

The Rules Have Changed...How to Write Great Page Titles in 2022

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When your dental website appears in search results, the first thing viewers will notice is the page title. Therefore, it has a significant impact on your CTR (click-through rate), as well as the first impression that your practice makes. Getting the titles right is essential, and Google recently made it a bit more challenging. Let's look at what has changed and the new optimization best practices.

In past years, optimizing page titles was simple for anyone with basic web programming skills. Simply provide your title and use the appropriate coding – Voilà, your chosen title would appear in Google search results. That changed late last year, with an algorithm change that led Google to rewrite as many as 65 percent of page titles. This presents a couple of problems.

- Google is not interested in promoting your dental practice. Its generated title might not encourage clicks or convey the marketing message you desire.
- Google's algorithm is highly sophisticated and designed with the latest AI technology. Yes, it is good. But, it is not human, and the titles it generates are not reviewed, edited, or approved by a human. That means the generated page title could be low quality or even nonsensical.

Why is Google rewriting your titles?

The sudden increase in rewritten page titles may seem random, but it is not. For years there has been a gap between Google's title recommendations and standard SEO (search engine optimization) practices. There were rarely repercussions for page titles that Google deemed sub-par in the past. However, since last August, the algorithm has been rewriting them.

What Google wants: According to Google's guidelines, the title should "accurately describe the page's content." The document also warns against stuffing the title with unnecessary keywords.

Old SEO practices: The page title is a ranking factor, albeit, a tiny one. As a result, prioritizing keywords became a common SEO tactic. Of course, inviting wording that encourages clicks is also essential. Often, little to no thought was given to the descriptiveness (and sometimes even accuracy) of a title.

Page title SEO for 2022: The top priority is following Google's recommended best practices very, very closely. As your second priority, continue to include appropriate keywords and use inviting wording.

Tips for writing titles that Google will love

The best way to avoid title rewrites is to make sure that your webmaster (or whoever is in charge of approving titles) is very familiar with Google's basic and advanced guidance on page titles.

Here are a few top tips for creating Google friendly page titles:

- First and foremost, make sure that the title describes the page content. What is the article about? Answer that question as accurately and succinctly as possible.
- Do not fret about keywords. Re-order the words in a key phrase or use variations if necessary to create a great title.
- Every word should add value (beyond SEO). Titles are short. There is no room for fluff, repetitiveness, or vagueness. "Home page" does not tell readers anything about the content. "Teeth whitening – teeth bleaching" appears keyword stuffed.
- Make sure every title is unique. Google is particular about avoiding boilerplate text in titles. Again, remember that the title should describe that page and its uniqueness.
- Where appropriate, include your practice name in the title.
- The website should be periodically audited for technical errors, such as empty, obsolete, or inaccurate html title tags.
- Do not violate the above recommended Google guidelines for the sake of SEO (or any other reason).

Optimizing your page titles for better performance

Does all of this mean the end of page title optimization? Absolutely not! Your page titles can still be optimized for maximum CTR. They can still be crafted to target specific keywords. However, the highest priority is on the quality and informative value of the title.

Does the above sound familiar? There is a good reason. The same theme is often repeated in advice for content creation. In fact, the impact of this algorithm change is similar (on a much, much, smaller scale) to long ago updates that targeted keyword stuffing in content. It did not end SEO. Instead, it simply forced some changes in standard practices, which actually improved the overall quality of marketing content.

Here are some of the best ways to optimize your titles:

- Include the keyword or a variation of it in your title. Ideally, it should be near the beginning, but not if it makes the wording awkward. It is more important that the text reads naturally.
- Are you finding that the keyword does not fit well in a title that actually describes the content? If so, you need to back up. The problem here is not the title. Either the keyword or the topic needs to change. The keyword or phrase should be the topic. After all, you are targeting people who searched for that specific term.
- When appropriate, format your title as a question. Of course, the content should thoroughly answer that question. That raises curiosity, increasing CTR by as much as 150 percent. Additionally, this is a great tactic when optimizing for voice search because people tend to use questions in spoken queries.
- Include numbers (i.e. top 10 tips...). The listicle is a popular article format because it typically provides "bite-sized" bits of related content, ideal for quick reading or scanning.

- Describe the content format or type. It can improve CTR because the reader knows what to expect. Additionally, it helps satisfy Google’s requirement of descriptiveness. Examples of descriptive words include video, list, interview, podcast, quiz, study, tips, advice, FAQ, and how-to.
- Make a promise that you can keep. A headline can easily improve CTR if it promises something of value, such as a “simple guide to...” or a “complete list of...” However, if the content does not fulfill the promise, it will likely increase the bounce rate because people will quickly leave again. Additionally, Google’s latest algorithm is likely to rewrite such misleading titles.

Conclusion

Instead of fighting Google’s requirements, embrace the opportunity to improve your page title quality. Refocusing on accuracy and descriptiveness is likely to benefit your marketing efforts in the long run. After all, a good description of the page is the best way to catch the attention of the right searchers.

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. You may also schedule a session at your convenience with the Senior Director of Marketing – Lila, by clicking

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