The holy grail for any organisation's online marketing is to appear on Page 1 of Google search results. Imagine how many patients you would gain. How would you like to achieve this without spending thousands of pounds? This is possible if you have time on your hands and reduce online competition through local listing.

According to Google, there are over 40,000 search queries every second. This roughly amounts to 3.5 billion searches per day globally, with a significant portion of this (increasing all the time) being searches on mobile devices.

Google is always tweaking and improving the search factors to deliver search results based on the user's intent. Therefore, it is understandable that your website should be focused on patients and easy for Google to find and read.

Even without a state-of-the-art website, it is possible to appear on Page 1. Organic (natural non-paid) rankings are achieved by being relevant and having authority in the online world, and depend on online competition.

On Page 1 of Google, aside from the organic listings, there are typically three to seven map listings. The most feasible way of achieving Page 1 rankings in your location is to register for a Google My Business listing first. If it has already created a listing, you will have to claim and verify this. Choose the tags relevant to the services you provide (dental practice) and ensure that your phone number (geographical number) is displayed, as well as your address and post code. Do also brand the page with your logos and personalise it with photographs of your team and practice (not necessary for rankings but highly advised). Finally, encourage your patients to leave you a five-star review on this page. This is a very important factor.

Once you have your page set up and optimised, the next step is to establish your online authority by inserting a link to your Google Business Place on your website. Ensure that your website has your contact details displayed. Then list your address details in local and large directories (try not to get carried away) and ask local businesses to cite your details online. Ensure that the details are always consistent and accurate, as inconsistent address or telephone number details will confuse Google.

Citations are a key factor for ensuring Google recognises your presence in your location. It may be that local hotels, bed and breakfasts, or newspapers are recommending dentists in your town. Even if there is no link to your website, having your address will benefit your rankings.

Google reviews can only be submitted by individuals with their own Google Account. I do not recommend allowing patients to provide reviews using your practice Internet connection, as Google may identify the location and think the reviews may not be authentic or independent. Once you have received seven reviews, Google will place a number of stars next to your practice name on the map listings. The more five-star reviews you have, the higher your score will be. It has been documented that having five stars encourages a 23 per cent increase in click through to your website.

These simple steps will set you in the right direction to achieving Page 1 rankings. Remember the results will be specific to your location and based on the user's search terms. Google is focused on the user, so if there are seven other practices nearer to the user's postcode they inevitably will be higher up on the results list. Consider organic or pay-per-click campaigns if you want to have a higher chance of success.

There are no guarantees with Google, but you should always focus on building visibility where Google is looking, because your patients will be directed there. The recipe for success in any business is focus on serving the client, and it seems the same rule applies with your online marketing. Focus on the patient in using the platform is key to everything.
As one of the few manufacturers of dental implants, UK company Neoss has not operated in Asia before. With a recent financial support package of £1.5 million from Yorkshire Bank, the company now intends to develop new business in countries like Japan, China and Taiwan.

Dental Tribune had the opportunity to speak with Chief Financial Officer Guy Leaver about the upcoming market entry and what makes his company stand out from its numerous competitors there.

Dental Tribune: Mr Leaver, how is this investment package helping you with your market entry into Asia?

Guy Leaver: The investment package will support our product launch in Asia initially. Currently, we are going through regulatory approval processes in Japan, China and Taiwan. It is difficult to say exactly when, but our expectation is that this year, probably in the second half, we will actually start to make initial sales. While we expect the growth to be significant, we need the facility for our cash flow in the beginning, as there will be a certain amount of money going out before money actually comes in.

What are your initial expectations for the region?

Since we do not have any sales in these countries at the moment, operating in Asia is completely new to us. We obviously have projections and want to see this business grow consistently over time into something substantial. Initially, we will focus on our dental implant system, as this is the product segment we are expecting approval for this year. In the future, we will expand to our full product range, including new products we are introducing that could also potentially target these markets.

Will you sell directly in Asia or through distributors?

We have already signed up with business partners in these markets. In Japan, for example, we have an experienced distributor who has personal contact with a number of leading clinicians in the country who we understand are interested in using our implant system. It always helps to have this kind of endorsement.

