Business

Dummies' guide to Google part three – SEO

You've built a practice website and filled it with information for potential patients. So where are they? Chris Baker explains all

The best-looking website in the world will be utterly useless if no one can find it. Potential patients will generally find your website by using a search engine and typing in 'keywords' that are of interest to them, eg, 'dental implant' or 'dentist Truro'.

Search engines use algorithms to find the most relevant content. There are quite a few search engines available but the key one is Google, as it receives almost 90% of all search traffic (according to statistics website statista.com) – the next largest being Bing, with around 10%.

It is clear that the nearer the top of the first page of Google that you appear, the more people will see your website. So, how can you achieve this?

Build and pre-launch

Build your website with Google and search engines in mind so that they find it easy to locate relevant information. You will have to consider many items, including:

- Keywords
- Content
- Links
- Header tags (the name of each page)
- Page descriptions
- Image tags
- Sitemap (so that users and search engines find their way around easily).

The content of your site should be unique, relevant and updated regularly. The reason that Google has become the number one search engine is that it finds the best and most relevant content. Ensure that yours is!

When your site is ready to be launched, it should be submitted to Google and all the other search engines so that it will be included on future searches. Google loves inbound links, ie, a link to your website on someone else's – but only those that are genuine and from a reputable source.

Ongoing optimisation

Once your site is launched, there are two further avenues to consider. The first of these is organic search engine optimisation (SEO). Organic SEO is the ongoing process of optimisation of your website to ensure that it gets to the top of search engines and stays there. This is necessary, as search engines constantly change their search algorithms – it requires constant attention and knowledge to stay ahead of the game. We recommend that your website is reviewed and updated on a monthly basis.

The second avenue is pay-per-click (PPC) advertising. As the name suggests, you choose an amount that you are happy to spend per click and you then choose the relevant keywords that you wish your 'ad' to appear for. If you do pursue pay-per-click advertising then your ad really must appear in the top three (see my dummies' guide to PPC – *Dentistry* vol 23 no. 2, 2 February 2017).

Pay-per-click advertising is so much more straightforward than organic SEO that many may ask, 'Why bother with organic SEO at all?' The simple reason is that many people do not click on the sponsored links as they know they are advertising – recent statistics suggested that searchers were 72% more likely to click on a natural listing than PPC.

A word of advice

One final word of advice. All of the techniques that I have touched upon are ethical and adhere to Google and other search engines' codes of practice. Beware of techniques such as bulk link exchange programs or spamming that promise quick results. The minute that search engines realise what you are doing, your website will be removed from listings and your domain name blacklisted! D

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FOR MORE INFORMATION call **0845 370 2211**, email **chris.baker@coronadental.co.uk** or visit **www.coronadental.co.uk**. If you have any comments or suggestions for future dummies' guides, get in touch with **newsdesk@dentistry.co.uk**.

Making a will: don't delay

Rebecca Blake highlights reasons why it is vital to have a will in place

If you own a dental practice or another business, you also need to think about what would happen to your business interests if you die. Who does your share in the business pass to? Do they even know anything about the business? What if both you and your business partner die in the same accident? Who is going to pay your dental nurses or look after your patients? These are all things that you need to think about and include in your will.

We often hear people say that they don't need a will, based on misinformed presumptions: they think that their circumstances are uncomplicated, they don't have anything worth leaving, or their partner will get everything anyway. Obtaining advice from a dentally aware solicitor is the best way to make sure that you are not falling into this trap.

What is a will and why do I need one?

A will is a legal document in which a person states their intentions as to what should happen to their estate after their death. In general terms, a person's estate is the total of their assets, less their liabilities. It includes everything from your collection of *Dentistry* magazines to your share of your practice.

Everyone should have a will, especially those who have savings, investments, insurance policies, children, own property or own a business. As much as we may like to think that we're immortal, we are not, so we need to put things in place that protect who we leave behind. Whilst your will is individual to you and so circumstances may vary, here are just a few reasons why it is vital to have one:

- To decide how your estate will be distributed
- To decide who will take guardianship of your children (if you have any)
- To minimise tax
- To make gifts or donations
- To deal with funeral arrangements
- To avoid a lengthy probate process; and/or
- To disinherit someone who would otherwise stand to inherit.

What happens if you don't have a will?

If you die and you do not have a will, your will is invalid, or your will is held to be revoked by virtue of you marrying or entering into a civil partnership after making the will, then your estate will be distributed under the intestacy rules. In its simplest form, the intestacy rules – head to www.gov.uk/inherits-someone-dies-without-will for more details on intestacy rules.

What is the effect of this?

The effect of the intestacy rules is not always fair and may leave your loved ones having to claim for what they should be entitled to. What happens if you were engaged and were due to get married but then you passed away days before the wedding? Your partner gets nothing.

What happens if you have step-children that you have brought up as your own? They get nothing. What happens if your husband leaves you for another woman, but you are not yet divorced? They can get everything.

It doesn't seem fair, does it? Noone likes to think that these things will ever happen to them, so don't leave things to chance when it can easily be avoided by making a will.

So, the moral of this story is, take care of your family like you do your teeth. Don't leave them unprotected. D

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