**p3**

# The Advanced Guide to Online Marketing for Your Orthopedic Practice

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# Introduction

Your orthopedic practice may have covered all of the basics you need to have a solid online presence, including a website, unique content, and basic SEO techniques. However, if you want to push further and really dominate your local markets, you will likely have to move on to more advanced techniques.

In this ebook, we will give you the information you need to try out more advanced marketing strategies for your practice. We'll also show you how you can continue to tweak and improve your current strategies. At P3, we like to remind our customers that orthopedic practice marketing will never be a "set it and forget it" effort.

Patient behaviors, search engines, and technologies are constantly evolving and changing. If you don't regularly review your current marketing efforts, optimize your strategies, adopt new strategies, and stop engaging in efforts that no longer serve you, you could end up falling behind your competition. With these tips, you'll learn how to gauge the true effectiveness of your marketing so that you can continue to improve your strategy and stay ahead.

# Chapter 1

# Optimizing Your Website

If your practice is engaging in any sort of online marketing, then you're already well aware that your website is the central hub of all of your marketing efforts. By this point, you've probably gotten to a point where you are at least happy with the design and layout of your practice's website. However, do you know if your website is actually helping your practice achieve its goals? Is it helping patients find the information they need to find? Is it guiding patients to booking appointments?

It's important to continue to test and optimize your website over time. Your online marketing efforts are ideally driving traffic to your website, so you need to make sure that your website drives patients to action once they get there.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to test the true effectiveness of your website, and how to go about making any needed changes.

# Measuring Your Website's Effectiveness

There are several tools you can use to see if your website is performing how you expect it to. We recommend using a few different tools to help you gauge effectiveness.

## Website Analytics & Goal Tracking

We recommend that every site have analytics tracking installed to get an idea of what traffic is coming in. Traditionally, marketers have used Google Analytics for tracking website traffic, since it is a free tool with fairly robust reports. However, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services issued a bulletin in December 2022 advising that the use of Google Analytics to track patient behavior is not HIPAA compliant.

There are analytics tools out there that will allow you to track all of your website activity in a HIPAA compliant manner, though they are likely paid tools. Before you sign up with an analytics vendor, make sure that they can attest to HIPAA compliance and are willing to sign a Business Associate Agreement (BAA)–the lack

of a BAA is the reason a lot of analytics tools are not compliant.

Aside from HIPAA compliance, you also want to select an analytics tool that gives you the information you need to fully analyze the effectiveness of your website. Analytics tools can vary quite a lot in what information they provide. At a minimum, your analytics tool should be able to do the following:

- Tell you where your traffic is coming from (search engines / direct / ad campaigns / social media / etc.)

- Show you the top-viewed pages on your website and how long users are spending on those pages

- Show you your landing pages--the pages from which users are entering your site

- Set up goal tracking for key actions you want users to take on your site, so that you can see how many website visits result in goals being met

Traffic source reporting is important because you can see which medium is the most effective at driving traffic for your practice. Ideally, you'll see the majority of your traffic coming from organic sources, meaning search engines. If your practice is active on social media or is running a paid search campaign, you should

see that reflected in your traffic sources as well. If you do not, that's an indication that you might have to change your current strategy.

In your pageview reports, you should be able to see which pages on your site get the most traffic. When optimizing your website, this is where you should focus your attention first, as these are the pages patients are viewing most often. Additionally, a landing page report will show you the top pages that people use to enter or "land" on your website. Though it's common for your homepage to be a highly-trafficked page, and a top landing page, keep in mind that patients may be entering your website via other pages. Location pages and doctor bios are also very common landing pages. For tips on how to optimize your landing pages for local search, see Chapter 2, which covers local SEO suggestions.

These types of reports are fairly standard in most analytics tools. Ideally, you would also be able to configure additional metrics like goal tracking. Goal tracking helps you gather even more data about how patients are interacting with your website and whether or not your website visitors are taking the actions you want them to take. One goal that we recommend setting up is submissions to your online appointment request form, if you have one. By setting up this goal, you are able to connect your website traffic to patient appointments, a key metric

in understanding the effectiveness of your website.

Once you have your goals in place, the next step is figuring out if you're getting as many appointment requests as you should. This number will vary based on your location (and local population), and the number of providers at your practice. On average, we see orthopedic practices with more than 6 providers getting about 100 online appointment requests per month.

If your goal conversions on the appointment request form are lower than you'd like to see, it could indicate that you need to optimize your website to add more links to the form or make calls to action more prominent.

