

Webinar: Staying Ahead – Practice Management, Marketing and Maximizing the Internet
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Answers to questions that could not be addressed during webinar

By Ryan Miller

Q: How do we find a local company/agency to help us with SEO?

A: While face time is a boon to any relationship, it's not likely to help a vendor who is unfamiliar with medical marketing better understand your procedures or the unique medical marketing laws, codes and guidelines that govern how you can communicate online. Much of online marketing today requires copywriting and a clear understanding of your procedures and patients. We would argue that this experience and expertise is more valuable than proximity to your office.

That said, selecting any vendor requires due diligence. Ask your local network for recommendations and turn to the Web if needed to develop your short list. Then take care to:

1. Ask for examples of how they have helped businesses like yours
2. Ask them to explain their approach and the breadth of online marketing services offered
3. Understand how success will be measured and demonstrated
4. And ensure that you own all of the work and can leave at any team
5. Finally, check at least 4 references

Q: Google + seems to be blocking all new reviews. We have had several patients say they wrote reviews but they are not being published. Is there any insight on this?

A: It may be better to say that in many cases, new reviews are not appearing on Google. Google+ Local, where business reviews appear, is under a significant overhaul and may be experiencing bugs at this time. We believe new reviews are being recorded by Google but may not show up for some time.

We also know that Google has recently added a number of filters intended to improve the reliability of their reviews. If Google suspects that the review is in any way biased they may hide the review.

Q: How many e-blasts per month do you recommend? We worry about over-blasting or customer fatigue.

A: This will vary by market and with the quality of your blasts. The easiest way to find the optimal frequency is to survey your readers. For most clinics this will be not more than one newsletter per month and one special "blast."

Q: How do you see and measure what your SEO company is doing for you? or if they are doing what they are supposed to do every month?

A: Ask! Ask your vendor to explain what they are doing for you and why. And watch your ranking trends and referral traffic from the top search engines as an indicator that their efforts are paying dividends. A sophisticated partner will help you measure your actual ROI.

Q: Is there any way to measure ROI from RealSelf.com posts?

A: There are 3 separate, objective data points to measure the value of your RealSelf participation...these are the same points you would measure for any other "directory" site as well:

1. Patients can email you directly from RealSelf. When the email arrives it is clearly from RealSelf. Save these emails and audit them periodically to ascertain an actual financial return. RealSelf also provides a tracking number to count calls referred from their site.
2. There is a link from www.realself.com to your site. Your Analytics program will show you how many people click through from RealSelf every month.
3. A sophisticated Web vendor can help you flag every inquiry collected on your site that originates from RealSelf. You can audit these leads and add them to those emailed directly from RealSelf.

There are a myriad of subjective benefits as well.