



AYIK + BERTO
DENTAL SPECIALISTS

How AYIK + BERTO Disrupted the Endodontic Industry with a Direct-to-Patient (DTP) Model



StrataBlue

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Introduction

Disrupting the Endodontic Industry

AYIK + BERTO Dental Specialists is a new, private equity-backed venture that houses eight decentralized endodontic practices. Prior to 2020, these practices operated separately and followed the status quo of the industry: they relied on referrals from general practice (GP) dentists.

But there was a glaring problem. Relying on GP referrals is a passive, uncertain business model that often prevents endodontic businesses from achieving real growth.

The model is unpredictable by nature because it creates a dependency on third parties for new business – and at the end of the day, there’s no control over the decisions those third parties make (and you can only hand out so many cupcakes to build those relationships). Research shows that only 32% of GPs refer 10% or less of their root canals to endodontists.

To take the power back into their own hands, AYIK + BERTO joined forces with StrataBlue to disrupt the endodontic industry.

The Mission

Shift the business to a direct-to-patient (DTP) model where customers are educated and empowered to self-refer, rather than continuing to depend on third party referrals.

To accomplish this goal, they needed to:



Consolidate their eight disparate companies into a single trustworthy and credible brand



Build a consistent and predictable customer acquisition system that can scale with the company’s growth



Create a sales and marketing foundation that builds authority and confidence



Demystify endodontics and make it a household term – and make AYIK + BERTO the top name in the space



Improve the customer journey and experience to efficiently turn leads into patients

Introduction

Disrupting the Endodontic Industry

Tactics

To bring their DTC strategy to life, Ayik + Berto built a new website for the consolidated brand, created paid advertising campaigns on several media channels and platforms, and generated various types of educational content for potential and current customers.

They advertised on Facebook and Instagram, created radio and audio ad campaigns on Spotify and AudioGo, and built search engine ads on Google, Bing, and Yelp. The company also created several educational and awareness-generating content pieces like video content, ebooks, and email campaigns for consumers and current patients.

The Result

Since setting their strategy into motion in April 2020, Ayik + Berto has seen consistent and predictable year-over-year (YOY) growth – during a pandemic, no less. Their practices receive over 1,000 phone calls a month, with 76% of phone calls on average coming from paid media platforms.

In roughly four months of the campaign's launch, the new website generated more than 43,000 website sessions and their cross-platform ads generated more than 5.1 million impressions. The practice pages have 231% lift in new Google reviews from April 1, 2020, to August 18, 2020 – more than double compared to the Google reviews during the same period in 2019.

Conclusion

Ayik + Berto proves that when brands want to achieve real, sustainable growth, it's sometimes necessary to break through the status quo and carve a new path. To make this happen, it's critical to have a clear, research-based strategy to guide every granular tactic and decision. Companies who don't feel that they have the internal expertise should seek a partner to help build the right action plan and bring their goals to life.

Key Findings

1k+

phone calls in a month

76%

phone calls from paid media platforms (avg.)

43k+

website sessions

5.1M

impressions from cross-platform ads

Harnessing the Growing Self-Referral Trend

AYIK + BERTO had the choice of ramping up their initiatives to grow their GP referral network, but they knew that this model simply wasn't sustainable in the long run. There are a few key reasons for this.

Relying on General Practice Referrals is:

Unpredictable



Relying on GP referrals offers no predictable way to manage case flow. You may have more referrals in some months compared to other months, and there's no way to know when inflow or outflow will occur.

Competitive



Most endodontic practices are visiting general dentist practices to build their referral network. This solution doesn't set AYIK + BERTO apart from others. It's also a limited solution, as they were competing with other endodontic practices to build relationships with the same GPs in the area.

Impractical



It's cost-prohibitive to hire additional staff to travel to-and-from GP practices, bringing and distributing cupcakes and other food items to literally and figuratively sweeten the deal.

Stagnation



Continuing to follow this traditional, saturated "me-too" business model would not allow AYIK + BERTO to stand out or achieve the ROI set by the private equity group. At best, it might keep the practices in business without growth.

The first step to solving their business problem was to conduct a deep analysis of the current state of the endodontic industry and how customers seek and receive their dental care. This helped make sure their plan was built on a solid foundation.

