10 tips for a patient-focused website

Your dental practice’s website is the online “face” for your business. You want it to reflect your capabilities and your philosophy. But at the end of the day, you really want the answer to one key question: “Is my website doing everything it can to convince visitors to become patients and current patients to become repeat patients?”

To answer these questions, Sesame Communications conducted a national market research study in partnership with Resolution Research. The results revealed key website characteristics that create a favorable experience for dental practice website visitors. In this article, Sesame Communications shares the 10 key features of an engaging, patient-focused website.

No. 1 — Include personable, engaging photos on your home page: Your website’s home page is your first — and best — opportunity to make a great impression on visitors. As revealed by the research, websites that prominently featured one or more photographs of happy, smiling people on the home page scored highly because of the emotional impact they created. Considering the fact prospective patients will take only six seconds once landing on your website to decide if to read on, that first positive impression is critical.

No. 2 — Focus on your patients’ needs — not your interests: Rotating your website around a sports or other hobby-related theme may seem like a fun way to show off your practice’s personality. But the market research study found that hobby themes on a practice website can negatively influence a patient’s perception of the practice. Focus your website on your patients’ wants and needs instead.

No. 3 — Be careful with home page animations and videos: While an animation or video can be a suitable feature for your home page, it must not distract patients or impede them from accessing the rest of your website. Be sure to disable your video from auto-playing, and add a play/pause button. This allows patients to choose if they wish to watch the intro video.

No. 4 — Remove splash pages: “Splash” pages — introductory pages that users must view before they can access your home page — detract from the user experience by unnecessarily delaying a visitor’s ability to access the information they want. If your website currently features a splash page, it should be removed to provide visitors with fast, seamless access to your website content.

No. 5 — Focus your home page on the patient: Your home page content should focus on how your practice can help patients, and why they should choose your dental practice. A common mistake is for dentists to prominently feature on their home page a special offer or treatment. If your home page features this content, we suggest replacing it with content that addresses key consumer needs and concerns.

Discuss the experience of being a patient at your practice, include a patient testimonial, or spotlight your dentist and his or her patient-centered approach.

No. 6 — Create a warm, personable “Meet the Doctor” page: Your “Meet the Doctor” page is the most visited page on a practice website and should present a positive, friendly view of your dental practice. Feature a large color photo of the doctor wearing non clinical clothes. Make sure the doctor has a warm, caring expression, if possible, include the doctor’s child or family members. Don’t use black and white photos or clinical images. Avoid including your doctor’s credentials and experience as a simple bullet list. Instead communicate this information in a warm and compelling manner.

No. 7 — Include a “Meet the Team” section of the website with team photos: Your website should also feature a Meet the Team page that highlights each staff member. In each staff member profile, include a personalized message to patients that communicates the individual’s warm, caring personality and commitment to patient-focused care.

No. 8 — Include a “First Visit” page for new patients: Make sure your site features a “Your First Visit” or “For New Patients” page. This page should make a compelling case for why a prospective patient should choose your practice. List benefits of choosing your practice over others. Describe what patients should expect on their first visit. Consider including an “Office Tour” section that features photos —

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Reading this caption? That’s probably related to research results showing that dental practice websites that prominently feature one or more photographs of happy, smiling people on the home page score highly in favorable user experience — because of the emotional impact the images create. Photo provided by Andrew Taylor, www.dreamstime.com

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Expert Dental CE partners with Guardian Life

Guardian Life Insurance of America has engaged Expert Dental CE (on the Web at www.expertdentalce.com) to exclusively provide online C.E. courses for Guardian’s 80,000 dentists. According to Expert Dental CE, Guardian selected it because of its in-depth, procedurally specific courses that are presented by “best-of-breed” scholars in all areas of dentistry.

Working hand-in-hand with Guardian, after first producing an introductory lecture on how Guardian dentists could more effectively and expeditiously submit insurance claims, Expert Dental CE was asked to develop programs that would enhance skill sets, reduce risk and improve patient outcomes.

The first two topics that Expert Dental CE designed to fulfill Guardian’s request were in endodontics and in the marginal fit of crowns.

