

How social media can help grow your practice

Included:
best facts
about the
most relevant
platforms

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Introduction

Please note: This document is a general guideline on potential uses of social media for your business. Applicable laws and regulations in your jurisdiction may restrict how you are allowed to communicate with your patients or about your business via social media.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your use of social media for your business adheres to all applicable laws and regulations and Nobel Biocare disclaims all liability in this regard.

What this paper is about

Social media has been around for over a decade, but remains a buzzword. It offers unique advantages over traditional means of communication, but also takes time and manpower to manage.

We've created this ebook so you can find out whether social media is right for your business.

If you come to the conclusion that it is, we'll help you to hit the ground running: In 30 minutes time, you'll know how to be great and what to avoid. And we've already written your social media strategy – all you need to do is grab a pen and check the items that matter most to you.

Enjoy the read and let us know your thoughts.

Send us an e-mail to: **brandinfo@nobelbiocare.com**



Why social media?



LinkedIn

Google+

Pinterest

YouTube

Instagram



Why social media?

Here are eight advantages over other marketing activities:

1 **Social media allows you to reach a large audience**

Countless people worldwide use social media platforms and more are joining them every day. Regardless of where you are in the world, there's a high likelihood that thousands of potential patients close to you use social media, either privately or for business. Which brings us to the next advantage.

2 **Social media lets you target your audience**

Facebook alone is just one platform in the social media landscape, but it's the largest. And, compared with others, it excels at offering you targeting options for what you have to say – or more specifically: whom you want to say it to. You can use it to reach the people that really matter to you.



Not only can you target your audience according to their geographic position, you can also select them by their interests and their age.

3 **Social media is cheap**

Social media takes time to manage, and as we all know, time is money. But compared with traditional means of advertising such as print ads and radio commercials, it's cheap.

4 **Social media is fast**

Publishing on social media platforms can be done in an instant. Once you post something, it's out there. You can also schedule your posts ahead of time, however.

5 **Social media makes you more visible**

People who want to find your practice on the web will no longer be limited to a static website that is rarely updated with recent news and stories.

Instead, people can stay in the loop by following your activities on social media. Or rather, you can keep them in the loop.



Whether you enhance your portfolio or share pictures of your best cases, on social media platforms people who care will take note of what you do.

It can be a far more effective, targeted way of spreading the information and without the administration effort and cost that comes with updating a website regularly.

6 Social media accelerates your relationship building

Social media platforms are a great place to show others the people-related, human side of what's happening in your practice.

Why should you show it?

Because people love to hear stories from other people's lives. And that's to a great extent what social media is all about. It's called social media, after all.

The direct effect of telling stories with a human touch is that people who don't know you yet will be able to make more qualified assumptions about you.

They will therefore start to trust you and your business faster. They are more likely to build goodwill. And that paves the way for a future relationship.



7 Social media lets you receive valuable feedback

For businesses in particular, social media platforms are a public place. Sooner or later, you will hopefully get feedback on what you've been posting.

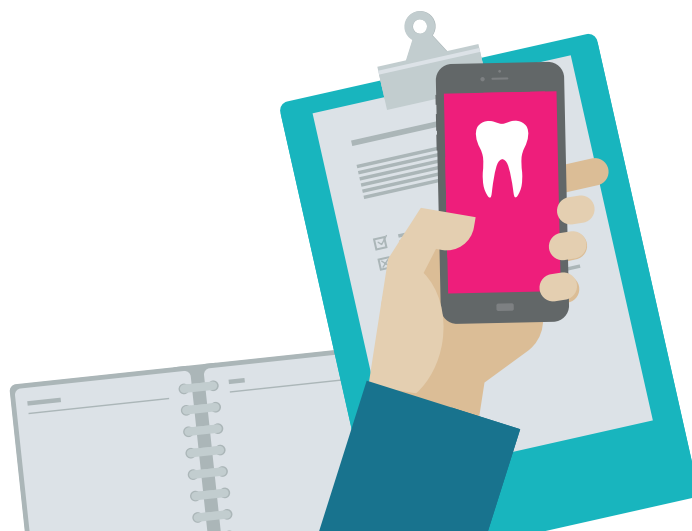
Feedback can be positive or negative, but either way, you win. You'll receive praise for good work and might be criticized if others think your work is falling short in some way.

