

Secrets of the online patient journey: part 4



NAZ HAQUE from Dental Focus explains how to consistently generate more successful online enquiries

FACTFILE



Naz Haque is the Google Consultant for Dental Focus. Excelling in business strategy, google

marketing strategies, digital marketing, mobile and network computing, he has provided consultancy services for major blue-chip brands such as Apple, Microsoft, HP and Sony. Through Dental Focus, as an expert in search engine optimisation, Naz has been helping dentists grow their business, attract more patients, increase their monthly revenue and achieve their dreams

In the previous three articles, I've revealed that there is a growing demand for adult braces and Google is the platform supporting this demand. We identified what prospective patients are looking for online. How to engage them, win their trust, address their concerns and increase the chance of achieving online enquiries. This all works phenomenally to leverage your 'word of mouth' patients and anybody else who finds you on page one of Google.

This all sounds wonderful, but what happens if your website can't be found on Google Page One? Having a beautiful website which can't be found on Google is like shining a torch in the sun. Pointless, ridiculous and just a waste of resources.

A website shouldn't be a vanity project, it should serve a purpose. You need a strategy to be found at the top of Google, for the right patients, the right treatments and the right keywords.

In this article, I shall assume your website is 2017 ready (compliant, personalised, mobile-friendly, packed with real patient stories and pictures) so now we can now focus on marketing via search engine optimisation (SEO).

WHAT IS SEO AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

SEO is ensuring your web pages are accessible and easy for search engines such as Google to find, read and store a copy of the page in their databases. As Google has the lion's share of the market, I will focus on and refer to Google throughout this article when I refer to a search

engine. With an SEO strategy, there is a mixture of activity you can carry out on your website and other sites on the internet to increase your online authority. Having other trusted websites mention you, is a positive signal to Google and helps to build your online authority.

READY FOR MARKETING?

Before starting any marketing including SEO we need to look at some hard facts. Do you have good online reviews from your patients? Can you/your team convert patients when they're in your surgery? Is the team at reception capable of convincing prospects that find you via Google, you are the right practice for them and book them in? There's no point feeling happy about eight new patient signups a week if you're getting 80 new patient enquiries a week!

Are you a specialist ortho practice or a GDP who offers short term ortho? Are we looking for young mothers, professionals, families, or mature patients? Look at where the success has already been in your business for that type of patient. Is the practice ready and capable to deliver this?

Now we know our strengths, needs, weakness and capabilities let's see where the demand fits in with this. Assume we have a practice in a town in London, the team are capable of delivering Invisalign and we know there is an appetite for this treatment.

We need to get our website onto Google Page One for the most searched Invisalign keywords and phrases. We can use a number of tools such as Google Keyword Planner to gauge the demand over a 12-month period. In case you're curious, at the time of writing this article,

Google reveals there are 8,100 searches per month in London for the word Invisalign. In conclusion, we may eventually want to be found for 'Invisalign London' but could start with 'Invisalign Croydon' providing the research shows there are enough search for this smaller location. Have a look at the top three competitors in your location online and see what other related phrases they appear for, this may reveal what the demand is and what keywords to target.

This important step will help to identify the keywords and phrases you want your website to appear for. When a user types in a query into Google, the engine desires to provide the most relevant and authoritative set of results based on their query. My formula is: $\text{Relevance} + \text{Authority} = \text{Position} / R+A=P$.

Google wants to provide answers which meet the user's intent. If Google provides poor results the user may go to another engine such as Bing and hurt their market share. This is one of the reasons why Google wants mobile friendly websites. Google knows most people are on mobile devices so they expect you to offer a mobile experience. If your website is not mobile-friendly by the middle of 2018, it possibly won't appear in the search results on a mobile device anymore.

Google doesn't see pictures or videos, it can only read content so make sure you strike a good balance between having pictures and having sufficient content on each page. Aim for a minimum of 300 words especially on your homepage and the pages focusing on the treatments you're targeting. Ensure your chosen keywords appears on the pages you want to be found by Google. Also look at having these keywords in the title and meta description tags. This is what Google displays on the results pages to describe the page and content. Make sure the content within that page is relevant to your meta description.

