

Search-Engine Optimization: 6 Tips to Generate New Patients Using SEO

By Naren Arulrajah

How can you generate new patients using search-engine optimization tactics? Chiropractors should target two categories of potential patients in their local area. The first category includes patients who are already predisposed toward chiropractic treatment. The second category includes potential patients who may or may not be aware of the benefits of chiropractic and need more education to build their interest in consulting a chiropractor. Search-engine optimization can be the most powerful tool available to a chiropractor to generate new patients in both categories and boost revenues from the practice on a sustainable basis.

The 2013 Pew Internet Survey reported that 77 percent of all online health information seekers begin their search at a search engine such as Google, Yahoo or Bing. Interestingly, nearly half of these searches are conducted on someone else's behalf, while 15 percent of the searchers say they looked for health information both on their own as well as someone else's behalf.¹ This data is clearly indicative of the power of search engines in determining the kind of health treatment the average patient seeks, and the choice of a health care professional or facility they visit in the local area.

1. Recognize the Changing SEO Paradigm

Over the past two years, Google has spearheaded a relentless mission to improve the quality of search and has implemented sweeping search-engine algorithmic changes. Chiropractic SEO experts cannot afford to ignore the impact of recent algorithmic updates such as Penguin and Panda. SEO strategies for chiropractors must incorporate the new changes that are causing a paradigm shift in the approach to search-engine optimization.

2. Build Authoritative Site Content, Not Links

When eminent websites link to a chiropractor's website, it indicates to the search engines how important the site is likely to be. However, such links should come naturally and organically, not artificially. Instead of focusing on link-building activity, the new SEO approach is to focus on building original, authoritative content that answers searchers' queries in the best possible manner. Organic link building will follow automatically. Obsessing with artificial link building can have more negative than positive fallouts in the new SEO paradigm.

3. Follow the Mobile Search Consumer Trends

A growing number of patients are using mobile devices to conduct online searches. A 2013 Google-Nielson study of 6,000 participants revealed that 77 percent of mobile searches take place either at home or at the workplace.² In other words, mobile searches are not confined only to on-the-go users. Therefore, it makes sense to have a responsive or mobile-friendly chiropractic website.

4. Create a Strong Online Identity

Search engines are increasingly ranking websites that can be identified with strong brands or individuals with an authoritative online reputation. Google seems inclined to favor content authors who have a detailed profile on Google+. A chiropractor with a strong online reputation and profile is likely to achieve better SEO value for author-specific content compared to someone with anonymous online content.

5. Educate Patients and Disseminate Useful Information

A great way to win new patients for your practice using SEO is to focus on addressing the queries of potential patients in the local area. It is important to assess the key problems of local patients and how chiropractic treatment can solve them. Creating website content for the search engines and not for the patients is a self-defeating exercise in the new SEO scenario. A close evaluation of web analytics can indicate what kind of keywords local patients are searching for; the successful chiropractic website must answer those queries effectively.

6. Leverage Social Search to Boost Local SEO

A recent comScore / GroupM Next study revealed that social media and online search are synergistic in the purchase path that consumers follow on the Internet. The study found that 40 percent of consumers who use Internet search in their path to purchase have a motivation to use social media before they conclude their

buying decision.³

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