It's important that you embrace both types of feedback and engage in a respectful dialog with people. This will help you to constantly improve your offering's worth in the eyes of existing and future patients. Now that's something you don't usually get from a run-of-the-mill print ad, right?

8 Social media allows customers to endorse you

Can your practice be found on social media platforms? Do you share your best work results regularly? Then you'll probably receive spontaneous, free testimonials by your customers or other dentists.

The great thing about these testimonials is that they are highly credible because they are real and unaltered. Just a few people commenting "great work" or "nicely done" can go a long way in building trust with potential patients.



Platforms you should know

Every platform you add to your social media portfolio needs to be managed, which consumes time and other resources. That's why you should decide carefully which platforms to devote your resources to in order to drive results.

facebook

Facebook is important to your social media activities due to the sheer amount of people who use the platform. There are virtually no categories that you could fit Facebook users into to characterize them.

Most people use Facebook to stay in touch with friends, family, classmates or coworkers. This might seem obvious if you're familiar with the platform, but it should make you aware that whatever content you're posting as a business competes against stories that Facebook users care a lot about.

Facebook has decided to gradually reduce organic reach in order to keep the platform relevant and Facebook's profits rising – in other words: Many people who've liked your page won't automatically see your posts – unless you pay for it.

Don't worry about this too much: A big plus of the platform is in fact the possibility to run advertisements for your posts. Not only does this increase their visibility, but you'll also be able to use elaborate targeting criteria.

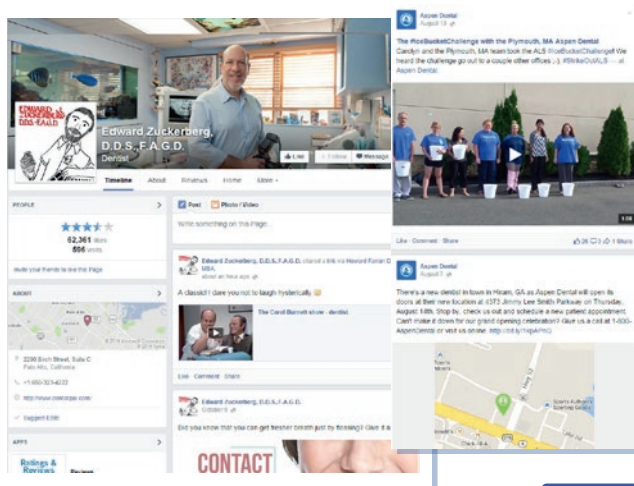
With small amounts like 10 dollars or euros, you can reach a targeted audience in the hundreds. The two most important targeting options for you will be location and interests. You can also try to create an advertising audience from fields of study or job titles, which works particularly well if you're in the US.

Either way, you can target Facebook users who are likely to be dental professionals in the area that matters to you, helping to make sure they see what you post.



Speaking of posting: Facebook is designed to support all media types equally, such as text, pictures, videos, etc. This makes it flexible, but can be a drawback if content is based heavily on one media type.

Facebook is not the ideal platform for lengthy text posts or discussions. That's because the layout of the post text and comment area is optimized for short text. Long posts and comments are cut off and have to be expanded with a click. Be aware that the vast majority of people won't make that click.



“In August 2015, more than one billion people used Facebook in a single day, setting a new record.”

