

Attract New Patients in the New Year: 5-Plus Ways to Improve Your Website's Bounce Rate

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by Naren Arulrajah, Ekwa Marketing

As we enthusiastically jump into a new and better year, there is no better time to take a closer look at your office's online "home"—its website. One way to gauge the performance of your website is by identifying and understanding its "bounce rate." *What is "bounce rate," you ask?* This term refers to the percentage of single-page sessions on your website. Google Analytics puts it this way: each time a visitor to your website opens up one page and then immediately exits, it is called a "bounce." The total "rate" is calculated by dividing the number of single-page sessions by the total number of visits to your website.

This calculation provides important analytical insight into how well your website is working to generate interest in the services that you offer. The lower the bounce rate, the more "sticky" your practice's website is—visitors tend to stick around and review pages longer. It is one thing to *attract* visitors to your website; it is quite another to *keep* them there.

A high bounce rate matters more to some types of businesses than others. For instance, in some industries or for some campaigns, such as a new product launch, entire websites may revolve around just the home page. However, as dental professionals, you know that is not the case with your website. The home page is designed largely to welcome the visitor to your office. It is the jumping-off point. It is not the be-all, end-all.

If your prospective patients are merely visiting the home page and then leaving, they are missing out on your practice entirely. You have pages for each category of procedures that are offered. Under category pages such as "cosmetic dentistry," you have numerous other pages. One page may delve into your expertise with Invisalign®, while another page may shout out about how natural your veneers look. Additional pages may highlight "must-have" information about winter promotions or discounts or biographies of new dentists. A high bounce rate, then, indicates that

these visitors are not sticking around long enough to take advantage of money-saving offers. They're not taking the time to review the credentials that new patients universally like to see before trusting their health to a dental team. **As a dentist, bounce rate absolutely matters.**

So, what is a good bounce rate?

Again, a good, bad, or middling bounce rate partly depends on factors unique to your situation. A high bounce rate in one location or involving a location specializing in a specific branch of dentistry may not be cause for alarm in another geographic market or if the office had a niche in another specialty area. Generally, though, the Corporate Finance Institute® (CFI) notes the “goal” bounce falls between 20% to 40%. Anything lower than that is stellar. Anything higher than that isn't great. But the real danger zone starts at around 75%. Many websites reportedly fall within the 41% to 70% range. So, there is most certainly room for improvement.

Elevating your bounce rate starts by first knowing that “magic number.” Dental marketing partners take a deeper dive into this rate and can also put this percentage into perspective. You cannot improve upon what you cannot measure. Accurately-analysed data drives the strategy that results in visitors who stick around, contact your office, and become patients for a lifetime.

There are many elements that can either help or hinder your office's bounciness or stickiness. We've highlighted some of the main characteristics of low-bounce sites below.

- **Clear communication** – let us get back to the fundamentals. Consider why you have a website in the first place. You want to “sell” your expertise, approach to care, and dental procedures and products. But what is your website “saying”? And, importantly, how is your website communicating that all-important information about you, your team, and your services? Nothing kills bounce rate quite like overly-technical, cumbersome-to-navigate, and downright boring home pages that lack dynamism.
- **Appealing appearance** – as smile designers, you appreciate this aspect of website development more than the average entrepreneur. The same types of characteristics that you take into account when improving a patient's smile may also be considered when enhancing your website's appeal. Colors and graphics should be bold and invigorating. Wild and flashy elements detract from the substantive information about what makes you different from your competition. Likewise, do not go the “blah” route, either. Unsophisticated, hum-drum fonts and images will not align with the progressive, advanced technologies and other approaches to dental science that attract new and loyal patients to your office.

- **Showcase your best work** – with other types of businesses; photos may be lumped into the above “appealing appearance” category. However, as dentists, your website deserves an entire category devoted just to the importance of photos. Nothing bumps up the stickiness of your website quite like authentic, well-lit, perfectly cropped, and otherwise gorgeous photos of your amazing handiwork. Imagine a scenario where Jan calls the office wanting porcelain veneers like Jon has in that photo featuring his smile on your website. Photography presents a wonderful opportunity to get the conversation going. Ultimately, this means more procedures and profits for your practice.
- **Smooth navigation** – related to the first point (“clear communication”), a website must be easy to get around. Get rid of confusing buttons or hard-to-read fonts. Pages and links should be titled clearly. Just because a site is clean and minimalistic does not mean that it is boring. When combined with fabulous photos of smiling faces, you have the vehicle to propel your practice forward well into 2021 and beyond.
- **Actionable content** – if you are missing a “call to action” and clear contact details, you are missing out! Make it as easy as possible for prospects and patients to get in touch with you. Encourage them to solidify a time online or to request a virtual appointment. You can even cross-promote with limited-time contests, prizes, or promotions. This content inspires the visitor to reach out to you without delay.

Our “call to action” is for you to **embrace bounce rates**. In today’s environment, a steady stream of patients bouncing into your office starts by getting patients to bounce onto your website and to stay that way. They need to stick around long enough to inspire confidence that you are the right oral health partner for their family.

About the Author:



Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dentists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you’re looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren.

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