

When's the Last Time You **GOOGLED** Your Practice?

In 2015, our company analyzed the website traffic of more than 1.5 million patients who were looking for dentists, and found that patients perform due diligence on Google *after* visiting a practice's website.

We also discovered that dental practices with at least five positive reviews on their Google My Business page, Facebook and Yelp converted 38 percent more traffic to active patients than practices that had fewer reviews.

Patients visit your website before they perform their due diligence because most traffic lands on your site as a result of SEO efforts or pay-per-click ad campaigns you're running. If your practice looks credible from a Google search, expect a prospective patient to return to your site to call or schedule an appointment.

If you know you're not a part of that 38 percent, how do you get started?

Go to Google and search the name of your dental practice and the city you're based in. Then ask yourself: If I were a new patient considering this practice, would these search results encourage me to dig deeper—or to run away?

If you're with the majority of dentists who aren't happy with the search results in front of them, it's time to make changes. These tips can help improve your brand when customers perform due diligence.

by Bill Donato

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Build customer reviews where they matter

Doctors frequently tell me, "I have more than 400 reviews on Patient360 (or ZocDoc)!" But when I run their brand through a search engine those reviews don't appear, because reviews on third-party applications aren't visible as easily as on other sites.

Why focus on building reviews in places patients can't see, when reviews like those on your Google My Business page are the first thing people see when they search for your brand on Google?

In this article, we'll focus primarily on building reviews where they matter: Google My Business, Facebook and Yelp. These are three reputable sources that customers trust and go to when they're researching a new practice. They're also the three most prominent sites Google displays in association with your practice.

If your practice isn't on all three of these review sites, I strongly recommend you take a moment and create a profile on each one. Make a note of what you're

missing, and have your team set up and manage these accounts. Once everything is in place, it's time to get customers to populate your pages with their honest reviews.

Here are a few helpful tips for each platform.

Google My Business

First, did you know that your practice most likely already has a Google My Business page? We worked with a doctor in Georgia whose Google My Business page listed his location as closed, and he had no idea. Worse yet, another practice with more than 10 locations discovered that the Google My Business page for each had been claimed by a competitor, which had changed the phone numbers to steal patients.

You can't afford to ignore this site! Visit google.com/business to claim or create your free page. You'll need at least five reviews to help show up in search results.

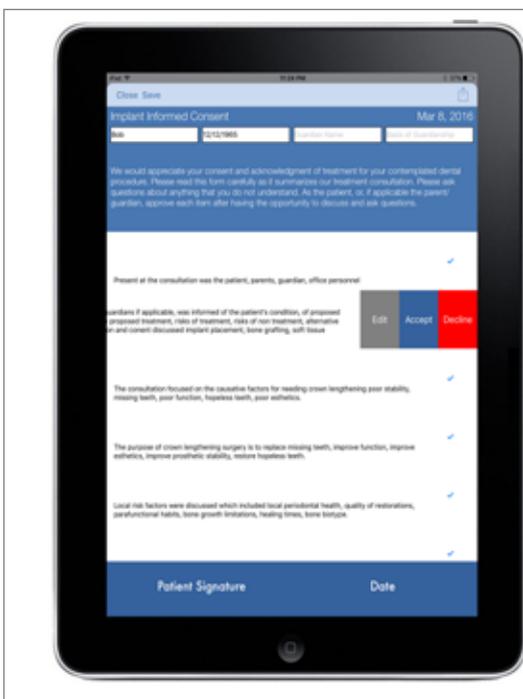
Make sure the page has the correct phone number, address and social media links for your practice. Your

Patients connect with real people, and building a sense of community within your practice's Facebook page will help encourage patient interaction.

Google My Business page should match your website and social media accounts. This also is beneficial for dentists, because it ensures that your practice's reviews will be accompanied by the right contact information.

Facebook

Your practice most likely already has a Facebook page, so optimizing it should be straightforward.



Notes Made Easy...

How do you record your consultation content?
Are your consent forms custom created based on what you just discussed?

...It's In The Details

Cnotes
centricnotes.com

App Your Notes!
Start Now

FREE FACTS, circle 9 on card



Go to Google and search the name of your dental practice and the city you're based in. Then ask yourself: If I were a new patient considering this practice, would these search results encourage me to dig deeper—or to run away?

If you have bad reviews, make it a priority to get enough good reviews so your gold-star rating surpasses three. (In fact, you should aim for a rating of 3.8 or higher.)

To help encourage patient interaction, stop posting images of cartoon toothbrushes wishing your patients a happy President's Day. Instead, upload photos of your staff. Patients connect with real people, and building a sense of community within your practice's Facebook page will help encourage patient interaction.

Again, consider encouraging your patients to use your practice's Facebook page as due diligence. What would make patients connect with you better: a cartoon tooth meme, or a picture of Brenda, your oral hygienist, enjoying her birthday cake? "Happy birthday, Brenda! Don't forget to floss!"

Yelp

Over the years, Yelp has become the place for customers and patients to research local businesses, because it's dedicated solely to collecting reviews. The strength of this site is its growing number of reviews and reviewers, which gives consumers an honest and

clear picture about the kind of experience they can expect when dealing with a business.

Once you set up a Yelp page for your practice, you'll be granted access to the Yelp dashboard. This tool can provide useful insights about how Yelp users are interacting with your profile, giving you a better overall understanding of how patients feel about your business.

Get started

This doesn't have to be complicated. Why not simply ask patients if they'll review your practice? If they've had a pleasant experience and you built up a rapport with them, I'm sure they'll be more than happy to share their stories.

Have your staff also bring attention to the fact that your practice is trying to receive more online reviews, and that you'd love to hear your patients' opinions. Think about throwing your staff a pizza party once you see the reviews start to accumulate. (And don't waste that opportunity—post a picture of your staff's pizza party on Facebook and watch as the number of interactions continues to rise!) ■

Questions for the author? Comment on this article at dentaltown.com/magazine.