The endodontics program was divided into two modules:

- The first module is on diagnosis, with a bonus lecture on computed tomography imaging (worth four C.E. credits).
- The second module provides a comprehensive overview of endodontic therapy. Combined, the modules review current thinking by leading scholar/clinicians in diagnosis, access preparation, instrumentations, irrigation, obturation, retreatment and decision-making on when an endodontically treated tooth should be removed and an implant inserted. The second module is worth 10 CERP-approved units. Both modules are specially priced for Guardian dental providers.

Expert Dental CE describes the second program as being “a one-hour gem that is an excellent reference course for all generalists.” It’s titled, “How to Achieve Excellent Margin Fit & Cervical Contour with Crowns” and is presented by Dr. Charles Goodacre, dean of the Loma Linda School of Dentistry. Even the most skilled and experienced clinicians should be able to learn something new and improve their work by reviewing these basic techniques from a master clinician and teacher.

Dr. Goodacre identifies the three synergistic factors that produce good fit and cervical contour; he summarizes the characteristics of tooth preparations that support mechanical success and enhance marginal fit and cervical contours, and he provides surefire steps to fabricating good impressions.

As a benefit of this exclusive arrangement, Guardian dental providers receive a 30 percent discount on all other Expert Dental CE courses and modules.

Organizations interested in partnering with Expert Dental CE should contact William Martin, managing director, at (212) 955-5534 or info@expertdentalce.com.

(Source: Expert Dental CE)

GLO Science offers webinar for dental professionals

GLO Science, a leading developer of teeth-whitening products and the winner of the 2012 Edison Award for excellence in innovation and design, is presenting a live webinar for dental professionals on Thursday, June 13, at 5:30 p.m. EST on the Dental Tribune Study Club website.

Registration is available through www.dtstudyclub.com, or directly at www.dtstudyclub.com/GLOScience, which is where the live webinar will be streamed and then archived for later viewing.

The webinar presenter is GLO Science Co-Founder Dr. Jonathan B. Levine.

The company’s GLO Science Professional division offers a dual teeth-whitening system available exclusively to dental practices. According to the company, the process enables patients to see results one, 32-minute, in-office whitening session — with no sensitivity.

The company’s patented Guided Light Optics (G.L.O.) combines heat with light in a closed-system mouthpiece, which activates the professional-strength GLO Whitening Gel and prevents whitening oxygen from escaping the mouth. According to the company, the system generates faster, more efficient and longer-lasting whitening results.

The technology’s inventor, Levine, is a dentist and prosthodontist who has been in practice for nearly 30 years and also is an associate professor at the New York University School of Dentistry.

Levine holds three patents and 12 “patents pending” in oral care. A national opinion leader in oral health, Levine devotes much of his professional life to guiding the next generation of dentists and is the program director of the Advanced Aesthetics Program in Dentistry at the NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

Levine also contributes his professional services to humanitarian efforts and organizations. He is on the board of Foundation Rwanda, which helps the children of the 1994 genocide, and is on the advisory board of Health Corps, a national service and peer-mentoring initiative. He also donates his services to Operation Smile to help correct childhood facial deformities across the globe.

To learn more about GLO Science and GLO Science Professional, phone (212) 497-5755 or email sales@gloscience.com — and schedule an in-office demo. The company’s website is www.gloscience.com, through which www.glosciencepro.com (serving dental professionals) can be accessed.

(Source: GLO Science)

Dr. Jonathan B. Levine, co-founder of GLO Science and inventor of the GLO Science whitening technology and other dental products, is presenting a Dental Tribune Study Club webinar June 13 at www.dtstudyclub.com/GLOScience.

Photo/Provided by GLO Science

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or a video — highlighting different parts of your office.

No. 9 — Feature a frequently-asked questions section. Including a FAQ section will allow your patients to answer questions they might have about your practice — or dental care in general — without having to pick up the phone. Your FAQ page should answer most key patient questions in warm, friendly, non-clinical language.

No. 10 — Make your site’s navigation simple and user-friendly. Making your website’s navigation simple and easy to use will help ensure a frustration-free experience for browsing patients. Avoid unconventional designs or layouts. Organize your navigation to focus on patient-centric information. Lead with First Visits and FAQs, then include doctor and team information, contact information, and finally information about specific treatments.

Final thoughts

The Sesame Communications research study found that you have less than 30 seconds to engage a prospective patient and persuade them to further explore your dental practice. Following these ten tips will help ensure that your website connects with your patients — and gives them the information they need — from the home page on.

(Source: Sesame Communications)