

Instant Results—The Most Common Dental SEO Myth

14 Apr 2020  Naren Arulrajah
836 times



Effective marketing can make the difference between a dental practice that is thriving and one that is barely surviving. And, you probably know that search engine optimization (SEO) is critical to modern marketing. But if you're thinking of SEO as a quick fix or "once and done" project, you'll be disappointed with the results.

Like building a successful practice, SEO takes time to grow and requires an ongoing commitment to maintain. A solid plan and long-term commitment are essential to success.

Initial Optimization

You can't optimize a website until you know what you are optimizing for. The first step is research. This includes competitive analysis, identifying your target market, evaluating your current (if any) website, and, of course, keyword research. Once this is completed, optimization can begin.

Contrary to common belief, optimizing a website is not as simple as adding a few keywords to your content. At the most basic level, dental SEO includes a plethora of factors such as the technical performance and speed of the website, meta tags, site structure, quality and quantity of content, consistency of local listings, link building, and compliance with Google standards.

Once all of this is done, it may take some time for Google to notice. It does not scan the internet in real time every time someone performs a search. Instead, results are drawn from an indexed database. Therefore, it will take a few days to weeks before Google finds new webpages or new content on existing ones.

How Long Will It Take?

The timeline for building or revamping a website will vary, depending on the complexity of the task and the size of your marketing team. However, you can generally expect to wait a few months for the site to be created, published, and begin appearing in Google search results. Yet that doesn't mean you're done with SEO. In reality, you've just begun.

Improvements in SEO might have some impact quickly, but the true benefits increase gradually over time. There are several reasons:

- **Age matters:** An older, established domain is likely to rank better than a new one. But for some queries, Google favors fresh content. The longer you maintain a quality website with regular additions of new content, the better your standing with search engines.
- **Reputation building is ongoing:** In local SEO, reviews can make a difference, along with mentions of your website, local listings, and relevant backlinks. There is no such thing as “enough” good reviews or citations. You want to continuously expand.
- **Link building takes time:** The days when you could buy useful backlinks are long gone. Acquiring organic links is a slow process, involving diligent effort and frequent posting of new content.
- **You can't target every keyword at once:** Google (and searchers) are looking for quality, in-depth information. Therefore, blog posts and articles need to be targeted. With each new piece of content, you can target new keywords.

Why Maintenance Matters

What if you're happy with your website, its search rankings, and the number of calls it's bringing in? Can you cease your SEO work and pause where you are? The short answer is no.

To understand why, just imagine a patient asking a similar question about oral health: “You fixed my teeth. They look good and they don't hurt. Why would I need to come back?” You would probably begin explaining the importance of preventive care and maintenance. The same principle applies to your website for several reasons:

- **Link rot:** You have a healthy portfolio of backlinks. Then you move a page, which changes its URL. The webmaster of a linking site changes the text and makes a typo in your URL. You take down an article because it is outdated. One broken link at a time, your portfolio degrades. Adding to the problem, you aren't acquiring new links, and once reputable sites can become spammy.
- **Google changes:** In the early days of the internet, you could repeat a phrase hundreds of times on a page, and it would lead search results. Stolen content and purchased links worked too. Today, those same tactics would get you banished from Google search results. This may be an extreme example, but it demonstrates how drastically Google standards can change. What is good for SEO today might be irrelevant or detrimental tomorrow.
- **Aging information:** Maybe your website is optimized for Invisalign, but you switch to Clear Correct. After completing a training course, you decide to add sleep apnea treatment. The brand of teeth whitening you use goes out of business, so you change to a new one. Without updates, your website no longer reflects current services, and it doesn't capture people searching for what you're offering.

Conclusion

Rome wasn't built in a day. Neither was the number-one ranking website. Don't think of SEO as a quick fix, but as a long-term commitment.

Mr. Arulrajah, president and CEO of [Ekwa Marketing](#), has been a leader in medical marketing for more than 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 him.