

9 Pre-requisites of Local SEO for Your Dermatology Practice

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Local search engine optimization (SEO) is the most powerful tool available today to get your dermatology practice in front of local patients. Local SEO is different from traditional marketing and advertising and involves a gamut of online techniques to enhance your visibility in local and organic search results for various keywords.

To build local SEO, you need a comprehensive marketing approach that involves site design, meta descriptions, page titles, localized keywords, content marketing, mobile optimization, social media promotion, citations, reviews, ratings, and Google My Business and other local listings. At the same time, there are certain critical pre-requisites that must be fulfilled in order to achieve success with your local SEO efforts.

1

FOCUS AND COMMITMENT

Achieving high rankings in Google local search results for your dermatology website is going to be a long process. If you can stay focused and committed to building a fully optimized website, generating high quality local links and exposure, creating a robust online reputation, and continuously monitoring, analyzing and readapting your local SEO strategy with the Google updates and algorithmic changes, you are bound to breach the barriers and make it to the top of Google search results.

2

CONSISTENT APPROACH

Staying consistent is a critical pre-requisite to achieving your online marketing goals. Once you have devised a certain strategy to improve visibility, such as regular blogging, social media engagement, mobile marketing, or building local online reviews, stay consistent with that strategy for a sufficient amount of time. Maintain NAP (name, address, phone number) consistency across all online platforms as well as branding, logo, font, color, and theme consistency as far as possible.

3

JUDICIOUS MARKETING MIX

Local SEO alone cannot be the magic potion to achieve sustainable success in your dermatology marketing endeavors. It needs to be backed up by additional reinforcements such as a PR campaign, social media promotions, online newsletter, email marketing, blogging, syndicated columns, article marketing, remarketing, and even geo-targeted online advertising in some cases, apart from a variety of offline promotional activities.

4

STRONG FOLLOW-UP

The traditional marketing wisdom that it costs 10 times more to win over a new customer than an existing one holds true for online marketing. You need to continually identify and engage with potential patients who visit your website more than once, provide contact information or download some information, make a comment on one of your blogs, or share a video from your social media account. Relationship building with such active participants will dramatically improve your conversion rates over time.

ACCESSIBILITY

5

Easy accessibility and convenience are crucial to achieving real results with your local SEO campaign. Local SEO will make it easy to find you, but you must provide a contact number managed by a friendly and professional receptionist to effectively address any queries from potential patients. All your local SEO touch points should include all the basic information a patient may require, such as full contact details, business hours, directions, location map, services offered, and flexible payment options.

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION (USP)

6

Choose the strongest unique selling proposition (USP) or value that your dermatology practice stands for, and which your patients

can identify with most closely. Highlight this USP in every aspect of your local SEO and marketing campaign efforts. Your USP could be about personalized care and attention, range and quality of services, latest technology, competitive prices, or something else. It could also be about your own stellar qualifications and experience. With a sharp focus on your USP, you can achieve maximum marketing impact with your target audience.

ENGAGEMENT

7 Wherever possible, your local SEO and marketing efforts should encourage involvement and engagement of potential patients with your practice. You could do it in the form of questionnaires, feedback requests, opinion polls and contests, special offers and rebates for a select group of patients, seeking online ratings, reviews and testimonials from existing or previous patients, social media participation, creation of an online forum or community, online newsletter subscriptions, and social media engagement. Such efforts will go a long way in boosting your relationships and online credibility.

8 **RIGHT TECH TOOLS** A number of advanced technological tools are available today to support your local SEO efforts, and help improve your local search rankings. At the very minimum, you need to have an intuitive website design with efficient site architecture that supports SEO, dynamic and localized keyword optimization, remarketing and local content upgrading, strong general purpose authority, high quality local links, location-specific landing pages, prominent online local business listings, and a variety of online reviews on major review sites.

9 WEB ANALYTICS

A popular old saying in the world of traditional marketing is that half of your marketing efforts are working—the problem is that you do not know which half. This challenge can, fortunately, be resolved to a great extent in today's world of digital marketing. Powerful website, blog, and social media analytical tools are available today to measure, quantify, and qualify the effectiveness of your marketing and SEO campaign and recommend corrective actions. Google Analytics offers professional tools to gain valuable insights about what may be working and what may not be working with your online marketing efforts.

DEVisING YOUR LOCAL SEO PLAN

Once all of your pre-requisites for local SEO are reasonably implemented, you are positioned to dominate local search rankings on Google, Bing, and other search engines. Challenges should be expected, changes should be anticipated in your long-term SEO journey.

With patience, consistency, and commitment, you will have a continually winning marketing strategy for your dermatology practice. Make sure that every online marketing channel and technological tactic is a part of your local SEO plan. The plan will continually evolve as implementation progresses and results are measured. ■

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. With a team of 140+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps dermatologists 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.



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Susan Hutson and Jamie Edson of Ekwa Marketing discuss the basics of content curation. Learn how to use content curation to boost SEO.

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