



UX: What is it and Why is it Important to Your Dental Website?

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You know that the days of yellow page marketing are long gone. If you want to grow your dental practice, you need a website. To be effective, that website needs to be optimized – and not just for Google. It also needs to be optimized for humans, specifically potential patients. SEO (search engine optimization) and UX (user experience) are two different – though related – aspects of a winning website.

How UX affects SEO

First, let's take a look at exactly what SEO means. As you probably know, it is an acronym for search engine optimization. Essentially, it encompasses anything that helps bring new website visitors from Google and other search engines. While the SEO conversation often revolves around optimizing your content, metatags, and links for keywords, it is actually much more complex and nuanced than that.

There are likely hundreds of ranking signals, although Google rarely confirms exactly what they are. Some of the best-known factors, such as page loading speed, have nothing to do with keywords. Instead, they relate to user experience.

Beyond SEO

Yes, providing website users with a great experience can boost your search rankings. However, that is not the only reason to focus on UX. After all, your ultimate goal is not acquiring website visitors. What they do after that is equally important.

Imagine that millions of people found your links on Google but none of them became patients. In that scenario, your SEO succeeded but your website marketing failed. The website should immediately communicate who you are and what you do. It should be easy for the viewer to navigate the site and find information (especially about appointment scheduling). Most of all, the website should make a great impression, and make the person want to become a patient. UX plays an important role in the transition from viewer (someone who just clicked on the site) to lead (someone who contacts your office).

Tips for UX optimization

How can you make your website more user-friendly and provide a better experience? Like SEO, there is a virtually endless list of possible ways to improve UX. Some of the most important include:

- **Page speed** – No one likes to wait, including Google. Loading time is a factor in search engine ranking, bounce rate, and user satisfaction.
- **Clean design** – You have a lot of information to communicate and viewers have short attention spans. It might be tempting to use every centimeter of space to advertise your services, but a cluttered design is unattractive and confusing.
- **Call to action and contact information** – Phone numbers, email addresses, contact forms, links, buttons, and invitations to call your office should be compelling and easy to find. Some people are just looking for a dentist, and they just want to know how to schedule an appointment. If that isn't readily available, they will move on to the next dentist Google offers.
- **Text formatting** – You've probably noticed that articles broken up by subheadings and bulleted lists are more attractive than lengthy paragraphs. However, it is not just a matter of style. Use these elements to convey the most important bits of information so readers can obtain answers easily to basic questions by scanning the page.
- **Images** – Don't waste too much space with stock photos and decorative graphics that contribute nothing more than aesthetic appeal. Use actual pictures from your office, useful infographics, navigational symbols, and other useful (as well as attractive) imagery.
- **Consistency** – Design and navigational elements should be consistent throughout the website. If button shapes, heading fonts, and menu location are different on every page, the viewer will perpetually be figuring out how to use it. Consistency helps people familiarize themselves with the site quickly, making every page easier to navigate. Also make use of familiar symbols, such as common home, download, or phone icons.
- **Navigation** – This one should be obvious, yet many dental websites lack intuitive navigation. If people can't find their way around your website, they won't have a good experience. They are also likely to leave the website without finding answers or contacting you.

Conclusion

UX optimization shouldn't be viewed as optional. If you want people (and search engines) to like your website, you need to provide a great experience. Furthermore, your website is the digital counterpart for your physical location. If people don't have a good experience online, they will have preconceived notions of poor service at your office.

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.

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