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**Dental Website**

**Design Tips**

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**Introduction: A dental website is your patient’s view into your practice**

* You need to turn your dental practice’s website into an inbound marketing tool
* It needs to attract potential dental patients, educate them, and influence them to become your patient
* Your website needs to be interactive; by enabling your patients or prospects to respond and communicate back and forth with you

 **Part I I**

**Can prospective patients Find You?**

1. **On-page Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**
* Select keywords or keyword clusters for each page (to not confuse the spiders what the page is about)
* Add relevant keywords into your content
* Include keywords in headlines and sub-headlines (known as H1 tags)
* Use (Alt tags) to name images/photos – include a dash between each word
* Make sure your content is written for your patients – try not to be technical and don’t forget to optimize for common search terms
1. **Developing backlinks to your site**
* You need popular websites (with high authority) to link back to your dental site
* It’s important to use off page SEO to increase your website ranking results
* 5 guidelines to constructing backlinks:
	+ Claim your online directories
	+ Use quality educational or engaging content
	+ Find backlink opportunities with other “higher ranking” sites
	+ Ask to guest post on other blogs
	+ Avoid third-party vendors who try to sell, trade or manipulate you into purchasing backlinks – this can have a negative impact on your rankings
1. **Behind the scenes: Meta data**
* Select one keyword per page and use it multiple times on the page
* Use unique title tags and meta descriptions for each web page
* Don’t forget to use a keyword in each page’s URL
* Make sure your content management system (CMS) enables you to change content
1. **Set up 301 redirects**
* If you add or move URL’s for your practice, make sure they stay connected
* To keep backlinks connected, direct them to your new page
1. **Include Sitemaps**
* Construct a sitemap for your practice’s site to help spiders categorize your web pages more efficiently

 **Part II II**

**Is your content informative and engaging?**

1. **The purpose for your content**
* Will they know what each page is about?
* Is their next step clear?
* How will you convince them to become a patient?
* Does your prospective patient quickly understand your practice differentiator?
* Are you moving them through the new patient activation cycle?
* Make sure there is valuable information for them to download from your site



1. **Use quality content**
* Quality content is a must have to increase traffic, make sure you:
	+ Create unique content
	+ Understand your ideal patient and make your content relevant for them
	+ Include educational content that helps patients
	+ Focus on what your patients’ need … don’t get too technical
	+ Update content regularly (2-3 times each month)
	+ Source content and images
1. **Educate and offer value**
* Not everyone is interested in becoming a patient when they find your site
* WIIFM… Does your site answer: “What’s in it for me?” for you potential patient
	+ Include content that helps prospective prospects solve their problems
	+ Determine if you are speaking directly to your ideal patient – speak their language and answer their frequently asked questions
	+ Use tips, case studies, white papers, videos and other forms of content that are educational and not promotional

1. **Avoid industry jargon**
* Avoid industry speak that may be confusing to patients
* Do not use technical dentistry terms no one understands

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1. **Blog, Blog, Blog**
* One of the most key things you can do for your dental practice is to blog
* A well written blog will increase traffic to your website
* Use your blogs to receive backlinks to your website
1. **Avoid the use of cute and clever terms and offers**
* People are tired of advertising gimmicks and bait-and-switch offers
* Make sure to make your point quickly and be concise
* Avoid humorous writing, what you think is funny might turn off another
1. **Make it easy to share your content**
* When your dental patients or prospects “likes” a post or blog entry it notifies all their friends to see what they like and even provides them with a link to find it themselves
* Every page on your website should have a sharing plugin
* You will want it easy to share your blog post, social media post and content



1. **Patient testimonials and case studies**
* Nothing adds credibility and trust faster than happy patients. Add: Testimonials, patient reviews and case studies
* To make them more real, it is best to use a picture or video of the patient with your testimonial and case studies – have them sign a simple release form to use their photo
* Add a testimonial to each page but make sure it matches the content on the page
1. **Other forms of content**
* To make your content easier to read and more engaging use: Photos, videos, podcast, and online tools (e.g. whitening chart)

 **Part III II**

**Does your design attract potential patients?**

1. **Make things easy to find on your site**
* Use common navigation tabs that are easy to understand
* Your dental website design should make it easy to find information
	+ Run navigation bars horizontally across the top of page
	+ To keep simple, navigation should be 3 levels or less
	+ Include a search box in the top right of each web page
	+ Use links within your page content
	+ To find your way back, use breadcrumbs on each page
	+ Navigation links should be in the footer of site
1. **Make a strong first impression**
* Your site design establishes you as a credible practice
* 4 Tips for a strong website design
	+ Keep it Simple: Use a font/type that is easy to read… use bullet points, large headers and brief paragraphs
	+ Color: Use calming colors that makes your patients feel comfortable. Pick 2-3 colors throughout your site
	+ Animation: Avoid excessive animation as to not confuse your prospective patient (less is best)
	+ Keep it Clean: Structure your pages to avoid overwhelming them and use whitespace to make it easy to comprehend
1. **Maintain a consistent format**
* Elements need to be consistent throughout the site… page layout, font size, colors and placement of type
* Don’t use too many page layouts throughout your site (3 should be enough)
* Landing pages should use a similar layout (don’t confuse the reader)



1. **Accessibility**
* Your dental site should be compatible with multiple web browsers, tablets and mobile phones
1. **Use photos of real people**
* Photos of your employees and patients add credibility to your site by making potential patients more comfortable with your practice
1. **Flash and animation**
* Do not use flash… Although it looks great, it is difficult to optimize and it’s disruptive