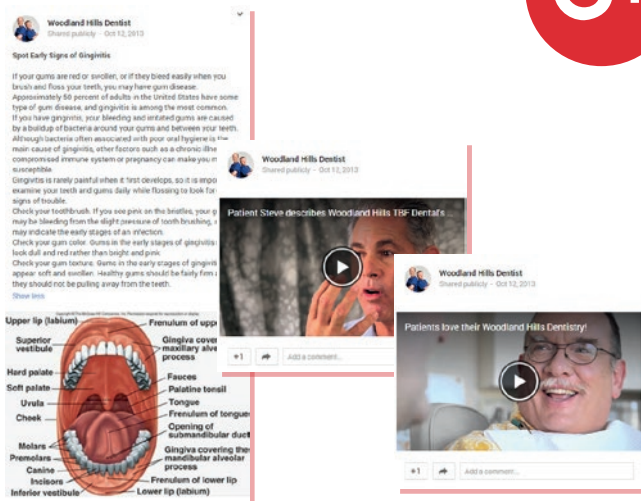




Google+ is similar to Facebook in its purpose and cross-media suitability, with the main difference being that there are far fewer active users. Moreover, it is unclear how Google+ will be positioned in the social media landscape in the future. Either way, your resources might be better invested elsewhere.

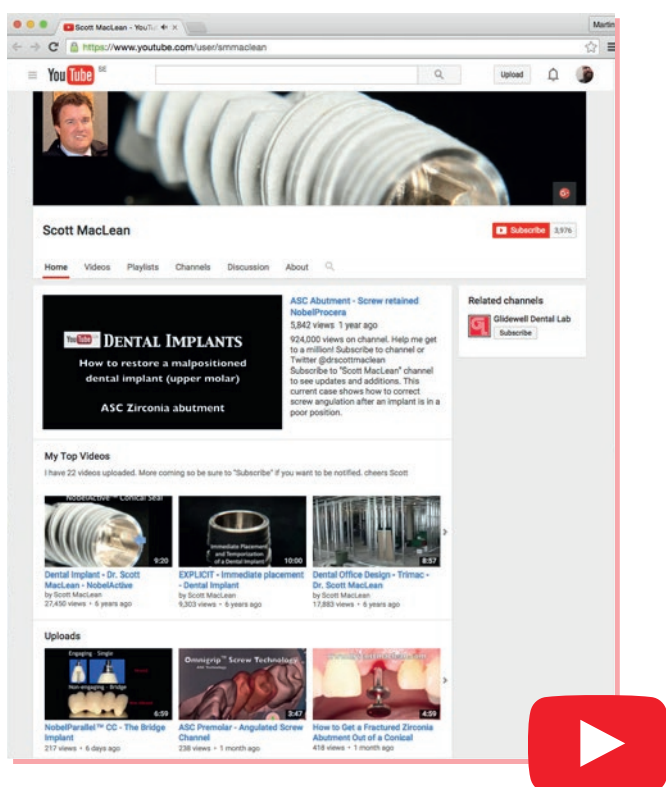


“It has been said that this is Google’s biggest attempt to rival Facebook.”





You're probably familiar with YouTube as a platform with videos and channels that you can subscribe to. Like Facebook, it's not easy to pin down any specific types of people who use the platform, though we don't recommend using case videos for patient marketing.



“Video is a suitable medium for dentists looking to share knowledge with their peers.”



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a platform for professionals looking to enhance their network and job openings. The majority of users are from a corporate environment, but dental professionals are on the platform too.

Interaction on LinkedIn happens between users, in groups and on company pages. Similarly, you can use the platform to share content with your so-called connections, the equivalent of Facebook friends.

You can join or create a group to participate in discussions and share relevant content.

And finally, you can create a company page for your practice, which is similar to a Facebook page.

From our perspective, dental professionals can use LinkedIn to strengthen and enhance their professional network with other treatment partners. An ideal way to do so is closed groups, which require a moderator to approve requests by others to join the group or see its discussions.



In this private setting, treatment partners can collaborate effectively. The treatment participants can share information and image material on cases, share advice and coordinate their workflows, reducing time spent on e-mails and phone calls.

If you decide to go for a company page as well, LinkedIn is a good platform to post and promote job openings at little cost.



