page. This area of your website will likely be the first patient point of contact for your new online consultation practice, so layout, colour and content choices are very important.

We also suggest filming a short video to tell your patients about how telehealth consultations will work in your practice. This video can also be easily shared via social media or email.



An example of a CoviU user, 'Declan by Biosymm', using the online booking button on their website.

To grab patients' attention, we suggest including a pop-up on the website when it is first opened that mentions something along the lines of 'video consultations now available', and ensure all visitors are prompted to the telehealth page to determine if this new service is right for them. Pop-ups are usually an included option on your web-hosting platform and relatively simple to manage, but the task may be best suited for your web developer.



*'The reoccurring nature of these emails will ensure your service offering is kept fresh in the minds of your patients.'*

- **Email/newsletter marketing campaign**

Your patients, particularly those who do not attend regular appointments, may not be aware your practice now offers video consultations. You will need to send out a series of emails to contacts you have acquired over the years to let them know about your new service. This is a great free and low-effort marketing strategy, as emails can easily be duplicated, personalised and sent to different recipients.

The emails should be brief, easy to read and focused on telehealth. You should include a brief general description of telehealth, the specific services you offer and how these services will benefit patients. A link to your website's telehealth booking page is also essential. You may also want to include an announcement about your telehealth practice in other general emails you send out.

A monthly newsletter, sent by email, is also an effective way to reach patients and discuss the benefits of your online physio practice. Make sure to include any relevant information or changes to your service and try to keep content interesting and lighthearted. The reoccurring nature of these emails will ensure your service offering is kept fresh in the minds of your patients.





- **Social media accounts**

A 2017 survey by PWC identified that '**74% of Internet users engage on social media; 80% of those Internet users are specifically looking for health information; and nearly half are searching for information about a specific doctor or health professional**'. It is evident that social media is now a major marketing tool for healthcare professionals.

At a minimum, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram are the best platforms to use as they are free and help you build a professional brand image by posting updates or interesting content. These are the first social media platforms patients look at when researching a specific physiotherapist or physio practice online. Make sure to include that you are now offering video consultations on your profile, and feel free to share case studies, interesting statistics or relevant images that you collect (ensuring you maintain patient privacy, of course). Emphasising these little details will give you a competitive advantage over other practices.

[Here](#) is an excellent article about the benefits of social media marketing in the healthcare industry – and how to do it right.



- **Search Engine Optimisation**

Search engine optimisation refers to actions you take that will affect your visibility on a search engines' unpaid results. This is very important because it determines how far up the search results page your website link will appear.

It may seem overwhelming, but a few easy tips for improving SEO are as follows:

- 1. Create new content and post consistently**

Creating relevant and original content in a variety of forms is not only one of the best ways to keep your target market interested in your work, but it will help with the creation of backlinks, which is when other websites mention your links in their own posts. Additionally, search engine algorithms factor freshness into their rankings, which means the more often you post original content, the better your SEO results.

- 2. Include keywords or phrases in your content**

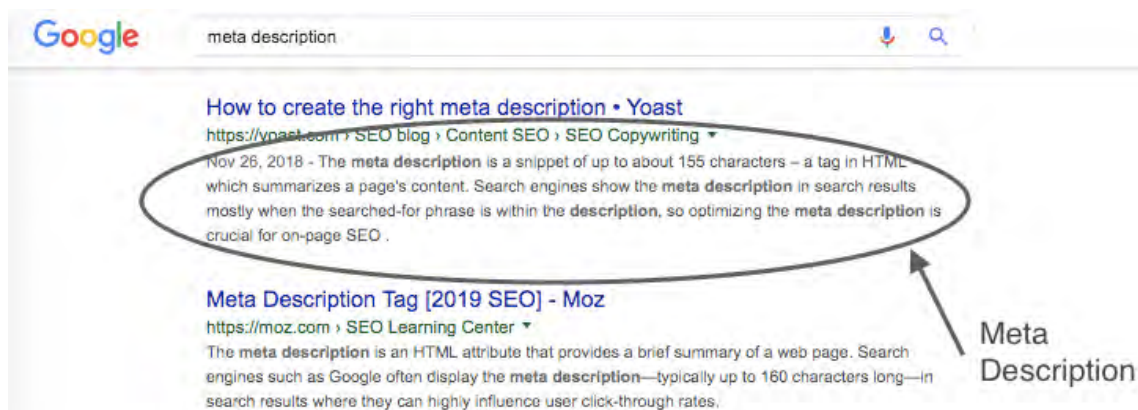
This is the way most search engines rank their content. Ensuring you include words on your website such as 'telehealth', 'video consultation' or 'telemedicine' is a great start. Adding a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section on your telehealth page also leaves room for you to answer common questions such as 'What is telehealth?' or 'Are telehealth consultations private and confidential?', which will also increase your SEO.