## Search Engine Ranking

Another thing to consider when optimizing your website is how well you are ranking in relevant local searches. Most orthopedic practices, especially large, well-established ones, will rank well for what we call "branded searches" – searches that include the practice's name or surgeons' names.
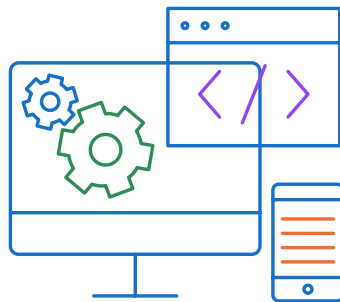
However, your practice may not be ranking as well as you'd like for non-branded searches, including searches for specific procedures. This is another indicator that you may need to optimize your website.

There are a number of factors that can affect your search ranking, including:

- **Your website design** – Is your website easy to navigate on all devices? Google favors websites that are easy to access on mobile devices.

- **Your content** – If you do not have original content on the procedures you want to rank for, or have very little content, it will be harder for you to rank for those procedures.

- **Competition** – If you have a lot of local competition, you'll likely have to work even harder to make sure your website and content are optimized for patient conversions.

- **Online reviews** – The more positive reviews you have, and the more recent they are, the better chance you will have of ranking well in search results.

When checking your ranking, we do not recommend performing a search in your normal browser. Search engines like Google tend to remember your preferred websites, so the results you see may be different from

what others see. Results can also vary based on your physical location. To get a more accurate depiction of search results, we suggest using a free tool like BrightLocal's Local Search Results Checker to do a quick check.

While performing one-off searches can be helpful to see where you're at in real-time, we also recommend using some sort of tool to help you track changes in your ranking over time. Services like Authority Labs, SEMRush, and Whitespark do incur a monthly fee (typically based on volume of keywords tracked), but they can help you identify which pages are ranking in search and whether or not you're ranking well for desired keywords. All you have to do is identify the keywords you'd like to rank for and plug them in along with your location, and the tool will track ranking for you. When you are busy running different marketing efforts for your practice, it's nice to have that data aggregated in one central location so you can quickly review it.

If you aren't ranking as well as you'd like for certain keywords, or notice that your ranking is starting to slip, that's an indicator that it may be time to look at further optimizations for your website.

# Heatmaps & Session Recording

Analytics and keyword tracking can give you an idea of how patients get to your website and what actions they take, but aside from link clicks, a lot of those actions are inferred. There are a lot of actions that patients may take on your website that analytics can't track (for example, hovering over items, trying to click non-clickable elements, or going back to a page multiple times), and those kinds of actions can provide valuable insights.

Heatmapping and session recording software like Mouseflow or Hotjar can help you track those interactions to get a better sense of how patients respond to your website layout, organization, and content. While it may sound a bit creepy to be able to track your visitors' every move on your website, this software can provide a lot of actionable insights that you wouldn't get with other tools. In fact, we've used insights gained from heatmapping to guide changes to our P3 Platform as a whole. These services also have HIPAA-compliant versions, so you don't need to worry about violating any patient privacy laws.

Heatmaps and session recording can help you identify issues like:

- **Confusing navigation** – If patients keep hovering over your navigation or going back to the same pages over and over again during the same session, it may indicate that your navigation is not as clear as it should be.

- **Pages with too much content** – If patients aren't scrolling down to the bottom of the page (or even halfway down), this may be an indicator that your page is too long. We often see this issue on homepages; patients often do not scroll very far down on the homepage, so it's not very helpful to add lots of content there.

- **Places where patients expect a link** – It's also common to see heatmapping data that shows users clicking on elements that don't actually have links. This often indicates that the element either looks like it should have a link, or patients are trying to find more information on that element.

- **Online forms that are too long** – If you've set up goal tracking for your forms and aren't seeing as many appointment requests as you'd like, heatmapping can help to identify roadblocks patients are having with your forms. For example, heatmapping can show when and where patients abandon your forms, which may indicate you need to make some changes. Collecting a lot of information on your appointment request form can help your office staff out with intake processes,

but it may be a deterrent for patients who just want to quickly request an appointment.

This data can give you the missing pieces you need to make your website more effective and efficient for patients. If patients can't find what they need and get frustrated, they are likely to leave and may move on to your competitors' websites. By identifying and fixing problems, you can make sure you don't miss out on those appointments.

# Improving Your Website

Once you've figured out what you need to change to create a better online experience for your patients, it's time to make those changes. Based on our experience in working with orthopedic practices, we have a couple of suggestions on how to approach website optimization.