“Dental professionals can use LinkedIn to strengthen their professional network.”



Twitter is a micro-blogging service. Twitter posts, or 'tweets', are limited to 140 characters. The combined tweets of all followed users make up each user's timeline.

Another reason for Twitter's success is the ease of following, and most of all, unfollowing users. With this in mind, use your airtime wisely and avoid tweeting more than three times a day, excluding conversations with users.

The user name is in the format @username and is often referred to mention each other in their tweets by writing the handle anywhere in the tweet.



“Character limitation forces users to get straight to the point.”



When you tweet directly at someone by writing their handle at the beginning of your tweet, that tweet only comes up in the feeds of users who follow both you and the person you are tweeting at. If you want all your followers to see that tweet, put a dot in front of the handle, like this .@username

Tweets are public. If conversations require sharing private data, continue via direct messages. It is a common act of courtesy to follow users when they start following you – it sends the message that you are interested in engaging with your followers and want to get to know them; not following them sends the opposite signal. Don't follow users who cannot be identified by their profile as a real person or a company that you either know or are interested in, as they are most likely sources of spam. Tweets can be retweeted by anyone to their followers – this is the highest 'honor' as it usually not only expresses endorsement or agreement with the tweeter, but also shares the tweet with their own followers.

A like on Twitter, symbolized by a heart, is the equivalent of a Facebook like and saves the tweet into a user's tweet collection. If you receive a compliment, compose a tweet thanking the user and feel free to retweet the compliment yourself.

Don't try to prevent others from retweeting your own tweets. Even if you think they are taken out of context and shed a bad light on you – it'll only make things worse.

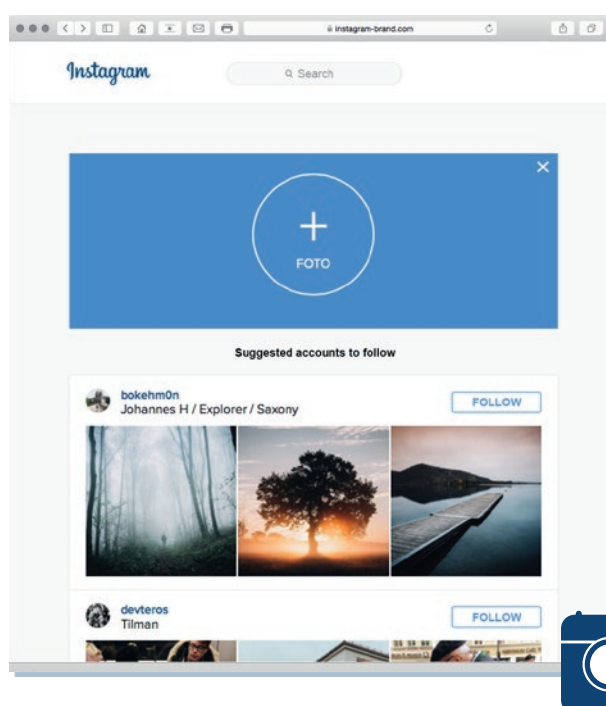


Instagram

Instagram is all about the photos users take with their mobile devices and modify with a set of filters. With the app, it's easy to create photos that look great and have an artistic touch. In 2014, more than half of all users belonged to the demographic of millennials, which means people who were in their teens around the year 2000. Users document their daily lives with the photo app, but Instagram is also home to many fashion bloggers and creative professionals.

Instagram posts are usually public and users can follow each other. Hashtags are particularly important for gaining followers as they help users find the photos they are looking for. That's why users looking to create a following often add a plethora of hashtags to their posts. It's notable that Instagram was acquired by Facebook in 2012, which means that pictures shared from the photo app will be displayed well in the timeline. Is this the right place for you to be on social media?

That depends: If you're trying to connect with young dental professionals, it might. If you're looking to connect with patients, probably not.



“Users document their daily lives.”



