THE PERSONAL TOUCH

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

Personalization is the new optimization when it comes to Internet marketing. Yes, key words and unique content will attract visitors, but it's the personalization that will keep them there and make sure they come back again … and again.

In its simplest terms, personalization is the creation of data-driven online experiences that are tailored to each visitor's specific interests based on demographics and previous actions. Amazon, Netflix, Spotify, and Facebook have this concept down to a science, but healthcare sites are catching up as personalization is a necessary step in building visitor engagement.

Understanding your visitors/potential patients and serving them what they need when they need it will dramatically increase engagement and conversion. Here are five cost-effective ways to personalize your website and engage visitors:

1. Get to Know your Visitors

How long do visitors stay on your site? What links are they clicking on? What kind of content are they sharing on social? Are they uploading or downloading content? If yes, what kind and at what times?

Profiles saved in the system containing data such as demographics, billing information, family physician name and number, visit history, and user preferences, or a portal that categorizes visitors based on self-selected preferences and behaviors can provide healthcare websites with a distinct engagement advantage.

Such personalization helps in subjectively consolidating what could be or is an overwhelming amount of information. Start with a simple question on the landing page such as "I am a" a.) Patient, b.) Family, or c.) Caregiver. This can direct the visitor to a specific page with information relevant to them.

The use of cookies can also keep track of search patterns for future visits. These actions help optimize user navigation and the patient search experience. A cookie is a small piece of data sent from a website and stored in a user's web browser while the user is browsing that particular website.

2. Let them Get to Know You

Gentle compellers in the form of patient testimonials, reviews, and ratings, detailed product or service information, as well unique patient success stories or community involvement can highlight your brand in a positive light.

These are trust-building tools that highlight reasons that your brand is the right choice for potential patients.

3. Dilute Distractions

The one mistake that most healthcare websites make is that they go overboard with too many links, extensive sidebars, offers, images, and unclear calls-to-action. All of this clutter will confuse visitors and dilute their attention. Limit the number of distracting elements on your site.

4. Optimize your Call to Action (CTA)

A CTA should encourage visitors to take a specific and measurable action. A compelling and creatively bold CTA prompts an immediate response. Use strong, actionable words and make sure they are visible.

5. Accelerate Access

Page-load speeds come with a wait-time limit of three to five seconds. If visitors can't access a resource/page/tool quickly and with ease, they will go back to the search engine results page. Make sure your forms can be easily accessed. If they contain any unnecessary fields, remove them to streamline access and use. ∎

Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete Internet marketing company which focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education and the online reputations of Dermatologists and Plastic Surgeons. With a team of 140+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps doctors who know where they want to go get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call (855) 598-3320 to speak one-on-one with Naren.