

# Growing Pains: Do You Need Another Website When Opening a Second Office?

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At the center of a good dental marketing plan is a good website. However, when you expand to multiple locations, a website might not be enough. You may need one for each office. There are several factors to consider when making your decision.

## Does a single website make sense for your business model?

One website can represent multiple practice locations. Or, each one can have its own unique website. There are pros and cons to each option. However, before diving into the technicalities, it is wise to look at the big picture. In some cases, a single, shared website simply does not work well. Why?

Your website represents your dental practice. It introduces the dentist(s), describes the services, and reflects your brand identity. If each office is essentially the same except for location, then a shared website might work. However, if there are significant differences between each location, then a single website is not likely to work well. In that case, the website would either include some information that does not apply to all offices or have some important details missing.

Here is an example. Location A is a family practice offering a full range of orthodontics for all ages. Location B offers short-term orthodontics for adults only. There are a few possibilities for handling the discrepancy on a shared website, but none are ideal:

- Each practice has a unique orthodontics page on the website. Jane is considering going to practice B for teeth whitening, so she checks out the website to do some research. She sees a page about children's orthodontics. Her son needs braces, so she thinks this would be convenient. After further reading, she is disappointed to find that the braces are not available at the location in her neighborhood.

- Orthodontics is omitted from the website to avoid inconsistencies. Jack lives a few blocks from location B, so he thinks it would be a great choice for his kids' dental care. He is impressed with the website, but he finds no mention of braces, which his daughter needs. Now he assumes he would have to take her to an orthodontist, which would negate the convenience of a nearby dental office.

In both examples above, you have probably lost a promising lead. At best, you will get a new patient who is already dissatisfied before even scheduling an appointment.

### **Why choose a single website?**

Your new location will have the same name, offer the same services, and otherwise be very similar to the current one. A shared website is possible. But is it wise? There are a few reasons why some dentists choose this option:

**Budget** – This is probably the worst reason to choose a single-site marketing plan. Some dentists mistakenly believe that they can market a second location without additional expense. However, your site will need to be optimized for each location, increasing the labor and resources it requires. Your new location needs adequate marketing to thrive, as does your current one.

**Time** – Creating a brand new website from scratch is no small project. This can be a problem if the grand opening is looming and you have a small web development team. It can be faster to update an existing website with new location information than to create a new one.

**Simplicity** – One site can be more efficient to maintain and update. For example, changing the payment policy only needs to be revised on one site instead of two.

**Unique content** – If the details of two practice locations are essentially the same, you might want to create a new website but re-use text from your current site. Just replace the city name, address, and other pertinent details. Unfortunately, that is a recipe for poor ranking. Google seeks to deliver original content. If a significant portion of text is duplicated on two web pages, one of them will be treated as a copy (and not worthy of ranking well). Therefore, separate websites require different, unique content for every page. A single site avoids the frustration of finding different ways to present the same information.

### **Why choose multiple sites?**

If consolidating your marketing into a single site is feasible, the idea probably sounds appealing. However, there are still several distinct advantages to separate sites. Some of the reasons you might choose this option include:

Local search – SEO (search engine optimization) is at the heart of digital marketing. For a physical business such as a dental practice, optimization focuses on local search. The city where your office is located and nearby places you market to should be mentioned. You want links from other local websites, listings in local directories... SEO is simpler and more efficient when the entire website targets one location.

Personalization – Even if the vast majority of details for both offices match, there are always a few variations. Perhaps one location has great parking, while another has beautiful ocean views from the treatment rooms. Separate sites allow for more nuanced individualization.

Room to grow – Maybe your locations mirror each other right now. However, that might not always be the case. Consider whether you might want to bring in a specialist at one office, expand services at another, or target different demographics. Unique websites allow room for each practice to grow independently.

Future plans – Another important consideration is your long-term goals. Do you plan to sell your practice eventually? If so, would you sell each location separately? In that case, it is wise to start building a unique brand identity and distinct reputation for each practice.

Opening a second location (or more) is often a goal of many new practice owners. Achieving this goal is an exciting milestone. It is also a risk. What if the new location is not profitable? What if you don't get enough patients to support it? The best way to alleviate your fears and avoid these problems is with smart marketing for both locations. Decisions such as creating a new website should not be taken lightly.

## 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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