## Work with a Web Design Expert

If your website is built in a content management system (like Wordpress, for example), your team should be able to make content changes fairly easily. However, most website optimization will involve much more in-depth changes to your website's layout and design. For this reason, we strongly recommend that you work with someone who specializes in web development,

whether that person is on-staff at your practice or you outsource the work to an agency. This will ensure that the work is done right, and that any changes made will comply with the latest web standards.

An experienced web developer can help guide you in the right direction to provide a better online experience for your patients. A web developer can advise you on solutions to the problems you've identified, and may be able to offer different options based on your budget.

## Try A/B Testing

Sometimes, it can be helpful to test out your options before fully implementing a change on your website. You might be surprised how much something as simple as a button color affects conversion rates on your website. If you are considering a couple of options when optimizing your website, an A/B test can help you determine which option might be more effective.

A/B testing software allows you to set up different variations of the elements you want to test, and will show the different variations

to your website visitors evenly so you can see which variation comes closer to achieving the desired results. With this software, you can test anything from content, buttons, images, form fields, or navigation changes.

Regardless of what software you use, we recommend that you work with your web developer to get the tests set up. Your web developer will make sure that the test elements match and integrate seamlessly into your website. This is important, because if your test doesn't appear to fit in with the rest of your website, it could throw off the experience and skew the results.

We also recommend that you run all A/B tests for at least a month to gather enough data to make a decision. In some cases, you may need to run it a bit longer to get more conclusive results. Also, it's important that you don't try to test too many elements at once – it could skew the results. We recommend testing just one or two variations max of the same element at a time against the current version, and only running one test at a time. Otherwise, it can be difficult to pinpoint which change was actually effective.

Once you've got a "winner" for your test, then you can implement any needed changes. You may need to repeat this process a few times if you have any other changes you want to test.

It can be a longer process, but it's worth it to figure out what works for your patients.

## Why Continual Optimization Is So Important

Patient needs and web standards are constantly changing, so it's important to evaluate your practice's website on a regular basis to see if you need to make any changes. By optimizing your website to better meet patient needs, your practice ultimately benefits by getting more patient appointments.

**Chapter 2**

# Local SEO for Multi-Location Practices

When you have a very large practice, it's common to have several locations throughout your state, or even in multiple states. In order to attract the patients closest to each of your office locations, local SEO is a critical piece of your online marketing. Google often shows map results based on proximity to the person performing the search, so it's important that you get each of your locations established in local search to capture every opportunity.

When you have several office locations, local SEO requires more effort than it would for a smaller practice, but it's not impossible if you approach it with the right strategy. We've worked with orthopedic practices that have several locations, and we've found some tactics

that have been really helpful in getting each
location established in local search. In the next
few sections, we've outlined the local SEO plan
that we've tested and proved for multi-location
orthopedic practices.

# 1. Create a separate page for each office location.

This is a critical first step to getting each location
to rank in relevant local searches. When you
have a separate page for each of your locations,
you can link directly to those pages in your
Google map listings. This provides more value
to the user, as it makes it easier to click through
and get more information about the location.
These listings also help to create a signal to
search engines they should associate your
practice with that location. This will help your
website to show up in geographically relevant
searches.

There may be some overlap in the information
on each location page, but you should try to
include as much unique information about
each location as possible. Of course, that starts
with the address and phone number for each
location. Beyond that, consider adding these
elements to your location pages.

- **Photos of the location** – Adding photos of
  the outside of each location will give new

patients an idea of what to look for if they have never been to your office. If you have a standalone location, try to get a photo of the whole building. If you are located inside a medical building, a shot of the building would be helpful, but you should also add a photo of your office door. You might even consider adding photos of the inside of your offices to give patients an idea of what they can expect to see when they come in for an appointment.

- **A link to your Google map** – Many people rely on GPS systems for driving directions, so having the map readily available is definitely a plus.

- **Written directions** – Many local patients will be familiar enough with the area that they may feel comfortable finding your office without a GPS, but it helps to provide some written instructions too. You don't need to include written instructions for each possible route to your office, but you should consider directions from any nearby highways or main roads. Include nearby landmarks that would be easily recognizable, such as restaurants or stores.

- **Hours of operation** – It's common for separate locations to have different hours of operation, so make sure you include hours for each location on their respective pages.

- **Onsite services** – Some practices offer different services at each location. For example, you may have one location that you use for outpatient procedures, and another location that you use for more routine examinations. This isn't true for every practice, but if it is true of your practice, it's something that you'll want to highlight on your location pages as a way to differentiate the two offices.

