



MARKETING / OFFICE / STAFF

Online Marketing Basics: Website Creation

Stephanie Beck

The various online marketing options make it a challenge, especially when all you want to do is help your patients feel better. With such a broad topic, I'm going to share some basics you should know about website creation. When you are evaluating and comparing various website companies or individuals, the first things you need to realize is that not all websites are created equal. Website programmers/designers and graphic artists can both build you a website. Some have specialized training for on page SEO (search engine optimization) and a small number have a strong marketing background or content or copy writing skills. Remember to ask about their skill level and know what it is you are asking for. Not every website build includes on page SEO and almost all of them charge more for copy writing or content creation.

For example, if you hire a database programmer to build a website, but in your mind you envisioned them having a creative and artistic flare, most likely you will be disappointed. It isn't that they won't be able to build you a very good functioning website based on their skill level. But it doesn't meet what you had in mind. The definitions of what you are asking and what they can provide are not congruent. In their mind, you contracted to "build a website." What you feel you asked for was a website designer who could capture the artist meaning of your words. You asked for a website, they provided you a website. The gap was in the communication of expectations and deliverables. Understanding what you don't know and what the various parts of a website could be should save some heartache and frustration. If you want the best converting website, it should have elements of these five areas.

Element One



You want a solid outline of the purpose and functionality. Determine what is the purpose of the website, who are you talking directly to and what action do you want them to take when a visitor is on each of the pages of your website. Any website designer should start by asking you to define what is the general purpose of the website as a whole so they are clear on the functionality and how many pages you will need. It will help both of you to if you already have the action plan and target audience for each of the individual pages of your site. Start with the home page and work your way through each page. This will help your programmers to offer the best template or wire frame that is user friendly and will help get you the results you want. If you want it completed within a time frame, you want your programmer to be a strategist who will provide you with exactly what you asked for and not just be a tactical robot. You have to be very specific and this type of person is going to cost more.

Element Two

You also need keyword research and on page SEO. Some website designers will not invest the time in meta tagging images for social shares and optimizing pages because if the clients do not ever plan on continuing to provide content or invest time into SEO, they consider it a waste of their time. The initial on page SEO does help to get the website indexed by the search engines, but in most cases without properly identifying the customers pain points and best words to rank and continuing to invest in ongoing SEO services, then the website will most likely never increase in ranking. So, unless you specifically pay them for on page SEO or keyword research, it won't be included in the website quote. If you want something done quickly but you are on a limited budget,

then paying for the additional may not be the wisest choice. Most website companies will offer an SEO package upgrade offer. Ask about social share features and keyword research. Some of the packages are designed for mass use, meaning they are generalized ranking for local businesses that may not be your ideal target audience. So you end up with patients, but they aren't the type of patients you prefer to work with. That isn't to say these don't work or aren't experts in providing what they say they will do. The difference is in the perception of expectation. Most "mass" market packages are cheap and good and some of them even work fairly quickly, but you still might not be happy with the result because they aren't producing your perfect long-term patient.

Element Three

Content development is another key. Once you have the general purpose of each page outlined and a structure and you know what keywords best apply for that purpose for that page, now craft the content so the keywords flow naturally. Another item to consider is what is acceptable by the FDA, what is legal and ethical. That means understanding your city, county, state and federal guidelines. If you choose to hire someone to write content for you or you use pre-written content from a template site, keep in mind ignorance is not a defense. You are still liable for what is said about your practice. They could be the best writer, but if they aren't aware of your specific regulations and how your patients think it may not be the best use of time or investment. That isn't to say they aren't the expert, they just aren't the best choice for your situation. Most people in order to save money will write the content themselves. Which can work however, you need to write it from the patient's perspective, it can't be about what your practice does, it has to be connecting with the visitors so they feel like you understand their problems. That takes a certain amount of finesse and artistry. Sometimes you can save money by creating it yourself then sending it to an expert in content development who then edits it. Editing and re-writing can sometimes cost you a lot less, but it may take you longer.

Element Four

Creative design is another important step; these are the finishing touches, the icing on the cake so to speak. This is an important part because most of us are visual buyers. It is best if you can find a good marketer to help you with both the content and creative design, but most of the time people hire graphic artists excellent at creating something visually engaging but have not been trained on how to create it so it converts. Yet, creative design is where most people invest the majority of their time, money and effort. If you have defined your purpose, crafted your content with the right keywords and have all your pages with the right SEO and layout with a marketing perspective, it doesn't have to be pretty to produce numbers. My suggestion is to work with someone who is flexible and can take direction and be able to provide you with what you want - more clients.

Element Five

The final key is marketing perspective, a combination of all the items previously discussed. Understanding what makes a good headline, sub-headline, and what are going to be the "hooks" that speak the visitors language that make them want to do business with you is certainly a specialized talent that many people claim they have but few really do. Knowing where the best place is to capture the eye, what needs to go above the fold and where to put the images and videos so they show up on all types of devices can be a combination of content creation and design. Keep in mind, making something "look pretty" to you, may not be the best marketing strategy for your patients. A well-trained, experienced marketing consultant can assist you with your outline and formulating a solid strategy for each of your pages. Some marketers are really good copywriters as well so they can help you with your content creation. They also have experience working with graphic artists so they can help guide them through the project. One thing you don't

find as often is a website programmer that is also a good marketer.

So, the next time you are in the market for a new website, I hope you remember these elements and the varieties available. If you are in the market asking for a Jaguar but you have the budget for a Honda you are going to notice some differences in the result. Both vehicles can get you where you want to go but you have two completely different experiences when driving them.

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