

Chiropractic Marketing in the Age of Social Media: 5 Effective Strategies

By Naren Arulrajah

Social media has grown into a formidable marketing force, one that no chiropractor can afford to ignore. However, many chiropractors are still wary of the impact social networking may have on their practices. They have no clear idea of how social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, Google+, Instagram and Tumblr may be leveraged to their local advantage. Smart SEO and Internet marketers, however, increasingly realize that any Internet marketing strategy in the current scenario remains incomplete unless it is integrated with an effective social media campaign.

A PwC Health Research Institute survey revealed that one-third of consumers in the United States make use of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to find health information, discuss their symptoms, and exchange opinions about doctors and treatments. An overwhelming 90 percent of respondents in the survey in 18-24 age group said they would trust health information shared on social media.¹ These figures make a compelling case for chiropractors to understand how social media can potentially influence the decision of a patient looking for a suitable health care professional or treatment. Here are five key strategies to implement now to take advantage of social media.

1. Establish an Active Presence Across Social Networks

A social-media marketing strategy for a chiropractor cannot be restricted to one or two social networks such as Facebook and Twitter alone. Patients with different profiles are likely to use different social networks according to their personal preferences. Presence across multiple networks allows a chiropractor to build a strong online reputation, and attract potential patients and industry influencers. While Facebook and Twitter can form the foundation of social networking, images can be used effectively over Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest, while short videos can be promoted over YouTube.

2. Engage With Key Social Influencers

Chiropractors can achieve maximum marketing impact with minimum effort using social media by focusing on developing relationships with key influencers. These may include industry leaders, local chiropractic association heads, and key journalists and media outfits focusing on health care. Influencers may also include people with very large networks of followers on social media, who may share the chiropractor's content on their networks.

Online press releases and other promotional announcements may also be shared over social media to gain the attention of influencers. PR.com and PRLog.org are two websites that provide free press-release distribution. PRNewswire.com is a paid service that offers a more comprehensive online press-release distribution.

3. Integrate Social Search With SEO

With the evolving search-engine algorithms, it is no longer a wise idea to have divergent social media and SEO approaches. Social search has rapidly become nearly as important as SEO. A potential patient today may find a local chiropractor as easily on Facebook as through a Google search. Furthermore, search engines are incorporating social signals into their algorithms to determine the rankings of a website. Social links are an important factor for search engines to evaluate the popularity and worthiness of a website.

4. Build a Strong Author Identity

Anonymous interactions over social media and other Internet forums are likely to diminish the credibility of an author in the eyes of the search engines. Leading search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo have indicated that they may be assessing the author's authority and online identity when including social signals in their search results. In his forthcoming book, *The New Digital Age*, Google's Executive Chairman, Eric Schmidt, says information that can be tied to verified online profiles will rank higher compared to content without such verification.²

5. Promote Content Sharing on Social Media

The higher the number of shared links on your social networks, the better your credibility and visibility quotient. Inbound links on social-media accounts demonstrate to a search engine the social relevance and popularity of a particular account. A higher number of shares for a chiropractor's social account effectively

means a higher number of endorsements or "votes" for the account. It is important to provide multiple sharing options to the readers, and create interface between the chiropractic website and various social media accounts, to maximize the possibility of shared content.

Health care market-research company YouGov Healthcare published the results of a survey that revealed 57 percent of survey participants were influenced by their social-media connections with a health care facility while deciding to choose a facility for treatment.³ Social media offers a compelling opportunity for brand-building and fostering closer relationships with potential patients for health care providers. Chiropractors have no reason to be left behind in this race for market domination.

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