### 3. Headlines and meta descriptions

When creating and publishing content, whether it be a video, blog post, whitepaper or other form, ensuring you have an eye catching and relevant title is essential. This is called the 'headline'. In addition, a meta description, as seen below, is the short sentence visible to web searchers that helps them decide if the link has relevant information for them. Creating an interesting headline and relevant meta descriptions will help to improve your click-through rate and subsequently, your SEO. For more information on meta description, check out this [Google search](#).



An example of a meta description is circled above

### 4. Optimise the user interface/user experience

In simple terms, the user interface and user experience work together to create the appeal and usability of your website and how well it allows searchers to navigate and find what they are looking for. This is a big factor for improving SEO, because if your website is too slow, hard to understand or has too many ads, users will bounce (exit the website soon after entering), which can hurt SEO rankings. A recent report revealed that **68% of all health-related searches occur on mobile devices**, meaning you also need to ensure your website and booking platforms are mobile friendly.

- **Text message marketing**

Sending text messages to patients from the mobile numbers you have on file is a simple and effective way to gain their immediate attention. However, the construction of the message is important because consumers often quickly judge the authenticity and relevancy of text message marketing. It's important to clearly identify your physio practice, state your offering in a professional and interesting manner (in this case, your new telehealth practice) and include a 'call to action', such as a number to call or a website to visit, so the patient can easily find out more or book an appointment.



*'Before you spend thousands of dollars on marketing campaigns for your new practice, make sure you have first utilised all the free tools.'*

- **Blog**

As mentioned previously, creating original content and posting regularly is important for boosting SEO and attracting new patients, so why not host this content through a blog? There are plenty of free blog sites such as WordPress, Medium or Wix, or paid plans if you would like access to premium features. Blogs are a great way to increase your reach and educate readers about important topics, particularly those related to telehealth.

- **Free directories**

Before you spend thousands of dollars on marketing campaigns for your new practice, make sure you have first utilised all the free tools. The following health information services and directories are often used by people when searching for particular physiotherapists or practices. This means they have great SEO, showing towards the top of the search page and giving your business increased exposure.

- [Online Doctors Directory of Australia](#) is a great place to start. ODDA is CoviU's own telehealth only directory. It is top ranked on google and listings are free for all healthcare providers (not just medical doctors).
- [Healthdirect](#) is a government-funded service offering free health advice and information. It also has a directory for providers, so make sure you sign up and select the 'telehealth capable' box when setting up your account.
- [Healthshare](#) is a health directory that also allows practitioners to post their own blog content to gain visibility. This is another free option to add to the list.
- Listing yourself in the [Yellow Pages](#) may seem bit 'old-school', but they actually have a free online listing option and get quite a lot of traffic each month.
- Finally, [Yelp](#) is a review site that includes doctors. [42% of individuals searching for health information on social media look at health-related consumer reviews](#), so make sure you sign up and consider asking your patients to provide a positive review.

