

Optimize your dental marketing with integration of search and social

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With the numerous algorithmic changes designed to raise the quality of Internet searches, Google and other leading search engines have pushed SEO to a new level. Dental marketing experts must take note that traditional SEO techniques are rapidly giving way to a more evolved approach called Integrated Search Marketing (ISM). With this approach, SEO is no longer an isolated strategy that can help improve the search engine rankings of a website.

Search engines are increasingly attuned toward identifying websites that offer superior reader engagement levels, as well as a greater integration with mobile, social, branding, public relations, and other marketing areas. While SEO techniques such as link building remain relevant, ISM is well on its way to becoming the new search paradigm that will determine whether your dental website gets a top spot in Google page rankings.

The marriage of social and search

As the power and reach of social media grows, social networks are toying with the idea of developing their own search platforms. Facebook has already seized the initiative with its own innovative search engine tool called Graph Search. At the same time, search engines such as Google and Bing continue to pick up social signals as a key factor in determining search rankings.

A dental website can be optimized in accordance with the new ISM paradigm by creating compelling content that addresses the keywords patients search for, and then socializing that content. Links, excerpts, and articles from the content can be promoted across various social media accounts of the dental practice. Social media now serves the dual purpose of enhancing search visibility, while creating a powerful channel for wider and more interactive distribution of content.

Brand promotion

Brand promotion and marketing under the new Internet search paradigm is no longer disjointed from online marketing. Search engine algorithms are increasingly factoring in a particular organization or website's brand value in determining search rankings. In other words, a greater brand reach and value is likely to result in higher search rankings. Therefore, brand development must be a part of the new ISM strategy.

SEO experts should include brand promotion as one of their key goals, while trying to create a search engine optimized dental website and employing other SEO tactics. Even link building strategies should focus beyond dental procedures and services offered by the practice. The strategies should include brand oriented text to push branded traffic and inbound links. One of the key goals of ISM should be to grow the brand profile of the dentist and practice, apart from other search marketing goals.

Press visibility

Getting published in leading industry publications, magazines, and high quality blogs is emerging as a powerful way to improve the link profile of a website. Dentists should consider writing guest columns and blogs to disseminate useful and educational information to readers at large. This can have significant long-term benefits in terms of higher search rankings for the dentist's website. The ISM approach cannot afford to ignore the power of print and digital publications that provide high quality content.

An alignment between the dental website and the content in publications is bound to get the attention of search engines over a period of time. Getting published in a few top print or online newspapers and magazines can gain some powerful backlinks for the website. Interviews, essays, opinion columns, news articles, press releases, and other forms of presence in leading media avenues will be a major part of ISM in the near future.

Video marketing

Search engines have increasingly managed to integrate multiple content formats into the Search Engine Result Pages (SERPs). Google and other search engines are keen to show multiple format content to enhance users' search experience. Videos and images often tend to outrank plain text listings. That makes visual domination a valuable SEO strategy in the new ISM environment.

A Forrester Research study found that nearly 50% of searches for popular keywords display "blended results," which means a mix of text, video, and other visual graphics.¹ Videos have a significantly greater influence on the target visitor's mind, according to some research. With a greater search visibility and a higher impact on the readers, video marketing should be pursued as a key part of the new ISM strategy.

Responsive website design

With a wide range of mobile devices available for Internet search, a dental website must be seamlessly navigable across multiple devices and platforms. This is a critical part of the new ISM strategy, and has a high relevance from an SEO perspective as well. A responsive website design enables users to view the same content with equal ease on all their devices, particularly mobile devices.

A responsive website ensures continuity between multiple viewing contexts. It remains agnostic to the size of the screen, type of software platform, and nature of the device. Internet search has diversified across multiple devices, and SEO is no longer possible in the fullest sense without a responsive website. Businesses and professionals that fail to recognize the importance of responsive web designs may soon start losing targeted traffic to their websites.

Thought leadership

Comprehensive and sustainable success in terms of search rankings cannot be achieved without dynamic thought leadership and initiative in the new ISM environment. A dentist who wants to dominate the search market should become a thought leader and come up with innovative ideas, solutions, guidance, and inspiration for the patients, peers, and other associates in the field.

Innovation must be accompanied by persuasive zeal to popularize the idea and make it actionable. Thoughts and ideas can be presented and shared through seminars, webinars, conferences, meetings, online videos, eBooks, white papers, press releases, and published columns. The subtle SEO benefits that such leadership actions will bring can push the search rankings and prospects of the dentist's practice beyond expectation.

The time of the Integrated Search Marketing (ISM) has arrived. Those who are geared up and ready to seize the initiative will find themselves in top positions on page one of Google and other search engine rankings. The old school SEO has already made way for the new school, where integrated search is going to establish its rule.

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