A vital resource

The best way to reach out to your patients is with a new website, says Amy Rose, who shows just it's benefited one of her clients who treats dental phobics

Everyone understands the unique benefits of using the internet to research topics from the history of Rock 'n Roll to the finer points of Chaos Theory, and purchase products as diverse as DVDs, antique clocks and sports cars. As an information resource it is unparalleled, with new data being added all the time, and sites such as Wikipedia go through constant revision.

Most UK dentists have a website, and enjoy the competitive edge this gives them. A website is the most cost-effective marketing tool you can employ, enabling you to educate and inform your patients with detailed treatment lists and post-treatment advice. With regular updates, you can keep the site content fresh and your patients up to speed with any changes to the practice, including staff changes and any completed training courses.

Beating phobia

Dr Jenny Pinder has benefited greatly from a professionally designed website. 'I specialise in treating dental phobics,' she says, 'a very specific market.' Dental phobia affects a high percentage of those people who do not regularly visit the dentist, and can lead to chronic cases of periodontal disease and other painful, sometimes irreversible, oral health issues.

Sometimes the phobia results from a traumatic childhood visit to a dentist, or a general fear of clinical environments. Often it is a combination of more localised fears, including a fear of syringes and of having objects inserted into the mouth. 'A very specialised management of the patients is needed,' states Dr Pinder. Often, dentists will not be able to treat dental phobics, who need a sympathetic ear, patience, different communication and treatment techniques – in fact, a whole new brand of expertise.

With such a large number of dental phobics in the UK, it was important for Dr Pinder to have an effective method of advertising her particular service. She met Nigel from Dental Design, a website design agency working exclusively for the dental industry, and resolved to implement a new site.

Standing out

First of all, Dr Pinder had to outline the aims of the site. 'I gave them some pointers as to what I wanted, and we did a couple of trials,' she says. 'We gradually got to the best result. They got the flavour of what I wanted to get across.' By working closely with Dr Pinder, the website design team reached a solution that met all of the client's needs. The site was also designed to ‘treatments’, allowing visitors to read extensive Q&A entries about topics including sharp images and smooth animations. With this unique combination of still and moving images, and straightforward text, dental phobic visitors can get a great idea of what is involved in each step of a procedure, and their fears will be assuaged.

Dental Design created a site that was easy to navigate, with a concise layout. At www.dentistforphobics.co.uk, visitors are able to learn more about Dr Pinder herself, can view a map to help them find the practice, and make appointments over the Internet. Not only is this latter feature much more convenient, it is also a more comfortable way for dental phobics to arrange a visit.

The site was also designed with a ‘links’ page, especially important considering the aim of the site. Now, Dr Pinder can give patients fast access to information sites to help them come to terms with their fears. There is also a testimonials page so that prospective patients can read about the practice’s success stories. Since the comments are by other dental phobic patients, they know exactly what is going to happen during their first visit, which innovative techniques are used during procedures, and the costs. With this information they will feel much more confident when they arrive in person for that first appointment.

Of course, aside from the business benefits, dental phobics can now find treatment that much more easily, Dental Design’s comprehensive Search Engine Optimisation service has meant that Dr Pinder’s site appears close to the top of the results list in popular search engines like Google – a crucial feature of any web design project. After all, it is no good having a rich and helpful site that vanishes beneath thousands of other sites.

‘It has been very rewarding financially and professionally,’ Dr Pinder concludes. ‘I am proud of what the site does. The people who have found me through it might not have found me otherwise.’ Thanks to this new website, dental phobics in the area can find a specialist who will give them the standard of care they require, and those further afield can benefit from an accessible resource of helpful information.

In many cases, dental phobics are desperate for treatment, but have been too afraid to seek it out. Thanks to a regularly updated, content-rich site, they can now find the support and expertise they need. ‘We have rebuilt people’s lives,’ says Dr Pinder. ‘Some people are unhappy because of their dental phobia. This website has allowed them to find help.’

For more information on Dental Design’s services, please call 01202 677277 or email contact@dental-design.co.uk. To view HD treatment animations, visit www.dental-design.co.uk.

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About the author

Amy Rose has over six years experience in the dental profession, working predominantly in a marketing capacity. Amy currently heads up the design and marketing team at Dental Design Ltd. For more information, call 01202 677277, email contact@touche-ed.co.uk or visit www.touche-ed.co.uk to see exactly what the system has to offer.

Extra features

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One excellent benefit of working with Dental Design is the exclusive use of HD (high definition) animations accompanied by professionally written treatment text. Dr Pinder’s site has a section dedicated to ‘treatments’, allowing visitors to read extensive Q&A entries about topics including ‘crowns’ and ‘fillings’, with sharp images and smooth animations. With this unique combination of still and moving images, and straightforward text, dental phobic visitors can get a great idea of what is involved in each step of a procedure, and their fears will be assuaged.

A boost to business

So how has the site helped Dr Pinder provide for dental phobics? ‘The site has taken off in a very big way,’ she says, happily. ‘It has directed a lot of new patients to me, a substantial amount of dental phobics.’ Dr Pinder stresses that this is an ongoing boost to her patient base.