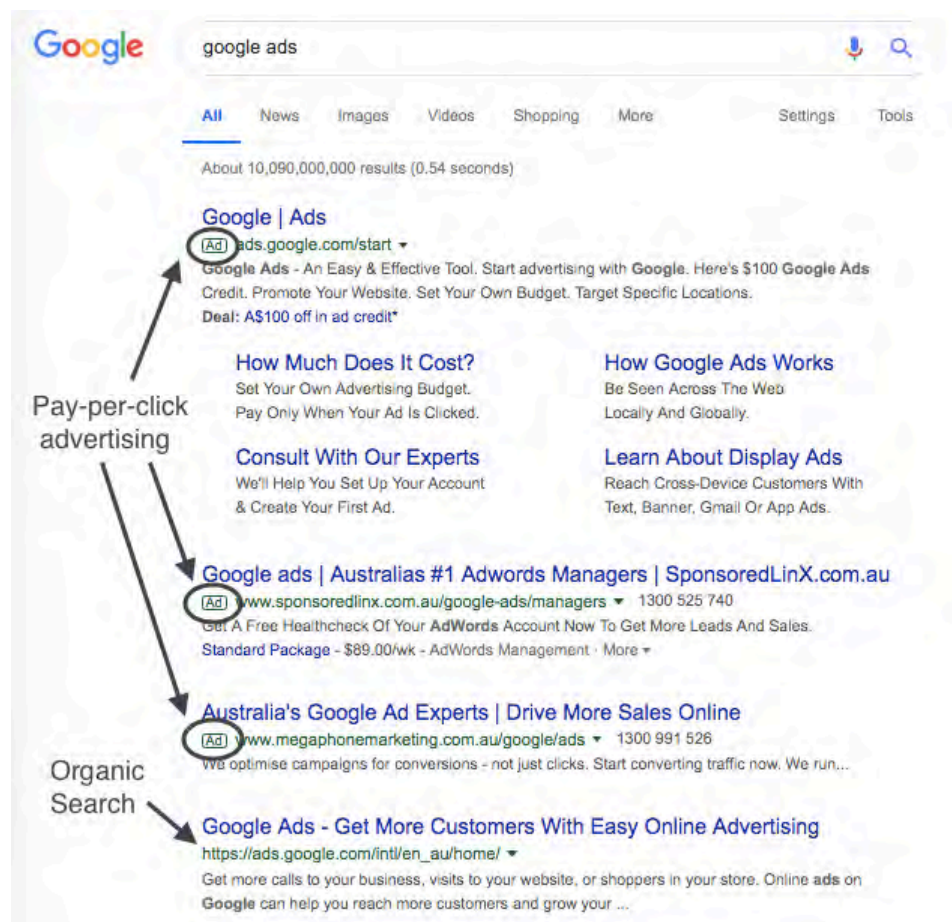
## Paid

Before you endeavour into the world of paid marketing, it may be worthwhile to consider outsourcing a marketing team to set up and manage these paid digital advertisements for you. Such professionals will have experience designing and executing advertisements in this area and will maximise their effectiveness and provide you with high-quality results reports. Paid marketing can get expensive quickly, so you'll want a strict budget, an experienced person or team managing the process and clearly-defined outcomes.

- **Paid search engine marketing**

Pay-per-click advertising, such as that offered by Google Ads, is a form of search engine marketing whereby companies pay for a place in the web engine's sponsored links. The companies are charged a small fee each time the link is clicked, regardless of whether a sale occurs or not.

Whilst this is a great way to increase your online visibility, this form of advertising, more than any, can break the budget, especially if not every website visitor actually makes an appointment with your practice. Many physios have had success with paid search engine marketing for their telehealth service, but we suggest entering this world with expert help.



The difference between organic search and pay-per-click advertising

- **Facebook ads**

Facebook has also entered the advertising world and serves both as a place to gain visibility by creating a business page and a place to buy advertisements that will be shown to various groups depending on whom you choose to target. In addition to age, gender and location, factors such as time of day and behavioural targeting are part of the set-up choices. In a similar way to search engine marketing, these advertisements may be a great investment, or they may be more expensive to run compared to the revenue they generate. Success is dependent on factors such as advertisement quality and your targeting abilities. We also suggest getting expert help with Facebook ads.





## Offline Marketing Tools

Offline marketing methods are often labelled as less effective than digital methods. But this is far from the truth. Whilst it is true that offline marketing conversion can be harder to track, there are still countless reasons why you need a strong offline strategy.

As a physio, you cater to patients from all ages and lifestyles. There is a good chance many of your patients or their parents/caregivers are not regular Internet users, don't have social media accounts or simply ignore any email or text marketing they receive. If you do not have an offline strategy, you will miss out on targeting these types of patients.

Offline Marketing also helps solidify your brand image and reputation, even in the minds of patients who first sought you out online.



