

# Managing Marketing

## ADA's Guidelines for Practice Success™ (GPS™)

### CHECKLIST FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE WEBSITE CONTENT

- ✓ **Include contact information in more than one place.**  
In addition to having an easy to find "Contact Us" page that details the practice's name, street address, hours, email address, etc., make sure you include contact information on every page of the website so it's easy for anyone to reach you.
- ✓ **Some patients may prefer to contact the practice by email instead of by phone.** Include a "Contact Us" form that allows them to request an appointment or get more information about dental benefit plans you accept. Make sure you or someone at the front desk checks the email account that receives those queries several times each day so responses are timely.
- ✓ **Include a concise biography of the doctor(s) and information about staff.**
- ✓ **Describe the services offered in the practice.**
- ✓ **Mention that you accept some dental benefit plans, if you do.**  
It's generally not necessary, or recommended, that you list specific plans. Instead, encourage prospective patients to call your office for more information.
- ✓ **Briefly recap your payment policies and mention that financing may be available for certain procedures.**  
Again encourage prospective patients to call your office for more information.
- ✓ **Make sure the website is visually attractive.**  
It can take as little as three to five seconds for a visitor to a website to decide whether to stay on that page or go somewhere else. Since it's impossible for anyone to actually read any content in that amount of time, that response is based solely on the visual appearance of your website.
- ✓ **Always remember that visitors to your website will see the quality of your online presence as a reflection of the quality of your dentistry.**  
A Stanford Web Credibility study found that 75% of website users admit to making judgments about a company's credibility based solely on the design of the business' website.
- ✓ **Make each page easy to read.**  
The average American reads at a ninth grade level. Visitors to your website will read more and stay longer if your content is both easy to read and engaging. Avoid big words and technical language.
- ✓ **Write unique, custom content.**  
While some reasonably-priced website design companies can create a fully functioning site in just a few days, they usually achieve that quick turn-around by relying on stock content that appears on the websites of many other practices. In many cases, prospective patients will be able to tell that the content isn't original.  
  
And the search engines will know too. Many search engines use tools that look for duplicate content, and if the text of your website is available on other websites, your website's rank will drop, making it harder for prospective patients to find you.
- ✓ **Write for the eyes as well as the mind.**  
According to the web analytics company Chartbeat, 55% of visitors spend less than 15 seconds on any website. Avoid paragraphs that are lengthy or technical. Whenever possible, use numbered or

bulleted lists since they naturally attract attention. While different styles, such as text that's bold or italicized or in a different size or color, also attract attention, keep in mind that they can also make the page look messy and confuse the reader about what's most important.

- ✓ **Be friendly, engaging and personal.**  
Offer prospective patients a glimpse into your personality and the ambiance of your practice. Let them know how warm and welcoming you are. This is especially reassuring to patients who have concerns or fears relating to dental treatment.
- ✓ **Incorporate redundancy.**  
Give visitors to your website more than one way to find the information they want. While you might have a specific page that discusses services to replace missing teeth, you may also want to have a callout button, or hyperlink, somewhere else on the page that says "Solutions for Missing Teeth" and that takes visitors to the same place.
- ✓ **Online reviews.**  
Online reviews from current patients are the best word-of-mouth advertising out there. More information about online reviews is available in the [Online Reviews](#) and [Negative Online Reviews](#) articles in the Social Media section of this module.
- ✓ **Use real patient photos.**  
Showcase your skills and expertise by using photos of actual patients whenever possible. Make sure the photo caption mentions that the person in the photo is an actual patient who has consented to have their image used. Of course, make sure that you've obtained written permission from any patient whose images or other identifiable information are used. As long as you have the patient's permission, include patient testimonials and descriptions for cases that achieved impressive results. A [Sample Photography/Image Release Form](#) follows this checklist; a similar form is available as a resource in the [Case Presentations](#) article in the Managing Patients module of the ADA's Guidelines for Practice Success™. It's important to be aware that the form does not have all of the information required for a release under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and that a HIPAA authorization must be stand-alone document that cannot be combined with another document. A [Sample Authorization Form for Use or Disclosure of Patient Information](#) is also included for uses requiring HIPAA authorizations.
- ✓ **Connect emotionally.**  
Images of local landmarks or patients in your primary demographic area can reinforce that you're a member of the local community and help patients connect with your practice.
- ✓ **Include a strong call to action.**  
Prospective patients are more likely to call or submit a "Contact Us" form if the practice's phone number and form are easy to access.
- ✓ **Have social links.**  
Include buttons that take patients to the practice's social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest. This can be an effective way to engage patients and encourage interaction.

**Resources:**

[Sample Photography/Image Release Form](#)

[Sample Authorization Form for Use or Disclosure of Patient Information](#)

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