What they found was eye-opening

There's a large patient base in need of endodontic services. For example, the American Association of Endodontists (AAE) states that more than 15 million root canals are performed each year.

But when StrataBlue conducted their own market research in December 2019, they found that 64% of patients didn't know all the facts about endodontists and the benefits of seeing a specialist instead of their dental GP.

This lack of knowledge creates a barrier to patients who are forced to make health decisions – 89% of respondents didn't know that they could schedule an appointment directly with an endodontist without a GP's referral.

The key was knowledge.

The study also found that after being educated and filling these knowledge gaps, most respondents (89.2%) reported that they would or maybe would schedule an appointment with an endodontist the next time they experience tooth pain or sensitivity.

Key Findings

15M

Root Canals Conducted per Year

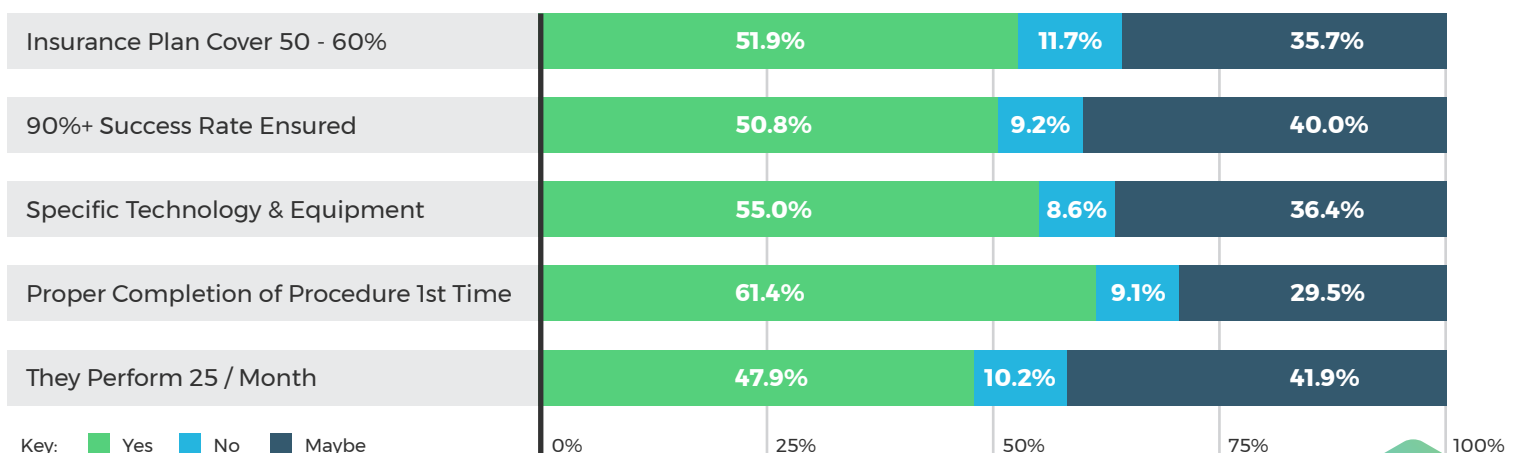
64%

Didn't know what an Endodontist does

89%

Didn't know they can book without a referral

Survey: Would You See An Endodontist If...



Research Harnessing the Growing Self-Referral Trend

This theory supports broader market research that indicates today's patient is taking more initiative to make their own health decisions.

After looking closely at the research, **it was clear that there was an untapped market to empower dental patients** to proactively book appointments with an endodontic specialist instead of their GP.

AYIK + BERTO set out to create a direct-to-patient (DTP) business model that started with robust customer education and ended with a consistent flow of self-referrals.



Consumers are taking to the internet to search out their own solutions and dental specialists. So many patients now utilize corporate dentists or clinics for their primary dental. **When they need services beyond the scope or comfort level of a clinic, they seek specialists themselves.** This change has brought about an increase of 'self-referred' patients to the endodontist¹.

Building a Scalable, Repeatable DTP Business Model

AYIK + BERTO worked with StrataBlue to devise a process for their new direct-to-patient business model that would allow for more brand exposure and control of the patient experience:



Before they could set the plan in motion, they needed a strong brand foundation to build on. They started with consolidating all eight decentralized practices and unifying them into one fortified, relatable, and trustworthy brand: AYIK + BERTO Dental Specialists. The website www.ayikberto.com became the brand hub, which branched into two mobile-optimized websites where patients and endodontic professionals can engage and learn.

