How to Conduct a Basic SEO Audit of Your Practice

By Naren Arulrajah

The importance of search-engine optimization (SEO) for businesses and professionals continues to grow with each passing year. According to a <u>recent survey</u> by Conductor Inc., six out of 10 companies expect to increase their SEO staff this year. Sixty-five percent of survey respondents agreed that natural search is influencing their revenue strategy more than it did a year ago. [1]

Is your chiropractic website built using the best SEO principles and practices of today? If not, you may be losing out on a significant amount of locally relevant online traffic of potential patients from the search engines. You can begin by conducting a basic SEO audit of your website to identify the gaps, and then take steps to make the site more search-engine friendly. The audit exercise may be repeated once or twice a year, considering the fast-changing Internet search dynamics.

1. Review the URL Structure of Each Page

Google's official webmaster guidelines recommend the use of appropriately formatted URLs that the search engines can understand easily. Each page of your chiropractic website should be reviewed to ensure that the URLs are correctly created. Here is an example of a poorly optimized URL: **http://www.chiropractor.com/1334/test/58pq47pi9**. And here is an example of a correctly optimized URL: **http://www.chiropractor.com/testimonials**.

2. Check Text Formatting

The text in each page of your website should be logically formatted. The main heading of each page can use a larger and different font to differentiate it from the subheads used later in the same page. Italics, bold text, underlined text and lists may be applied as appropriate.

3. Ensure Logical Internal Linking of Web Pages

All the pages of your website should be linked logically with each other. This is helpful not only for the visitors who wish to navigate the site optimally, but also for the search engines. The important pages of the website that you wish to rank better in the search-engine results should ideally be linked from the home page. Do not use too many internal links for each page, but make sure the important pages have more related links than other pages.

4. Evaluate Original, Relevant and Updated Content

Use Copyscape software periodically to ensure the entire content on your website is original and unique. Search engines will flag duplicate content and remove those pages from their indexing. Content should be free of errors and regularly updated. Websites that add fresh content regularly are likely to rank better. For instance, a study by MarketingProfs says websites that publish 15 or more blog posts a month generate five times more web traffic compared to websites that do not blog at all.[2]

5. Identify Broken Links

Anything that hinders a seamless user experience on your website is essentially bad from an SEO perspective as well. Broken links can be the hindrance that makes site visitors less likely to return. An easy way to look for broken links on your website is to use a free online tool such as Broken Link Check. You can either remove the broken links entirely from your site or redirect them to a valid URL.

6. Review Download Speed

Good download speeds and shorter page load times enhance user experience, which is why search engines prefer such efficient websites. You can assess the average speed of your website by using the PageSpeed Tools offered by Google. This can provide an authentic insight into how your website performs in terms of speed from a user's perspective.

Consider a recent iMedia Connection report that revealed online marketing already constitutes 24 percent of the total marketing expenditure across industries.[3] It may be a good idea to invest your time, effort and money to conduct a thorough website audit and take corrective measures to improve your local patient traffic.

References

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