### Unpaid

- **Place advertisements on waiting room screen**

A recent survey revealed that **85% of patients often wait up to half an hour past their appointment time** before seeing their healthcare professional. That gives you an enormous opportunity to grab their attention and inform them of your new physio telehealth service. A great option is to place an advertisement on the waiting room TV screen, if you have one. A short video about your new telehealth service, repeated occasionally throughout the hour is a good way to expose patients to your service. Or, you could simply have a still image displayed on the screen about your new telehealth offering and how patients can find out more information.

- **Publicity**

Publicity relates to the attention given to your business from the media, and there are a few ways to do it for free or at a low cost.

A media release is an official statement given to news organisations for the purpose of announcing something notable, such as being the first person in your field of expertise to open a telehealth clinic in the area. It is worth sending a self-published media release to your local paper to see if they will include it for free.

Speaking at industry events and conferences is also a way to network, get your name in the media and 'spread the word' about your new digital practice. You may find yourself making helpful connections and establishing referral opportunities from others in the healthcare industry.

- **Word of mouth**

Following on from publicity, one of the most effective offline marketing techniques is word of mouth whereby patients refer their family, friends, co-workers or even strangers to you through a verbal or written exchange. A [2012 Nielsen study](#) identified that 92% of people trust recommendations from friends and family more than any other form of advertising.

This type of marketing is completely free and often regarded as highly effective due to the trustworthy nature of personal recommendations. A great way to facilitate word of mouth is to encourage patients to recommend the service to family and friends and to really value and nurture your repeat customers. Having supportive staff, such as a telehealth coordinator, to help patients' video consultations run as smoothly as possible is also important for positive word of mouth.





## Paid

- **Direct mail**

Direct mail is similar to the email marketing option listed above, however it requires sending physical letters to patients' mailboxes. Whilst this method is more expensive than free email marketing, it is proven to have better engagement and conversion rates.

A [2015 report from Quantum Postcards](#) revealed that 87% of direct mail recipients were influenced to make online purchases and 86% felt more connected to the business. Compiling your mailing list may be difficult, so consider looking into a direct mail list broker who will help you find appropriate addresses. This is especially important because your telehealth patients may come from all over the country and will not necessarily be the locals using your brick and mortar physio practice.



- **Radio advertising**

A [2016 Roy Morgan report](#) revealed that 86% of Australians listen to the radio during the week, with breakfast radio being the most popular time slot. In addition, people who heard a radio ad were [six times more likely to search for that brand online](#) compared to those who did not hear it. These statistics give great weight to a radio marketing strategy for your practice, however there are numerous things to consider.

First, radio advertising can be expensive, and your budget will likely only allow you to place local advertisements. Whilst this can still be an effective way to reach current or new patients, your telehealth service is also available to others located outside your local area, so you will need a different marketing strategy to reach them.

There is also the challenge of finding the right station and time to place your advertisement. If you are not targeting your audience in these basic ways, your ad will likely be ineffective. It may be worth hiring a media agency to help set up and manage your ad.

- **Posters/brochures/pamphlets**

As mentioned previously, patients often spend up to half an hour in the waiting room before their appointment begins. Using posters, pamphlets and business cards that provide information about telehealth and why it may be a good option for patients can be an inexpensive way to fill that waiting time and educate patients about your range of services. Though there may be a small cost to creating these materials, the 'wall space' is free.

- **Branding your telehealth set-up**

Whilst the hard work of finding patients for your video consultations is mostly completed at this point, it is still important for the patient to remember your brand and have a positive experience.

Coviu's professional and scale packages allow for custom branding on the telehealth interface, meaning your patients will only see your brand during the call. Additionally, it is recommended you purchase a backdrop with your brand logo and practice name on it, so patients can easily identify you. A great website for customising backdrops is [BannerBuzz](#).

## Conclusion

Marketing your new video consultation practice to patients is essential to ensure you fill the books and enjoy the many perks telehealth has to offer, such as increased revenue, better work-life balance and improving access for your patients. There are so many ways in which you can market your physio telehealth service to patients, but your decisions will likely depend on your business objectives, budget and technological abilities.

For more information about telehealth, or how to grow your telehealth practice, please don't hesitate to contact us [here](#).