Action

Building a Scalable, Repeatable, DTC Business Model

A core component of the new brand identity was to build authority, familiarity, and comfort, especially because of the high anxiety that most dental patients experience. AYIK + BERTO accomplished this by showcasing each dentist in the company's marketing materials, placing their face and expertise front-and-center.

Once the brand was solidified, AYIK + BERTO focused on paid advertising and targeted content to grow education, awareness, and demand for the company's services.



Action

Paid Advertising to Grow Awareness and Generate Phone Calls

Paid Advertising to Grow Awareness and Generate Phone Calls



As a Google Partner and Facebook Blueprint Certified agency, StrataBlue set out to use its paid advertising expertise to increase awareness of the brand and drive traffic to targeted landing pages.

From these landing pages, visitors learn more about endodontics, how an endodontist might be the right option for their current needs, and a phone number to call and schedule a standard or emergency appointment.

AYIK + BERTO created multiple tracked phone numbers to report on the performance for each ad and platform, helping to show direct attribution between each campaign and its results. These ad platforms include:



Social Media

Facebook and Instagram ad campaigns created general awareness around the brand. These campaigns displayed to social media users who fit demographics more likely to see an endodontist, aiming to educate and encourage users to book an appointment by phone.



Digital Radio

Spotify and AudioGo ads to increase awareness in practice zip codes. These location-based ads show customers that help is nearby – an important detail, as StrataBlue’s market research showed that 70.4% of customers were willing to travel 30 minutes or less to get to an endodontist, but only 40.9% were willing to travel longer than 30 minutes.