- **Doctors available at the location** – It's helpful to let patients know which doctors are available at which locations, and on which days, if possible. If patients have a preferred doctor, this allows them to choose the location that best fits their needs.

## 2. Create local listings for each location.

We recommend starting with Google map listings, since Google is by far the most popular search engine. Make sure that each listing is set up consistently and keeps up with Google's current listing guidelines. Make sure business categories stay consistent throughout all listings and that your business name matches your practice name. According to Google's guidelines, the listings for all of your locations should have the same name. If listings already exist for some of the locations, try to claim what you can to prevent any messy duplications that

could interfere with verification.

Once you have the Google listings set up, you'll need to link to your website. For this step, you should link to the individual location page that corresponds to the location of the listing, rather than linking to your homepage in every listing. This will help Google understand that there are several locations for your practice, not just one. Also, be sure to take advantage of all of the other fields on your Google listing beyond the basics. The more information you can provide, the more likely that location will be to show up in relevant searches.

Google listings are only the first step. There are several other local listing and review sites that commonly show up in search results. To really boost your ranking for each location, you need to be listed on these sites, too. Across all of these sites, make sure you keep all of the information consistent with your Google listings. Services like Moz Local, Localeze, or Yext can help you get some of that information out quickly.

## 3. Use reputation marketing to build up reviews on your local listings.

The more online reviews your practice has, the more likely you are to have a higher ranking in search results. With reputation marketing, you can work on building up a stronger online

reputation so that patients in your area always see an accurate representation of your practice when they search online.

There are a couple of ways you can approach reputation marketing for your practice. One option is to simply let your patients know where you are listed, and encourage them to leave reviews. You could hand out a card with the URLs at the end of the appointment, or send an email or text message with links to your listings on these sites. However, the problem with this approach is that your patients may forget or be too busy to go to each site and fill out a survey, so it may take quite a while to build up the amount of reviews you want.

The solution? Collect reviews from patients at the end of their appointments, while they are still in your office. They only have to fill out one survey, and if patients grant permission, you can then post those reviews to a number of online review sites. Our Reputation Marketing service through our partners at Doctor.com is a very simple way to quickly build up your number of reviews online.

It's also important to keep up with your reviews

on all of the popular review sites, and make sure to respond to reviews, particularly negative ones. If other patients see that you do your best to resolve complaints, you can turn that negative into a positive by demonstrating that you care about your patients. If you use a reputation marketing service, it can help you monitor for any negative reviews and get responses out in a timely manner.

As practices begin to build up positive online reviews, most find that their ranking in local search results increases, and they begin to dominate search results over time. Google looks for these factors when determining how it will rank websites in search results. The more positive and current reviews you have, the more likely you are to have a favorable presence in relevant local searches.

## Attract Local Patients with the Right SEO Strategy

Local SEO requires more time and effort for large, multilocation practices than it does for smaller practices, but it is so important because search results are often based on the user's location. With the right plan and tools in place, it is very possible to get each of your locations established in local searches. This will ensure your practice doesn't miss out on any potential opportunities to attract patients in local search.

**Chapter 3**

# Online Ad Campaigns for Orthopedic Practices

Once you have the right website, content, and local SEO efforts in place, paid search and social media ads can be a great way to extend your practice's reach even further. As you may have noticed, search results have very much become a "pay to play" space, especially on Google. Even if you have the top organic result, you might have to scroll halfway down the page to see it because the top part of the page is now filled with ad space. With that said, it's important to have the right strategy in place for ad campaigns to get the results you want and get a healthy return on investment.

Based on our experience with setting up and running online paid search and social media campaigns for orthopedic practices, these are

our tips for setting up ad campaigns for your orthopedic practice, whether large or small.

## 1. Work with an online ad expert.

If you don't have someone on your marketing team who is experienced in running the types of ad campaigns you want to try, it's worth it to outsource this work. By working with someone who understands how to best set up an ad account, you'll get the results you're looking for much more quickly than you likely would if you tested things out on your own.

Managing an online ad campaign can also take some time, especially in the first few months as you are testing out different options to find out what works best for your practice. It is going to take some time to figure that out – even campaigns set up by highly experienced advertisers take time and testing to reach their full potential. If your team doesn't have the time to dedicate to the campaign, working with an expert can help with that workload.
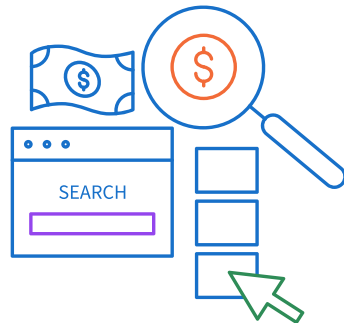
## 2. Select the right network(s) for your goals.