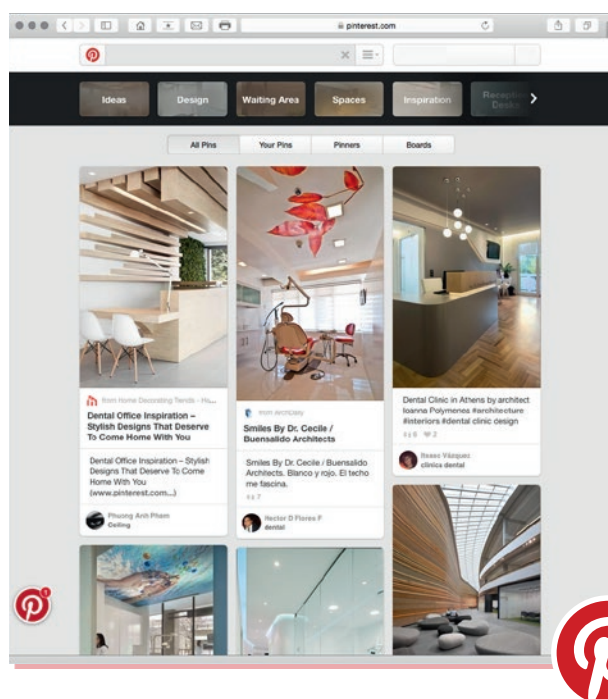
Pinterest is a virtual pin board onto which users can pin images they find on the web and want to keep. The stored images are the so-called pins and they can be assigned to boards with specific topics.

Users can follow other users with common interests to keep track of what they pin, and to repin that content to their own boards. In 2014, 42% of all women online in the US were Pinterest users, but only 13% of men.

Pinterest is a platform that celebrates beauty, sensual stimulus, and often also indulgence and the extraordinary. Content that is compatible with these values and professional photography standards are a must in order to attract a large following.

Do you think you can live up to those high standards? It's tough. And few dental businesses get it right.

Our recommendation: Your resources are better invested elsewhere.



"Pinterest has a large female user base."

How can you avoid pitfalls?

1 **Go for the long haul**

Don't rush into doing social media until you've thought the consequences through. Social media is a long-term commitment. Building a community of people interested in your activities takes more than just a couple of weeks. Few things reflect worse on a business on social media than abandoned accounts.

2 **Don't let your youngest team member do it entirely on their own**

The youngest members of your team might be the ones who grew up using social media, but that doesn't mean you should lay your activities entirely in their hands.

First off, be sure to own the social media strategy yourself – and to have one in the first place (read more about that later). If you recruit other team members for social media and want them to act independently on your behalf, make sure that they know the ropes and can engage in meaningful discussions with potential clients.

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't trust your youngest team members to communicate on your behalf. It merely means you shouldn't judge their qualification for the job by their age alone.

3 Follow through with promoting your platforms

Once you've set foot into the social media world, it's time to start promoting your presences at every opportunity. Flyers, posters, business cards, customer letters, e-mail signatures, e-mail newsletters, your website: Social media buttons and links need to be everywhere. Permanently.

4 Don't confuse social media with websites or advertising

Acknowledge that social media is neither a classical advertising or sales channel, nor a website.

Just like there are individuals who don't watch TV because of the commercials, social media users do not visit the platforms to consume obvious forms of advertising. It is significantly easier for users to avoid advertising on social media than offline – an option they readily make use of.

If content on social media is not perceived as relevant and interesting, it will not be read. Users decide freely on how best to utilize their limited time given the vast amount of content they can choose from.



That means:

- No use of UPPERCASE and exclamation points in your posts
- No images that look like flyers or print ads
- No stock photography
- No clichéd images

5 **Don't overshare**

If you post too often, people might hide your posts permanently. To avoid losing your audience, try not to post more than twice a week.

As a general rule, post only when you have something to share that's relevant or entertaining for your audience.

6 **Be aware of platform rules**

Don't use overlay text on images that you post on Facebook. It makes them look cluttered and overly promotional. Using more than around 20% text in your image will also ban your post from Facebook advertising, which means it might go unnoticed.