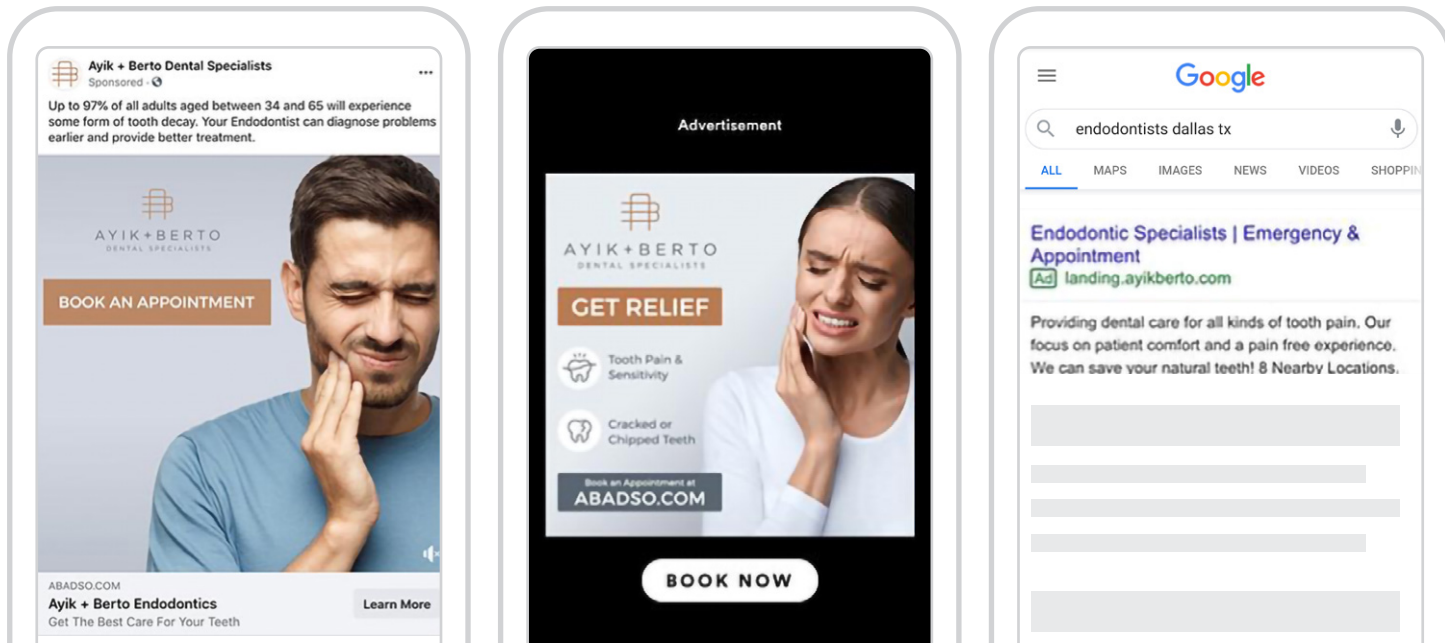


Search Engines

Google, Bing, and Yelp ads that show when customers are searching for solutions to their dental issues. These ads are more heavily aimed at generating conversions, driving visitors to call AYIK + BERTO and schedule an appointment.

Action

Paid Advertising to Grow Awareness and Generate Phone Calls



Targeted Content to Educate and Engage Patients

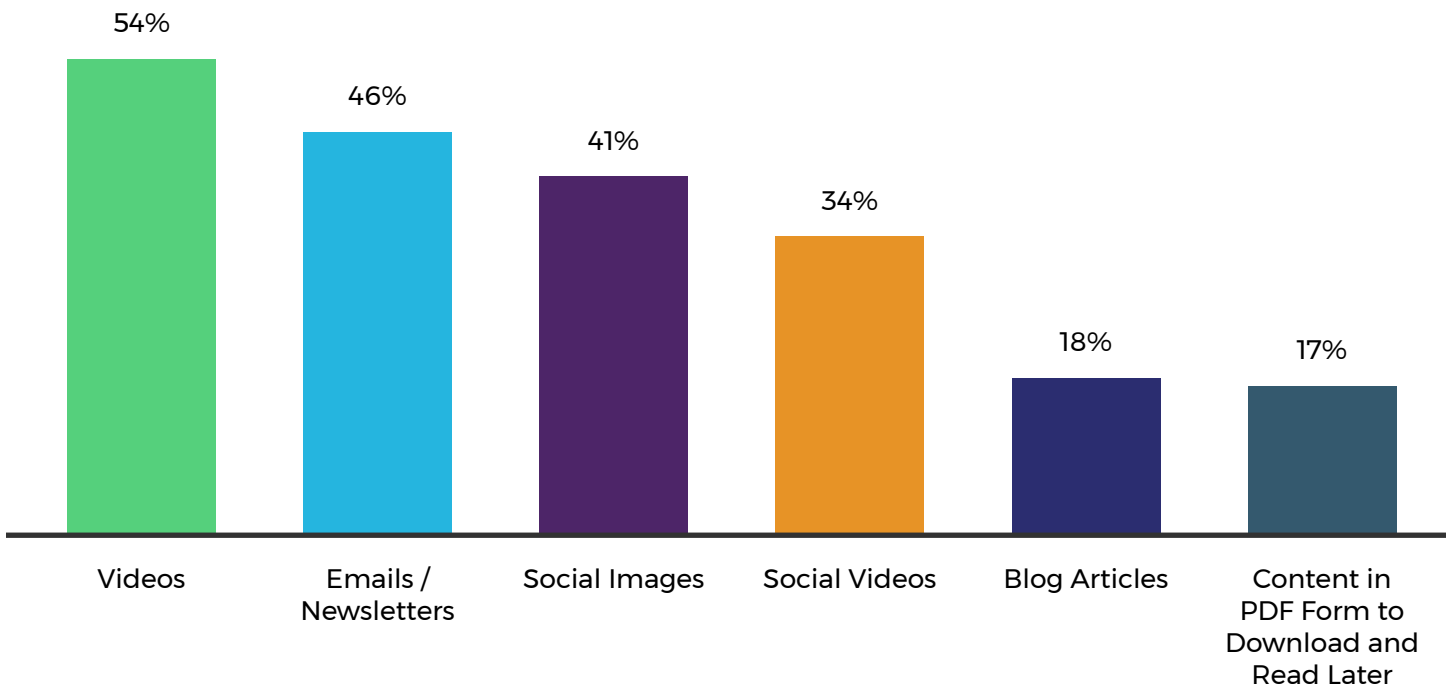
In addition to paid advertising, AYIK + BERTO developed targeted content to fill the critical knowledge gaps they discovered during the research process.

To educate and engage patients while building trust and authority around the brand, AYIK + BERTO created video content like videos and ebooks, as well as email nurturing campaigns for potential customers and existing patients.