We are also working with a major distributor in China and will see how that evolves. Potentially, we will put a person in charge there, but this will depend on how successful we are. If we feel there are more opportunities, we can always tweak the model.

There is also an experienced distributor we will be partnering with in Taiwan who has previously distributed a competitor’s product. Generally, we try to choose people who understand what our product is all about, are familiar with the market and know what works in that marketplace.

What are your initial expectations for the region?

As with many of these markets, business in Asia is primarily relationship based, so you need to become involved with the right people and institutions. This is particularly important in China, where there are a growing number of small private dental practices offering dental care in addition to the large government-run hospitals. We aim to take advantage of this development by choosing the right contacts for this marketplace.

Where do you want to position yourself in the market?

We want to position ourselves in the same way as we do in most markets by delivering a product that is the best there is. We strongly believe that we have a good package. Our company was founded by a clinician and an engineer, so our focus is on delivering exceptional clinical performance and product quality.

There is no point in introducing a product that is not as good as someone else’s. It has to be that good or even better. We always want customers to understand that they are getting a value product. We do not sell cheap or offer massive discounts. It is a good quality product at good pricing.

In terms of customer service, we aim for exceptional logistics and support. Take Europe, for example, it is pretty much next day delivery, so if you buy something from us in Germany, it will probably be there at noon the following day. Few of our international competitors can achieve the same.

Thank you very much for the interview.
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“It is our mission to simplify dental implantology”

DT visits the MIS headquarters and main production facility in Israel

MIS Implants Technologies is a global specialist in the development and production of advanced dental implantology products and solutions. The company, which started as a family-run business, was founded in 1995—a time when not many people understood the potential of dental implants, CEO Idan Kleifeld told Dental Tribune (DT) at a meeting at the beginning of 2015. Since its beginnings, MIS has seen significant growth, especially within the past ten years. “Today, the company has succeeded in building a recognised global brand in the market and is the only non-premium company operating on a global scale,” Kleifeld said. Headquartered in Israel, MIS currently has operations in 65 countries worldwide, covering major dental markets, such as the US, China and Germany, through a well-established network of local distributors.

In 2009, MIS moved operations to a large purpose-built production complex located in a new high-tech industrial park in northern Israel. “Our location adds to our uniqueness. Israel is a country of high innovation and offers particularly favourable conditions for manufacturing, because of the quality of education and people’s high levels of motivation. Furthermore, salaries are much lower than in competitor countries, making manufacturing especially profitable,” he stated.

The MIS building in the Bar-Lev Industrial Park spans about 10,000 m² and has two production floors with 50 Swiss high-precision machines running 24 hours a day from Sunday to Friday. “The facility was designed and built for growth. In the near future, our automatic warehouse, which currently covers only half of its potential total area, will double in size,” Kleifeld explained.

DTI further learnt that MIS primarily produces for stock, as products must be shipped to local distributors within two working days. For increased efficiency, processes controlling quality, sterilisation, packaging and storage are largely automated. MIS produces over 800,000 implants per year. The production site in Israel has a dedicated training centre with a fully equipped dental clinic for live surgeries. Kleifeld said, “We see education as an important tool to acquire new customers, especially in developing markets. It is an important driver in this business, and we offer doctors both fundamental and advanced training courses on MIS products and protocols.”

In 2015, MIS will be introducing some important innovations. Only recently, the company officially opened its MCENTER Europe, the new MIS digital dentistry hub in Berlin in Germany, in order to meet the needs of its growing customer base in central Europe. The centre offers direct services provided by locals to local customers, bringing all MIS digital dentistry products together in one location. It is aimed at providing a comprehensive range of services to clinicians through advanced digital dentistry and CAD/CAM technologies that facilitate fast and accurate surgical implant procedures with reduced chairside time and greater predictability in outcomes.

“We are extremely excited about the opening of the new MCENTER Europe facility, and especially proud to be able to offer MIS quality and simplicity in providing our customers throughout the region with highly accurate and efficient guided implant placement procedures and CAD/CAM solutions,” said Christian Hebbecker, MCENTER Europe Manager.

