

Why Classic Conversion Rate Optimization Doesn't Work for Dentists

Think twice before you go to calculate your conversion rate, for dentists this isn't the greatest statistic to rely on.

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Your conversion rate isn't an indicator on your bottom line, at least, not in the direct you might be thinking.

The most common misconception about conversion rates is that they reflect income generated. You have probably seen the often quoted statistic that a [2.35 percent](#) conversion rate is average. If 1,000 people visit your website, then you might expect it to bring in 23 or 24 new patients. In reality, that's not what conversion rates measure.

Conversions are not new patients (yet)

A webpage's conversion rate is the percentage of visitors who take a specific action, usually on the website. Some of the most common include:

- Product purchase
- Software download
- Service subscription or upgrade
- Newsletter signup
- Form submission

- Chat session

There are a couple of notable things about the above list. First, most of those activities are not directly income-generating. Converting visitors to leads is very different from converting them to customers. Secondly, the income-generating items probably don't apply to your website.

An online store has the option of measuring the visitor-to-customer conversion, because the entire transaction (including payment) is completed on the website. However, a dental practice is an offline business with an online presence. At most, your conversion rate will measure leads that might become patients.

Accurately measuring leads is challenging

You might have an email link, click-to-call button, or appointment request form. It is easy to track how many people interact with those items on a webpage. However, many people will just look at the phone number and dial it, especially if they are visiting the site on a computer rather than a mobile phone.

A call tracking phone number is immensely helpful for analyzing the effectiveness of internet marketing. It is a special number posted on your website, which routes calls to your primary phone system. However, classic conversion rates usually apply to a specific landing page, rather than the entire website. Even a tracking number won't tell you how many leads a specific page generated.

Making classic conversion rates work for you

Does all of this mean that conversion rate optimization is irrelevant for dental websites? No, but they need to be put into perspective.

- Measure site-wide conversions – With a call tracking number and clickthrough analytics on contact links, you can get a reasonably accurate ratio of total visitors who convert to leads.
- Measure page-level conversions, with reasonable expectations – There is nothing wrong with classic conversion rate analytics. However, keep in mind that the actual number of leads is higher.
- Measure website performance metrics – You can use metrics such as video views, link clicks, or interactions with an app. These actions won't tell you how many patients, or even how many leads, the page is generating. However, they can tell you how engaging the page is.

Optimizing a different type of conversion rate

As we discussed above, dental practices generally don't complete a sale online. The last and most important step in converting a visitor to a patient happens in your office. The process typically goes something like this: your website successfully piques a visitor's interest, prompting him or her to call, and the receptionist takes it from there.

In truth, the most important conversion rate in a dental office is the number of phone calls that convert to appointments scheduled. How can you improve this number?

- High customer service standards – Nothing will chase away prospective patients as quickly as a rude receptionist.

- Phone system upgrades – Every call that goes unanswered is potentially a patient lost. Furthermore, if people must wait on hold for several minutes, they already have a bad impression of your office before they talk to anyone.
- Staff training – A friendly, professional voice answering the phone promptly is a good start. However, that person also needs to be able to answer questions about your practice and know how to sell your service.

Conclusion

If your business isn't growing as quickly as you would like, don't count on website conversion rate optimization to correct the problem. The first statistic you should check is the number of phone calls you are receiving. When the phones keep ringing, but people aren't scheduling, then the problem isn't with your website at all – it is most likely with your office staff.

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.