Also be aware that Facebook's advertising guidelines neither allow before and after pictures, nor ones that Facebook's moderators deem to be promoting an idealized image of beauty. Note that you can still post before and after pictures. You just can't run Facebook ads with them.

If one of your advertisements is rejected for the latter reason, you can ask them to re-consider. In your request, focus on the fact that your patients health is your primary concern as a clinician.

For all platforms, URLs should be shortened with the ow.ly click counter and always go into the text box section of your post, not the image.

7 ways to be great on social media

1 Show people doing something in your photos

People on social media want to see other people and they want to see them being active, interacting with one another and having a good time.

Whatever it is you're promoting, you need to find a way to do that while making sure that the photo somehow links to what you're writing about.

2 Take beautiful, high-quality pictures

Use an image with every post you write on Facebook. This will increase the likelihood that people will read it.

Make sure you take pictures in favorable lighting conditions. To make your posts successful, attractive high-quality pictures are a must.

3 Focus on a few benefits

People decide within a split second if they want to see a piece of content or if they want to move on to the next piece.

You'll be most effective by clearly stating the benefits of what you're offering. Keep the number of benefits low and the language simple, short and clear. Try to get to the point right away.

You can increase the relevance of a promotion for patients by including a typical price range for the treatment.

4 Include a call to action

Don't forget to mention how people can take action. End your post with a short URL to your website or put down the e-mail address and phone number of your practice.

7 Special offers

Highlighting special offers is one of the best ways to persuade both new and existing patients to pick up the phone and make an appointment. Your offer doesn't have to be the price of the treatment – it can be about the first consultation or the financing options you provide, such as installments.

6 Be prepared to talk about pricing

Especially for implant treatment and any cosmetic treatments, you can provide value to potential patients by speaking about the typical price range for certain treatments. Potential patients find this information very relevant when they are researching a treatment. Enabling them to weigh the investment and benefits of a treatment will increase your chance of being the dentist they choose.

Just be sure to use terms such as "in most cases" in order not to build false expectations with patients who have conditions that need additional attention.

5 Leverage the informal nature of social media

Social media is a digital environment in which a human-to-human dialogue takes place. Users visit social media platforms because they want to interact with other people in different ways and to maintain and build their social networks.

The same holds true for businesses: Users want to interact with the people behind the business – human to human. Use that to your advantage. Write in a personal, conversational tone, just as you would speak, and be positive.



Your strategy for getting started with social media goals

Start defining your social media strategy by selecting the most relevant options from the list below.

Media activities

We pursue the following goals with our social media activities:

Generate traffic to the practice website

(if there is one and it's desired)

- ☒ Main page
- ☒ Special promotion sites

Build and maintain goodwill with potential patients in order to drive patient visits

- ☒ Promote the treatment portfolio (e.g., through patient cases, success stories, behind the scenes)
- ☒ Demonstrate our team's capability to create high-quality work (e.g. show the best results)
- ☒ Be open to questions and feedback
- ☐ Collaborate with treatment partners

Goals

These goals can be measured as follows, both monthly and annually:

Generate traffic to the practice website

Measure the number of visits (unique, total) that have been directed to the website by using Google Analytics and the ow.ly click counter, the former for determining total numbers and the latter to determine the effectiveness of individual posts.

Build and maintain goodwill with patients in order to generate leads and sales.

If unknown, have your assistant ask each new patient how they first became aware of the practice. Create a spreadsheet. Track a) new patients who first became aware of the practice through social media and related order volumes b) existing patients who became aware of the social media activities.

Target audience

The target audience for all activities is:

- ☒ Patients
- ☐ Referring dentists
- ☐ Peers
- ☐ Prospective employees

Scope of activities:

- ☒ Providing content (see Content)
- ☒ Answering inquiries about our portfolio, treatments and pricing
- ☒ Conducting a dialogue, which means:
 - Listening to feedback and forwarding relevant feedback to the responsible persons
 - Conversing with users on a human-to-human basis
 - Nurturing leads interested in getting treatment so they become willing to seek and accept treatment

Content

Content that is perceived as relevant and interesting by the target audience is a basic ingredient for initiating any kind of conversation.