Different ad networks can help orthopedic practices accomplish different goals, so it's important to have those goals clearly defined before you start running ads. Paid search ads, for example, are a great option when you want to target specific keywords that you know patients are searching for. On the other hand, if you are trying to build awareness of a brand new procedure or technology at your practice, patients won't know to search for it yet. In these cases, social media ads can be a great way to target the right audience and build awareness.

Sometimes, it might make sense to run ads on multiple networks, especially if you have a few different goals to accomplish or if you are in a larger market and want to expand your reach.

## 3. Make sure you are targeting your ads appropriately.

Regardless of the online ad networks you use, the right targeting is important to make sure you are reaching the right audience. Because HIPAA is at play here, you are somewhat limited in how you can target patients with ads compared to other types of businesses, but there are some things you can do to narrow in on the right audience.

Social media ads are a bit different from paid search in that they run in the feeds or anyone that matches the audience you are targeting. This means the people seeing your ads aren't necessarily seeking out what you are advertising. That said, you can still narrow the audience based on the characteristics you know of your ideal type of patient. The first thing is to narrow the audience by location-- you only want to target those who are in close enough proximity to visit one of your offices. You should also narrow your audience by age range. For example, if your practice only does joint replacements, it probably doesn't make sense to target an audience under the age of 45-50. You can also target people on social media by certain interests and pages they've liked, but be careful not to narrow your audience too far.

For paid search ads, you also can and should target users by location. However, the real targeting comes in with the keywords you choose to bid on. As an orthopedic practice, you serve patients who need help with musculoskeletal problems. You aren't seeing patients who have a cold or an ear infection. Beyond that, you probably have specific procedures that you'd like to focus on.

This is an important distinction to make when setting up your campaign. If you bid on keywords that are too broad, you may attract patients who are looking for a general practitioner or a

procedure or service that is not the best fit for your surgeons' specialties. For example, bidding on the keyword "doctor" wouldn't be very effective for you because it doesn't completely describe what you do. Even if you don't want to focus on specific procedures, you still need to make sure you are bidding on keywords within your specialty, like "orthopedic surgeon" or "orthopedic clinic." Also, when you do target specific procedures, there will be keywords that don't make sense for bringing in new patients (for example, "exercising after hip replacement" indicates a person who has already had the procedure). It's important to consider what keywords a person might use when they are actively seeking your services.

Remember, you pay each time someone clicks on your ad. If you use the wrong targeting and someone clicks your ad, you can burn through your budget pretty quickly and have nothing to show for it.

## 4. Make sure you have great landing pages for your ads.

When someone clicks on your ad, it doesn't mean that you've automatically won them over. If that were the case, you'd have as many new appointments as you have clicks. When people click through to your site, they're certainly interested, but they want to learn more to see if

your practice is a good fit for them. What they see when they land on your site will influence their decision-making process.

When someone clicks on your ads, where are you sending them? These are called your landing pages, and they are an integral part of converting those clicks into patient appointments. Simply sending them to your homepage isn't the best experience. If you can tailor the landing page so that visitors land on more specific information, you could increase your chances of getting more appointments. For example, let's say you were bidding on a keyword like "knee replacement doctor." Your ad could direct that person to a page about how your surgeons approach knee replacement surgery rather than your homepage. This way, that person doesn't have to go searching through your site to find the right information. You most likely have created pages on each of your surgeons' specialties when working on your web presence (if not, please refer to our Beginner's Guide to Marketing Your Orthopaedic Practice), and these types of pages can serve as excellent landing pages for your paid search campaigns.

It's also helpful to make the page visually appealing so that people want to keep reading, and design the page in a way that leads patients to the next step. Break up the content with visuals and calls to action so that they

know exactly what the next step is to get an appointment.

## 4. Consider the competition.

When orthopedic practices are looking into starting ad campaigns, they often want to know how much they will need to spend to outbid competitors. The answer is that ad spend can vary quite a bit from practice to practice. Largely, it depends on how much competition you have in your area. If your practice is located in or near a major city, there are probably at least a few other orthopedic practices that you'll be competing against, and you'll probably need to budget for a higher ad spend to outbid them. If your practice is located in a more rural area and you don't have many competitors, you may not need to spend as much as practices in larger cities.