In addition to the new MCENTER Europe, the company will be entering the premium segment for dental implants with the launch of a new implant system later this year. It has a truly innovative design and consists of high-quality implants that are completely new in the market and will fit within the premium segment. MIS plans to offer this new implant system to its global distributors at the end of the second quarter of 2015, for local distribution worldwide.

The name MIS originally stood for “Medical Implant Systems”. However, it is also an acronym that reflects the company’s main maxim to “Make it Simple.” “It is our mission to simplify dental implantology and, in order to become the preferred choice of dentists worldwide, we offer new and innovative products based on simple, creative solutions. Design and handling are made simpler, and all products are engineered to allow efficient, time-saving surgical procedures,” Kleifeld said. “With this simplified approach, we are set to become the largest global dental implant producer,” he added. However, the “Make It Simple” motto appears to apply to more than the company’s products. The MIS philosophy defines almost all areas of the business (from human resources to production), and the organisational structure is simple and characterised by flat hierarchies. “Make it Simple” embodies the start-up mentality that remains vital in a company that has become one of the largest in the global dental implant market.
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Pathways for selling or purchasing a dental practice

By Amanda Maskery, Newcastle

According to a recent survey by the National Association of Specialist Dental Accountants and Lawyers, private buyers and small groups in the UK have recently gained ground over large corporates in dental practice sales. Particularly for individuals looking to buy or purchase a practice, however, the process can sometimes be overwhelming.

A dental practice transaction can be done through an asset purchase (this gives the purchaser the opportunity to cherry-pick the assets) or a share sale (where the purchaser buys the shares and all). If the seller has incorporated his or her practice, this will depend on factors such as the tax advantages of either structure.

Solicitors will provide assistance with negotiating terms of the deal, including confidentiality and exclusivity. This can be with either the agents or the other party’s solicitors. It is beneficial to have them involved at this stage so that all major terms can be agreed on, for example restrictive covenants. This also assists in the preparation and negotiation of the sale agreement.

The purchaser’s solicitor will make an information request in respect of the business and make standard enquiries for commercial property. The seller’s solicitor will assist in the preparation of the responses to this. The replies will then be reviewed and any further enquiries will be raised by the purchaser’s solicitor as need be. This is an important exercise, as it can flush out any major issues at an early stage and allows the purchaser’s solicitor to negotiate indemnities and/or warranty protection to be inserted into the agreement or a retention of the purchase price.

The sale agreement can be the most protracted stage of the negotiations. The seller will want to ensure that his or her post-completion obligations and liability are minimal, while the purchaser will want to ensure coverage for anything that might go wrong with the practice post-completion. This will need to cover claw back by NHS England and patient charges and provide indemnities for contractual obligations and employees. The sale agreement will also deal with the mechanisms for the transfer of the NHS contract via the partnership route and will differ depending on whether the seller is selling the assets or the shares.

It is common now that a separate solicitor will also have to deal with the property elements of the transaction. In the case of the purchaser, his or her solicitor will carry out searches against the property, review enquiries raised and prepare the transfer document. He or she will also then deal with the registration of title to the property at the Land Registry post-completion.

A solicitor will also review the planning aspects of the property and, where necessary, provide a statutory declaration that the property has been used as a dental practice for a specific amount of time, depending on the covenants attached to the property. The property aspects will depend very much on whether the property is leasehold or freehold, and consents may need to be obtained from third parties, such as a landlord, to the transfer of the property to the purchaser.

Throughout the transaction process, the purchaser’s solicitor will liaise with the funder of the transaction to ensure that its requirements are met and that adequate security is given. It is important that this dialogue begins at an early stage to ensure the smooth release of funds at completion.

A solicitor may also provide debt collection assistance or, in conjunction with the purchaser’s accountant, guidance on the best business structure, whether this is a limited company, a partnership or an expense-sharing partnership. He or she will prepare any documentation required to incorporate into a limited company and will provide a partnership agreement.

One of the most meaningful ways in which a lawyer can help in a transaction such as this, however, is by offering general commercial sense and assistance. If a solicitor is experienced in this industry, he or she will be able to provide a much better service owing to an understanding of the nuances and needs of a dental practitioner embarking on the very daunting task of buying or selling a dental practice.