Video Content

Video consistently ranks one of the most sought-after content forms out there. In a HubSpot study, 54% of participants said they wanted to see videos from brands and businesses they support.² To make sure they were engaging potential customers, AYIK + BERTO created a series of videos that educate patients on endodontics and endodontic treatments

What kind of content do you want to see from a brand or business you support?



HubSpot Research Base: 3,010 consumers in the US, Germany, Columbia, and Mexico
Source: Hubspot Content Trends Survey, Q3 2017

Ebooks

Free content is another pillar of customer engagement. AYIK + BERTO created ebooks on topics that interest their target audience, like “Keep Your Natural Teeth for Life.” This content is offered via certain social ads, as well as on the patient website.



² <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/content-trends-preferences>

Action

Targeted Content to Educate and Engage Patients

Email Campaigns

After receiving a prospect or patient's email via various signups and opt-ins, AYIK + BERTO continues to nurture the relationship with two types of email marketing campaigns:



Future Patient Email Sequences

Future patient email sequences are for those who haven't yet become a patient or don't have a current need for endodontic services. These emails aim to educate people on how the industry works, as well as sharing more information on relevant topics like saving their natural teeth.

Returning Patient Email Sequences

Returning patient email sequences are for those who have scheduled an appointment or visited an office. These emails aim to alleviate fears and provide all information on what to expect up front.



Results

Marketing-Driven YOY Sales Growth

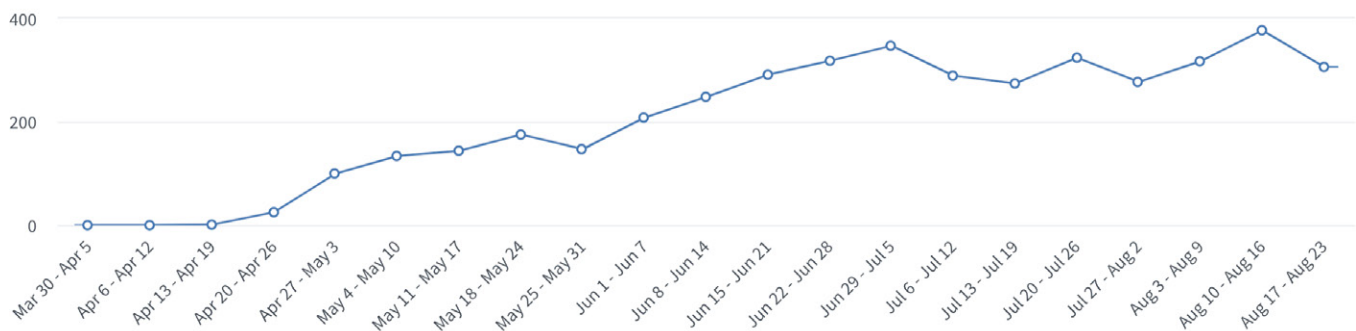
Since AYIK + BERTO and StrataBlue set these plans into motion in April 2020, the brand has seen a significant activity increase in all areas of the campaign. And because these campaigns were closely tracked, analyzed, and reported, the brand knows exactly which elements drove which results.

This creates a growth cycle: implement research-based strategies and tactics, discover which ones worked best, then repeat and scale those top-performers across various channels and platforms.

Here are some of the top performance metrics.

Ayik + Berto practices receive over **1,000 phone calls a month**, with **76%** of phone calls on average coming from paid media platforms.

4,302 Calls from Apr 1, 2020 - Aug 23, 2020 Central Time



1k 1,000 Calls /month

76% Averaging from paid media

Results

Marketing-Driven YOY Sales Growth

AYIK + BERTO's practice pages have generated **231% lift in new Google reviews** from April 1, 2020, to August 18, 2020 – more than double compared to the Google reviews during the same period in 2019.



Samuel Baeza
2 reviews

★★★★★ 5 days ago

I am telling everyone looking at this, I'm totally afraid of root canals but Dr. Berto and Ivy did a great job and it was pain free. I totally recommend this office!!! 😊



J Anim
6 reviews

★★★★★ a month ago

Excellent, Excellent!! Dr Garrett is astounding his work is simply amazing. His assistant is fantastic. I highly recommend Dr Garrett to all my family and friends. Great Job Dallas Endodontics!!!!



