

Beyond Keywords: Five Other Ways to Boost Your Dental SEO

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Content is king. You have probably heard that a million times, and it is true. Yet, your dental website can have plenty of articles with all the right keywords, and still not rank at the top of the list, or even on the first page of results. Why? There are many possible answers.

Google has advanced far, far past simple text-matching search. In fact, there are more than 200 ranking factors, with some of them having up to 50 variables. Of course, it is not possible to optimize your site for thousands of factors, especially since Google does not publicize exactly what they are. However, some of the most important are well-known. Below are five of the top SEO (search engine optimization) techniques that go beyond keywords.

Speed

If you have been online for years, then you probably remember the days when websites loaded painfully slow, especially if they included photos or videos. That changed over time, with faster internet service and more efficient devices. Today, near-instant loading is normal. Internet users do not like to wait, so Google avoids slow-loading pages.

Directories

You have probably heard that adding your site to spammy internet directories (the type that are designed for backlinks) is useless, and possibly harmful. That is true. However, not all directories are equal. Some are high-quality and designed to benefit the user. Services such as Healthgrades and Google My Business are also directories. Listing your practice in these reputable, authoritative directories can be immensely helpful, particularly in local search.

Earned backlinks

This can be one of the most challenging, but also most rewarding, SEO endeavors. As the name implies, earned links come from sources where you cannot simply add your practice. They are included naturally in articles or user generated content. For example, if you participate in a local

charity event, the sponsoring organization might link to your website. If you have bloggers among your patients, they might write about their dental experiences. Or a journalist who interviews you as an expert for a story about new dental technology might link to your website.

Consistent NAP

You will not find this on most SEO checklists, because it is not applicable to most businesses. NAP (Name, Address, and Phone number) is important specifically for local searches, which Google handles differently than general queries. If a person searches for “what is a dental implant,” Google will treat it as an informational search. The best result is the one that answers the question, regardless of physical location. However, a search for “dental implants near me” is processed as a local search. Google will limit top results according to the physical location of the website. To rank well in local searches, you need to keep your NAP information consistent across your website, as well as off-site listings such as business directories.

Visual content

Photos, graphics, and videos are popular content types. They are more eye-catching than plain text, making webpages more appealing to visitors. Yet, you might not expect visual elements to help your page rank, since keywords are composed of text. However, the opposite is true. If Google’s algorithm determines that a query might be an image or video search, that type of content will rank above pages with primarily text. Good captions, descriptions, and meta tags will help Google find your visual content more easily. Additionally, people are more likely to share visually appealing content, which can increase your backlinks.

Conclusion

No single factor (not even keywords) will reward you with Google’s top spot. Effective optimization is a combination of many things, the most important being quality. Remember that Google’s ultimate goal is to deliver what the searcher wants. That is exactly what all its ranking factors are designed to do. People like visual content, authoritative information sources, fast-loading pages, easy to navigate websites... If you find yourself wondering how to improve your website, do not focus on the technicalities of what Google’s algorithms might want. Instead, focus on what the end user would want, because that is what Google is actually looking for.

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.

