



Secrets of the online patient journey: part 3

NAZ HAQUE asks, what should you show and tell patients on your website to earn their trust and get them to choose you?

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.

People buy from people they trust. So it should be a no-brainer to focus on winning a patient's trust from the start of their journey. In this day and age, a good place to start would be a practice's website and online reviews.

Part of winning trust is by allaying concerns. Patients may have unfounded concerns and fears. These could have been built through life experiences or inherited through miseducation. If we can turn this around we can change their understanding, their beliefs and ultimately get them to say yes to treatment plans. So how do we get prospective patients to trust you? By gathering stories from patients who already do trust (and love) you.

Storytelling is a great way to build trust. People love to hear about others' lives. Stories can inspire and fill one with hope. Patients can become even more interested if they can relate to the stories of other patients.

Some hold the belief that the longer the patient spends with your practice, the more likely they are to choose you for their high-end treatments. With that in mind, what happens if you are in the possession of a great website and find ways to encourage patient to spend longer on your website? A website which tells a story will be able to keep the reader engaged surely?

So what's needed to keep the patients on your site and share their personal details with you?

At Dental Focus there are two frameworks to create powerful emotional websites which help to build trust and compel prospective patients to reach out to you. The 7 Ps and 8 Patient Concerns.

THE 7 PERSONALITIES (7 PS) OF EMOTIONAL WEBSITES

P1. Profile

Dental practice websites are usually too busy catering for everyone that they do not stand for anything and do not stand out. The home page needs to be fast to download but also quickly understood. The look, the feel, the brand all need to convince your specific target patient that this is the right place. Your USPs should be clear and the targeted visitor must feel compelled to stay and click in less than five seconds.

P2. People

Dental practice websites usually forget customer service is visually represented through people that appear professional. You need to show the personality of a happy and approachable team with great smiles. You need to look and read as the experts with the best level of customer service.

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'THROUGHOUT THE PATIENT JOURNEY, THE SECRET TO HELPING THEM MOVE THROUGH EACH STAGE QUICKER IS BY ADDRESSING CONCERNS'

P3. Premises

Dental practice websites need to stop showing scary dental surgeries, sharp tools and boring technology that mean nothing to the patient. Virtual tours using professional photography or corporate video need to focus on the feeling of luxury and comfort, showing patients what they actually care to look at, such as impressive patient lounges, classy receptions, and boutique washrooms.

P4. Prices

Dental practices generally attempt to show their fees online but are confused about the benefit that doing this brings. It is important to appear either reassuringly expensive and/or great value for money to attract your correct target patient otherwise you will not stand out.

P5. Promises

Dental practices commonly forget that customer service has to be promised and the brand standards need to be stated. Patients need to know what to expect. This is all usually hidden and difficult to find or lengthy to read. Video and/or photography should be used to explain the patient journey.

P6. Proof

Dental practices that think written letters and text testimonials are still going to attract patients are living in the dark ages. Nobody is going to convert into an enquiry after reading scanned-in thank you cards. You need before and after 'smile photos' to show clinical expertise and this means no blood, no gore, no metal, no tools and no retractors. You need full face 'smile photos' to show gratitude in your patient's eyes. You need video testimonials to put 'word-of-mouth' on your website and deliver emotional encouragement.

P7. Products

Dental practices are forgetting to differentiate their treatments. Websites tend to advertise the exact same services

as other practices so patients believe price comparison is the only difference.

Personalising treatments and creating 'branded experience' packages are required to make you incomparable.

THE 8 PATIENT CONCERNS

Humans move away from pain to pleasure. That is the quickest way to make them take action. Sometimes behaviour is a reaction because of a concern. Consider, in your consultations, how much time is spent delivering clinical work and how much is spent building the relationship and tackling concerns? Throughout the patient journey, the secret to helping them move through each stage quicker is by addressing concerns.

At Dental Focus, with over 15 years of experience researching the successes in dental websites, we have been able to identify and define the core 8 Patient Concerns. In this article, the concerns have been adapted for an ortho patient. These concerns apply to all patients for all treatments.

1. Form - Look and feel

How will the aligner or bracket appear and feel in my mouth (patient)?

2. Function - The life changing benefits

Aside from the aesthetics what else will the correction offer, an improved bite, reduction in stress/pain, an increase in confidence?

3. Longevity - How long it lasts and the aftercare

How many appointments are there in between each set of brackets, aligners or braces. Will retainers be needed to prevent relapses and for how long, are the results permanent?

4. Value - Why you're the expert

Why should patients choose you over another dentist they've seen. Do you have

a specific track record, an unrivalled level of success or an out of this world chairside manner?

5. Journey - Consultation and treatment experience

Who is involved (therapist/TCO), what does the consultation consist of (clinical/non-clinical), are you creating a mould or using a scanner? How many weeks before the braces can be fitted and then removed?

6. Character - You and your team

Have you seen it all before, are you non-judgemental. Will you be supportive or scold me (patient)?

7. Fears - Nerves, phobias and the feeling expected in the service

Am I the most nervous patient in the world or have you seen others like me? Do I have the worst mouth or have you seen worse? Will I be looked after?


8. Why now - Why is now the best time?

Why should I not hold back any longer, what have others in my shoes done, did they jump to change their smile or take their time.

To the dentists reading this article, it's likely you've heard these concerns before from your patients in your surgery. We have to be aware, that poor human (your patient) has carried their burden of concerns for a long time! They come to your surgery and the first thing they do is unleash all these concerns.

Now consider, what if you could manage the concerns on the website from the start, imagine how your consultations could improve as well as your treatment acceptance rates?

The best way to address and manage the Ps and 8 Patient Concerns is to collect and present stories from existing patients on each one of these points. Consider which patient has had a journey with you for the points identified.

Make a shortlist of who the raving fan patients are (as you've managed their concerns). They're already enrolled and love you, don't they? If not, are there any other unresolved concerns and treatments to offer? 

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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