Content we create needs to follow a linked approach: It should integrate our business objectives that we want to achieve through social media with our customers' interests.

We will focus on the following types of content:

- ☐ Share high-quality photos of the best results. We show off our best and most challenging cases.
- ☐ Behind the scenes stories from the practice. These need to be in a photo or video format and feature our entire team. We want to show the people who work here. We want the target audience to experience the value and skill of our work. We want them to see that we're great, committed, positive and likeable people.
- ☐ Success stories telling how our treatment helped a patient gain back their quality of life, with pictures of the treatment outcomes. Naturally, all involved parties must be willing to sign a release form.



Platforms

We will be present on the following platforms:

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ LinkedIn page
- ☐ A LinkedIn group where we connect with treatment partners
- ☐ Other ...



Conclusion

Social media can let you demonstrate how your practice improves patients' oral health and their quality of life – to a large, yet targeted audience of potential patients near you. And it allows you to do so quickly and inexpensively.

The key to success is creating content that your audience will want to consume, particularly content that is 'human' and tells stories from your practice.

We've given you an overview of the most important platforms and recommended you use Facebook and LinkedIn.

From our social media strategy toolbox you were able to choose the elements that you want to get started with.

We wish you a successful start in the social media world and a quick return on your efforts.



Find us on social media

Nobel Biocare is on social media too. Find us here:

facebook.com/nobelbiocare

Facebook is where we share what's new, training opportunities, and what's happening at trade shows and events.

[@nobelbiocare](https://twitter.com/nobelbiocare)

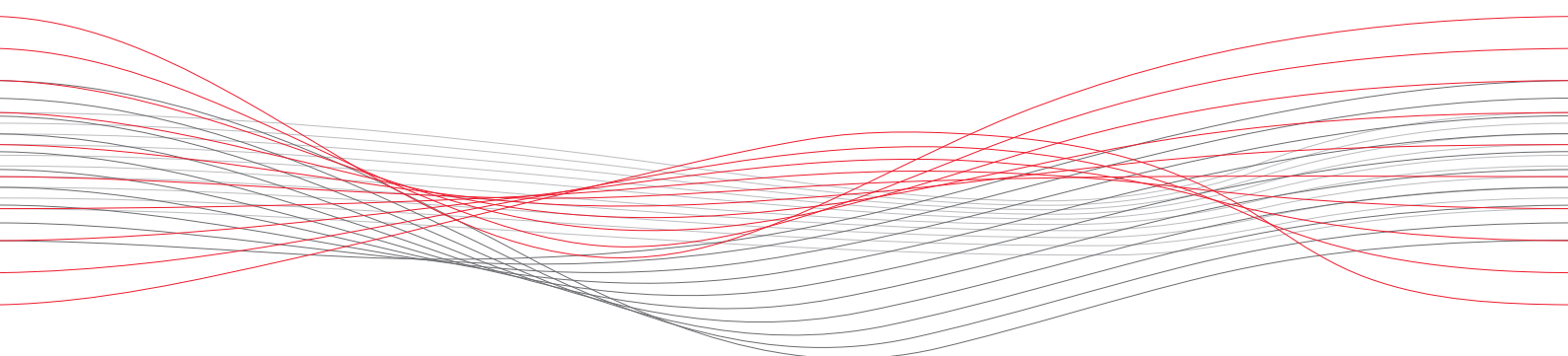
Twitter is where we get in touch with our customers and people interested in our company on a 1:1 basis.

linkedin.com/company/nobel-biocare

On LinkedIn, we share selected highlights from our activities. We also have a group for current and past employees and dental professionals.

youtube.com/+nobelbiocare

You can find video summaries from trade shows, our symposia and product videos on our YouTube channel.



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