You can start off at a more conservative budget and monitor to see if it is helping you. From there, you can start to increase your bids as needed. It's always better to have some extra money in the budget to use if you see that you need it to be able to compete. If you don't have the budget for a higher ad spend, then you might want to look into other methods of marketing your practice.

# Another Quick Note About Online Advertising

As a general recommendation, it's not a good idea to use paid search as the only means of marketing for your practice. It's a great way to start driving traffic to your site, but you should be working to improve the organic traffic to your site as well. Remember, as soon as you stop your paid search campaign, all of that traffic will go away unless you work to improve the overall value of your site in search engines. Organic traffic is free, and search engine optimization (SEO) efforts will generally provide you with longer-lasting results than paid search.
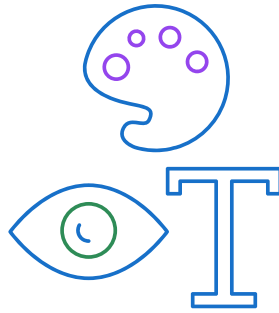
**Chapter 4**

# Improving ADA Compliance on Your Website

ADA compliance is a big issue that has come up more recently with orthopedic practice marketing. Addressing ADA compliance on your website will not necessarily provide a large boost to your marketing efforts, but failing to address these issues could greatly hinder your efforts and hurt your practice, especially if you are working to increase attention from patients.

In this chapter, we'll discuss how ADA compliance applies to your practice's web presence, and what you can do to address any issues.

# ADA Compliance on the Web

To reach every visitor on your website, your site must be created so that people with disabilities can use it without any barriers. The best way to ensure that visitors can use your site with as much ease as possible, and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is to follow a set of rules called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Recent lawsuits against businesses without ADA-compliant websites have made this an even more urgent issue. Visually-impaired internet users are suing businesses whose websites are not accessible, and they are often winning. You can reduce risks of lawsuits by updating your website. For a medical practice, we feel it is especially important to maintain an accessible website. Your patients are generally coming to you because they aren't feeling well. Whether they have impairments related to their condition or not, disabilities affecting sight, motor skills, cognitive abilities, etc. can make it difficult for those patients to navigate your website to get the care they need. Not only could your practice potentially get sued

or fined, but it also just doesn't look good from a public relations perspective. To make a long story short, just like HIPAA eventually expanded to cover patient data collection on the web, you should expect the ADA to do the same.

By updating your site to the latest recommended WCAG conformance level, your site will be easier to use for visitors with visual, auditory, physical, cognitive, or neurological disabilities. These improvements also aid users in nonideal situations such as sunlight, users with changes in ability due to aging, and users on smartphones.

## How to Assess Accessibility on Your Practice's Website

The easiest way to find out if your website has any issues with accessibility is to run it through a tool that does automated testing. We recommend a tool called WAVE. All you have to do is submit your website URL, and the tool will review if you have any problems with accessibility. You can then bring that report to your web developer to review and determine how to best address issues. (If you bring this report to your web developer and they don't know anything about accessibility, then it might be a sign that you need to find a new developer!)

Some of the most common accessibility issues that we've seen with medical practice websites include:

- **Images that don't have alternative (alt) text,** a bit of code that helps screen readers describe images for those who are visually impaired. This can especially be an issue if your website has any charts or graphics that contain key information that patients need to know.

- **Insufficient color contrast between the text on a website and its background color.** For people who don't have perfect vision, it can be difficult to read text if there isn't enough contrast between the text color and the background color.

- **Not using proper heading structure.** Using proper header tags helps screen readers understand how to categorize information. Often, we'll see practices use bolded text when they really should have used a header.

- **Using non-descriptive link text, like "Click here."** Similar to alt text issues, non-descriptive links can make it difficult for screen readers to determine where the link will take the user. Images with links produce a similar result, if no alternative text is set.

- **Online forms that don't have labels that properly define each field.** If a form isn't set

up in a way that a screen reader can describe what information goes in each field, a person with visual impairment may be unable to fill it out.

Once you've identified the accessibility issues on your site, it's time to create a plan to fix them.

# Addressing Accessibility Issues on Your Practice's Website

Some of the common issues we mentioned in this chapter can be easily fixed by your web developer or anyone with access to your website's content management system, especially issues like link text and headers.

We also will often have practices ask us about accessibility-focused website plugins like UserWay. Our general consensus on these plugins is that while they are better than doing nothing, they do have some shortcomings. They typically can address issues like font size and color contrast, and may have things like built-in screen readers. However, they won't address alt text, header, or link text issues. Also, adding a plugin to your website can slow it down, so that's something else to take into consideration.

