

Times are changing for dermatology marketing

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The demand for aesthetic skin care services continues to rise due to an aging population and an improving economy. However, the growth of competition is keeping pace with the expanding market. More importantly, the patients are becoming increasingly market conscious, empowered by Internet and mobile communication. They tend to research and evaluate their options before making a choice of a dermatology care provider.

The current market scenario is entirely different from what it used to be a few decades ago when a dermatology practice would grow on the basis of word of mouth publicity alone. However, in the current digital market environment, patients are very willing to comparison-shop for dermatology and aesthetic skin care services the way they would do for any other retail product.

Build a compelling website

This is the age of information overload, when nearly every independent healthcare practitioner has a website of their own. The Internet is already filled with incredibly large amounts of content in the area of dermatology and aesthetic skin care. In such a situation, the goal of a dermatology marketer must be to create a unique and compelling website that stands out from the crowd.

The website design and content must be original, unique and relevant. The content must be presented in such an interesting and user-friendly manner that it engages the target audience effectively. In a near-saturated cyber space, weak or half-hearted website content is unlikely to yield the kind of results that can make a difference to the bottom line of the dermatology practice at the end of the day.

The goal of the dermatology website must be to deliver real value to the target readers in terms of information and education about various dermatology procedures, products and services. Google repeatedly recommends that website developers must focus on original research, original insights, and come up with the kind of content that their potential readers are actually looking for. The readers should like the website, bookmark it, tell their friends about it, and link to it on social media or other online forums.

Shift focus to quality content

Many dermatology and other healthcare marketers continue to create traditional keyword-oriented website content and follow age-old search engine optimization (SEO) practices to improve their website rankings. However, the biggest mistake in this strategy is that traditional marketers continue to write content aimed at search engines, and not at the patients. The weakness of this strategy is that Google and other search engines have enhanced their online search algorithms to such levels where they are able to identify websites with superior content that addresses the queries of the online searchers in the most adequate manner.

Google has often suggested to website creators that they should invest their time and energies in developing powerful content aimed at the readers rather remaining tied down in attempts to impress the search engine crawlers for high page rankings. Google says that the age of short-cut SEO is past. Rather than trying to reverse engineer Google algorithm, website marketers should focus on creating excellent quality content that people love. That is the only thing that will eventually put a website on the right side of Google, Bing and other search engines.

The changing face of SEO

Search engine optimization is now more about achieving natural and organic links from reputed websites, building a successful online reputation, and winning wide exposure in leading websites, online discussion forums, blogs and social media. This involves proactive engagement with some of the key journalists, consultants, and other social influencers in the area where the dermatology practice is located. It involves writing guest columns or articles for highly respected websites, online publications and magazines, and reputed blogs. The dermatology website can also have its own blog that consistently provides the latest updates, information and insights to build a loyal readership.

As new patients find the dermatology website in top search results through local SEO efforts, it will increase the targeted online traffic to the site. High quality organic inbound links will improve the online visibility and rankings of the website. Compelling and constantly updated content will ensure that the number of repeat visitors continues to grow, and a greater percentage of these visitors may actually visit the dermatologist's office for a consultation. Strong online reputation can be achieved over a period of time with focused social media engagement and other writing and blogging efforts. A small or medium dermatology practice can effectively compete against the marketing power of large practitioners. Internet marketing and SEO are great equalizers that have created an increasingly level playing field for all.

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