To appear in local results, it's important you have a registered, optimised and verified Google My Business (GMB) Listing. This allows you to potentially appear in the top 3 map listings on Google. Ensure that your Name, Address, Phone Number and Website (NAP+W) address is consistent on your web page and the GMB listing.

You want to have the same NAP+W appearing on recognised platforms such as Facebook, and Twitter. You must ensure you've set up business pages, not personal pages. I often seen dental businesses with personal pages which just looks amateur

and cheap and patients can easily see the difference. You should also apply specific coding on your website called Local Schema which will help your business details be seen and valued better by Google.

So, we have a modern website, it's mobile friendly, content rich (300+ words) per important page, have a registered and verified GMB, a business Facebook and Twitter page - we just need to add a blog.

DOES GOOGLE KNOW YOUR BUSINESS ISN'T DEAD?

Google cannot physically visit your practice so the only way it can tell your business is alive is if you're making changes to the site consistently. A website change encourages Google to visit and update their library. Blogging is one of the best and most convenient ways to update your site, carry out SEO, automate postings on social media and build relevance in Google's eyes. Make sure your blog is on your website and not on another website address.

Consistently writing high-quality articles about your subject (Invisalign Croydon) will educate Google you offer this, make you appear more relevant for this query and potentially display you for that phrase if someone is to carry out a search.

Then you want to canvass and build relationships with local business, websites and related sites (doesn't have to be local). Provide them value by offering to write content for them on their sites, educational and engaging content. The entire article should be consistent, maybe an article about the benefits of Teeth Straightening. Somewhere within that article place your target keyword (Invisalign Croydon) in a sentence and have this phrase link to your site.

At the crux, Google sees a respected website presenting an article of value (300+ words again) linking back to you which is scoring you brownie points, and the keyword is linked to your target page. This is a clear signal to Google to help build your authority. Remember the formula $R+A=P$.

When you build your relevance and authority consistently you can aim to appear on Google Page One. 93% of consumer decisions start on Google. It was reported only 35% of users click on the ads so the rest are using the natural listings and map listings. This is where we aim to appear with SEO. After patient referrals, SEO leads are the best leads. The prospect would have spent time navigating your


site, reading the amazing stories, become more educated and have fewer objections.

It all sounds very straightforward but consistently preparing content and achieving the permission from third party websites to write on their platforms can take up a lot of time. Make sure you're committed to making the time or use an agency who has a track record in SEO.

There are some caveats, there is a danger of over-optimising or achieving too many links from poor quality third party websites which can drop you further down the Google rankings. Search engines are programmed with specific rules on how data will be processed, valued and stored. Google has monthly updates and sometimes the rules change and what works today may be bad practice in six months. You need to be vigilant, follow industry experts and keep up to date with the changes if you're taking responsibility for SEO.

Once you've achieved top Google rankings and your SEO is working well, you should start looking at the pages to see how they can convert better. How can you increase the number of enquiries per 100 visitors? This should enable you to build on your success. You may need to weigh up how much time you can allocate to this if you're in a competitive location and reducing efforts in the other-other areas creates a risk of dropping rankings.

Overall SEO leads have a higher chance of converting than a PPC lead (paid ads). Unfortunately, it does take longer to appear at the top of Google Page One via SEO. PPC top positions can be achieved instantaneously and SEO top positions can take anything from 4-18 months. In the long-term SEO will become the more cost-effective type of marketing as the results are somewhat permanent whilst your PPC ads stop the moment your daily budget is finished.

Using all the tips above can help you to consistently climb the Google rankings, increase your patient enquiries, the quality of the leads and finally the percentage of leads from every 100 visitors for your ideal treatments. Good luck, take action and let me know when you're on page 1! 

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on digital marketing solutions and website design go to www.dental-focus.com or call **020 7183 8388**.