Most of the common issues we described can be addressed without having to totally redesign

your website. However, if you have several issues with accessibility and are on an older website platform, it may be worth discussing with your developer if it makes more sense to just redesign your website completely. While your new website is being built, you can use an accessibility plugin to help out in the meantime.

We believe that web accessibility will only become more important as time goes on. We encourage every practice to assess their websites to uncover and address any issues. It may save you from legal issues in the future, but more importantly, it will show patients of all abilities that you care.

# Chapter 5

# Advanced ROI Measuring Techniques

As you continue to grow, evolve, and improve your practice's online presence, it is important to understand your return on investment (ROI) – what is working well for you and what isn't. Basic analytics and keyword tracking can give you a sense of how well your website is doing in relation to your goals, but it doesn't tell you if you're actually getting appointments from your website. At P3, we feel that patient appointments are the true measure of success for your online marketing efforts. Good traffic and search ranking are great, but are ultimately not helpful if they do not result in appointments.

Luckily, there are advanced tracking methods that you can implement to help connect the dots from website visits to patient appointments.

# Calculate the Value of Your Marketing Leads

We strongly recommend that you compare the patient leads you obtained through online marketing to the average value of each of your patients. If your practice takes steps to understand the average value of each patient appointment (the average of patients who had procedures and patients just coming in for regular office visits), then you can compare the amount of money spent on marketing efforts to the average amount of money brought in from those efforts.

For the sake of providing an example, we'll simplify this a bit. Let's say you've determined that the average value of each patient appointment, including standard office visits through procedures, is $100. Your practice then spends $2,000 on marketing over the next month, and those efforts result in 50 patient appointments. Because we know each appointment, on average, is valued at $100, we can assume that you have made back the $2,000 you spent on marketing, plus brought in an additional $3,000. By

calculating this information, you can determine the true ROI of your marketing efforts.

Once you understand the value of each marketing lead, you can start implementing better ways of tracking those leads. As we look at the various ways to track your leads, we'll provide more information about how to assign a value to your marketing efforts.

## Goal Tracking in Analytics Tools

With some additional configurations, most analytics tools will allow you to set up conversion tracking or goal tracking for key actions on your website. By taking the steps to measure important steps a patient might take on the way to getting an appointment, you can get a better sense of what marketing methods are working and where breakdowns might be occurring.

What sorts of actions might you track as goals in analytics?

- Appointment scheduling / appointment request form submissions

- Contact form submissions

- When someone clicks a phone number to make a phone call

- Calls from a call tracking number on your website (see the Website Call Tracking section in this chapter)

All of these actions are steps a patient might take to start the process of scheduling an appointment, so they would be valuable to track as goals. How you go about tracking these goals will differ depending on the analytics tool(s) you are using, but generally speaking, most of these things are relatively easy to track. The one thing that can be difficult with goal tracking is appointment request or scheduling tools that exist on another domain. Since your analytics code only tracks activity on your website, you may be limited in what you are able to track on that front. This is a common issue we see with goal tracking for orthopedic practices.

Depending on the appointment booking service you use, you may be able to set up something called cross-domain tracking to capture data on this activity. We recommend reaching out to your support representative for the appointment tool to see if they can help you with analytics tracking and integration. If your chosen appointment tool doesn't offer any tracking options or assistance, it might be a good idea to look into alternative options

since appointment tracking is such a key part of determining your marketing ROI.

Goal tracking won't help you track appointment submissions retroactively, but it will help you gather this information going forward.

## Set a Value for Your Leads

Going back to our example above (and for the sake of easy math), let's continue with the assumption that the value of a patient appointment is $100.

Not every person who requests an appointment through your website will actually be a right fit for your practice, or they may never follow through with actually finalizing an appointment time and showing up. If your practice has the means to keep up with this information for a few months (number of completed appointments following online requests), then you can determine the percentage of follow-through of your patients.

Let's say that 75% of your patients that fill out the form go to their appointment. Going back to the value of a patient appointment, we can now say that a form completion on your website is worth $75 (patient follow-through percentage * the value of a patient appointment).

Most analytics tools have an option to add a value for the goals you set up. You can use this value of $75 in your analytics goals to get a stronger understanding of which sources are leading to the highest return on new patient appointments.

# Website Call Tracking

Appointment request forms can give you a better sense of how many patients book an appointment after visiting your website, but as you are well aware, a lot of patients still prefer to call your practice to book an appointment. It can be a bit more difficult to track phone calls back to website visits, but you can install call tracking software on your website to help connect the dots. Call tracking software will incur a monthly cost that is typically based on the amount of phone numbers that need to be tracked and how much time you spend on phone calls with patients.