Robbie Peppers
4 reviews

★★★★★ 2 months ago

Baby, if I had a million dollars I would give it to each one of the staff at Metroplex Endodontics office. I asked God to lead me to the right place for a root canal. After making several phone calls to different offices, I made a call to ...

[More](#)



Cathy D
17 reviews

★★★★★ 21 hours ago

I cannot say enough great things about this office. Dr Field was incredible. My son had a root canal and everything went perfectly and he healed quickly. Everyone in the office was professional, efficient and kind. They were even able ...



[More](#)

Results

Are You Ready to Smash the Status Quo?

Are You Ready to Smash the Status Quo?

AYIK + BERTO found success for several reasons – but most importantly, they saw an opportunity to take control of their business and shatter the industry’s old model.

To make this happen, they needed the right partner with knowledge and expertise in building a holistic branding and marketing campaign.

They chose StrataBlue, an agency that helps brands attract, engage, convert, and retain more clients with various digital marketing strategies, including:



Digital Strategy:

Market research, strategic planning, competitive analysis, content strategy, SEO, and PPC.



Online Marketing Services:

Social outreach, community and reputation management, influencer analysis, recruitment, and social advertising



Marketing Automation:

Marketing and sales alignment, campaign management, lead nurturing and scoring, targeted creative content, and reporting and analysis.



Creative Services:

Branding, social media, web design, infographics, and video.

If you're ready to smash the status quo and reach new levels of success, contact us today.



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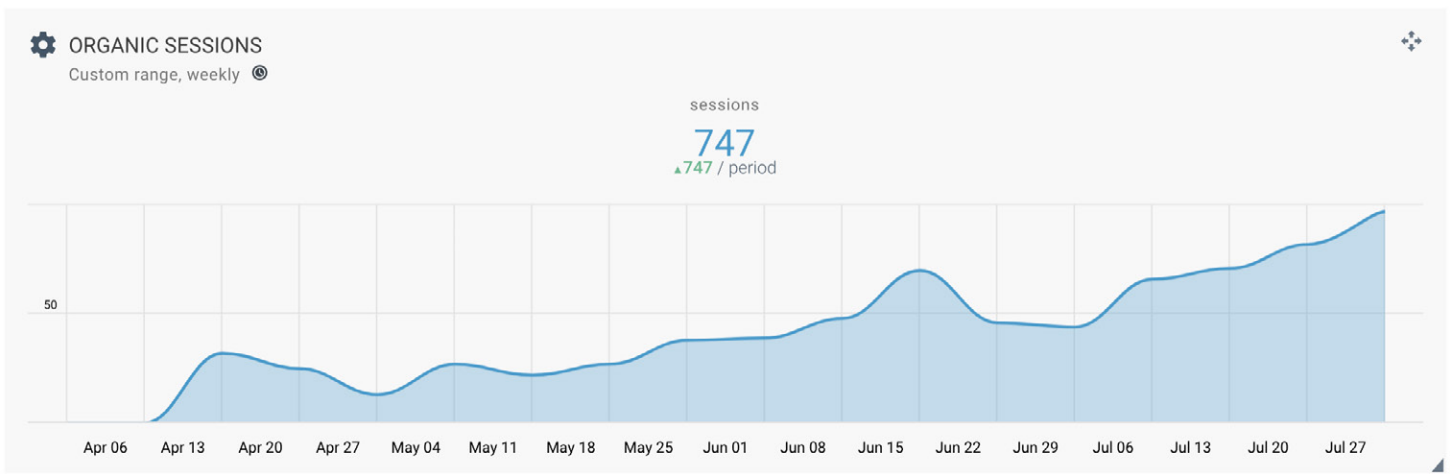
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Results

Marketing-Driven YOY Sales Growth

Ayikberto.com has generated **43,531 website sessions** from April 1, 2020 – August 18, 2020.



43,531 Website Sessions

Cross-platform ads have served **5,134,034 impressions** from April 1, 2020 – July 31, 2020.

5,134,034 Cross-platform Impressions

Results

Marketing-Driven YOY Sales Growth

Platform Impressions Include:



Social media:
Facebook,
Instagram



Audio and radio:
Spotify,
AudioGo



Search engines:
Google, Bing,
Yelp

