

# Millennial Moms: Why they should be an important audience of your marketing strategy

Marketing consultant Julie Yeomans discusses how to reach this important niche in a social media environment

After 20 years watching the trends in sales, education, and consulting in orthodontics, one thing is for certain — changes in the way practices market have been evolving quickly — and it has been a seismic shift. Unlike when sales teams helped launch Invisalign® or Damon® self-ligation, for which the orthodontist could decide if he/she wanted to offer this option in his/her practice, this new marketing change is outside of the clinician's control. Increasingly, direct-to-consumer “Amazon-type” retail options are delivered to willing patients' mailboxes, catering, in part, to a huge consumer base, the “Millennial Moms.” For these consumers, those born between 1980 and 2000, it is important to have services literally at their doorstep.

The largest companies in the world are bringing in consultants to coach in methods of working with and managing Millennials. This group is very diverse and affected by the technology evolution. There are “older” Millennials (pre-smartphone/iPad®), and “younger” Millennials. They shop, perceive value, convenience, and service completely differently from previous generations. Orthodontists probably have had plenty of experience already catering to the needs of this group of patients and parents.

At the 2018 AAO meeting in Washington DC, I had the sincere pleasure of meeting a successful orthodontist from Illinois. Talking about this exact topic, he said, “One of the best books I have read to understand an effective marketing strategy is *Millennial Moms* by Maria T. Bailey. It taught me that I have to change how I do my consults, my outreach, and my value to the patients.” I was intrigued and bought the book on Amazon for \$35. It was worth every penny.



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For this article, I reached out to author Maria T. Bailey, CEO of BSM Media.com ([www.bsmedia.com](http://www.bsmedia.com)). She was kind enough to take my questions, and I will share some of her insights on how you can apply this to your orthodontic practice, and what marketing strategies are effective for moms like me.

Know your Millennial Mom: 2015 is the year that Millennials become the largest generation of consumers. According to the latest United States Census Bureau report, there are 83.1 million Millennials. There are currently an estimated 13 million Millennial Moms in the U.S., comprising only about one-third of the 42 million Millennial women in the U.S. The influence is real. Millennial Moms are expected to spend approximately \$750 billion a year.

One question I asked Maria was, “As an orthodontic practice, what is the most effective way to reach this target base?” She offered the following advice:

“I think the use of social media is certainly a good tactic for recruiting new business.”

Here are some useful tips that she suggested, and I have tweaked for orthodontists to consider:

1. Using images is more effective than word-based articles. For example, I could see an orthodontist holding an, “Off Day” in their community and have an Instagram® feed of their patients smiling on their off day — typically Fridays. I know with client/patient privacy, orthodontists need to be careful to ask (and document) their patients' permission to post their images and use their hashtag. Seeing this fun content could interest prospective clients to their practice and keep existing patients interested.

In presenting your patient images on Facebook or Instagram, it would

serve your social media story well to share lots of before and afters, especially if you are accelerating cases. If you do a single image with the top two-thirds of the image a beautiful posed happy patient glowing with his/her new smile (the portrait feature on the iPhone® is incredible), and in the bottom one-third, a split before and after of the frontal shot-teeth only: this tells a great visual story. In Figure 1, Dr. Kyle Fagala (Saddle Creek Orthodontics and Founder of The Digital Orthodontist) and Dr. Sheldon Salins (Salins Orthodontics) use the Instagram layout app effectively. It's very easy to put together this image. They also use the iWatermark app on their portrait photo to maintain the integrity of the brand. The audience engagement at over 150 “likes” and followers comments is fantastic and easy for a client to scroll through quickly. You truly see the patient living with the successful treatment in a non-clinical setting. I see so many doctors' pages who are standing with patients and congratulating them for completing the treatment. But as a prospective mom, I don't know that patient, how many months treatment took, and what the patient's teeth looked like before. For new patients, a picture and information that is too vague provides limited value, so really evaluate who your audience is and your specific goals.

Do you want to engage current patients only or draw in new prospective patients? Canva is a free online website that is user-friendly, and you can create social media images in a



Figure 1

matter of minutes, easy-to-upload photos. Then drag, drop, and resize.

Share your good work, and share it proud. Differentiate your practice with the technology you offer, your team, your outreach in the community, your experience — It will make a difference and a connection with the patient.

2. Orthodontic practices could also focus on “smiles” and set up selfie stations at local events, high school football games, etc.

Many school carnivals, back to school nights, and graduations want to offer fun Instagram-worthy photo opportunities. I love this idea. Work with a local sign business to create a setup that can be reused. Here is one that my son’s school had on the first day (Figure 2), and there was a long line to snap a photo. “Sign Gypsies” made this display and have offices nationally (check out [signgypsies.com](http://signgypsies.com) for a location near you). Sponsoring this photo opportunity and tagging your practice for the chance to win a prize is a great marketing opportunity.

3. Boosting content on Facebook is also effective. I recommend fast-form video (video clips at a higher speed) because right now Facebook and Instagram are rewarding videos, so it will appear more often in news feeds. They could do a fast-form video of putting on new colored bands or a fast-form video on some new technology.
4. I would think about the behavior of their clients, and how the doctor can insert himself into that behavior.

In the book, tip No. 24 notes that relationships are really important to Millennial Moms. Do not outsource your social media posts. The sterile nature of “tell us what you’re



Figure 2

smiling about today” is obvious that it’s not from your practice. Also do not post the same thing on the three main social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter®, and Instagram). Change it up, and set up a monthly social media schedule (topics scheduled as well as dates) aiming to post three times a week if you can. This activity will get more traction in the scroll feeds. To develop that relationship, share the human side of your practice and your long-term relationships with your patients. Instead of two retainers included after treatment, maybe it’s a smile guarantee for a certain amount of time (a more feel good term) with the condition of annual retainer checks. Offer to your patients donations for school fundraisers to support their causes — maybe it’s a \$50 Target gift certificate. You can also offer to help promote their events on your page; for example, an annual fall school carnival if appropriate. That patient will most likely share your post with their friends.

One of the biggest takeaways I got from this book is to revisit your social media strategy and re-evaluate your pages often. Millennials are on their phones all of the time. You want to be part of that landscape in the social

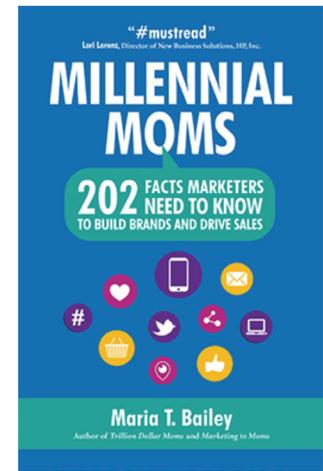


Figure 3

media space. Be engaging and interesting, otherwise people won’t follow your page. It’s more than number of “likes” you have on Facebook — what so many people use to judge their success. Many SEO companies focus on this as a marker for success, but it’s a waste of money. What is beneficial to the orthodontic practice is responding to every comment on your page, shouting out to local businesses and patients, sharing live video, posting on YouTube® (a very popular search engine for Millennial Moms), creating opportunities for patients to tag you in their posts, and communicating the personality of your practice. Always do this with the mindset of engaging and including your patients — just like you are at a dinner party, bring them into the conversation so they can learn more and enjoy your company.

This is the new age of marketing success in reaching the Millennial Moms.

## Acknowledgment

Many thanks to Maria T. Bailey for her advice, her excellent book, and contributions to this article. You can buy *Millennial Moms — 202 Facts Marketers Need to Know to Build Brands and Drive Sales* on Amazon. **OP**