When installed on your website, call tracking software like CallRail swaps out your practice's actual phone number with a tracking phone number that automatically forwards to your practice's phone line. Patients won't know the phone number displayed on your website is used purely for tracking purposes, as the experience is not any different from dialing your actual phone number. The tracking phone

numbers allow the software to record data about the user so that you can match up phone calls with patient appointments. You can also connect the software to your analytics account or set up goal tracking, so you can get data on how the patient got to your site and what pages they viewed before making the call.

Because call tracking software records potentially sensitive information about the patient, including names and phone numbers, it is important that you use software that is HIPAA compliant. Many call tracking services have a HIPAA-compliant option, but you should check with the company to make sure before installing the software.

## Set a Value for Your Phone Calls

Okay, we're going to continue to assume that appointments are worth $100.

Depending on the way that your call tracking systems are set up, you can actually tie the data to your analytics to further understand your return on investment. Bear with us as this process is a bit more involved than tracking forms, though it is similar.

Call-tracking systems will generally provide some info about who called (usually the information that might show up on caller ID).

By looking back through those logs on a regular basis, you can determine the rate of how many phone calls that originate from your website actually turn into real appointments. From an analytics perspective, you could then multiply that rate times the value of an appointment to determine the value of a phone call. That number could then be placed in analytics as a conversion value.
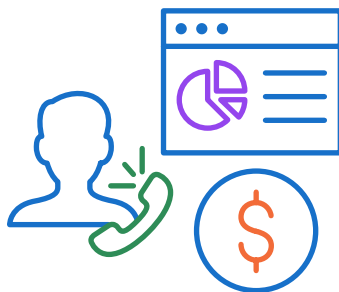
As we'll see below, this is certainly not the only way to track the value of the patient appointment that results from a call, but it can be useful in understanding what leads to new patients reaching out to you.

## Interpreting ROI Data

Once you have your tracking all set up for appointment request forms and phone calls from your website, the next step is interpreting the data to determine the ROI of your marketing efforts. The conversion or goal reports in your analytics account are a good place to start getting an idea of how effective your marketing efforts are, but we also recommend actually reviewing your conversion data against your

appointment records to see how many patients actually had procedures done.

## Conversion Rates

Conversion rates, typically found in your analytics reports for goal tracking, will tell you what percentage of your website visitors filled out your form or called your practice, based on the goals you set up. The higher the conversion rate percentage, the better. Though, keep in mind that patients may be visiting your website for other reasons, if they've already made an appointment. They could be looking for information about your office hours or directions to your office. For this reason, it is not realistic to expect every website visitor to result in a goal conversion.

## Goal Source/Medium

The Source/Medium information (sometimes referred to as Channels or Acquisition) in your analytics goal reports can help you identify which channels are the most effective for getting new patient appointments. These reports will typically break down the number of conversions by Medium (organic, direct, paid search, etc.), and Source (such as Google or Bing). As you learn over time which channels are the most effective for attracting new patient

appointments, you can start focusing more of your marketing efforts on those channels.

## Compare Data with Your Records

To determine the true ROI of your marketing efforts, we recommend that you compare your appointment request form and call tracking data with your patient records. From there, you can determine how many of those appointment requests resulted in procedures. This does take a bit of effort to track down – you'll have to match up the appointment requests in your admin area with patient records, and you'll have to go through call data to see if you can match up any of the phone numbers and names with patient records. However, if your practice is interested in the true ROI of your online marketing efforts, this is the most accurate way to track that information down.

# Improving Your Practice's ROI

If, after you've reviewed the data, you aren't getting the ROI you'd like to see, we recommend revisiting the items we discussed in Chapter 1. With the right optimization techniques in place, combined with ROI-tracking, you can continue to improve your website with the ultimate goal of getting more patient appointments.

Even if you are happy with your current ROI, it is still important to regularly review the data. Patient expectations are changing, and so are online marketing best practices. Online marketing is not a "set it and forget it" type of effort. By regularly keeping track of your ROI, you can address any changes or shifts in patient behavior before your ROI takes a big hit.

**Chapter 6**

# Orthopedic Marketing Tactics to Avoid

We've talked a lot about our recommended marketing tactics for orthopedic practices, but we also wanted to leave you with some tactics we don't recommend. A lot of the more "traditional" forms of marketing for orthopedic practices has revolved around advertising offline. However, offline marketing can be very costly, and it's difficult to determine your return on investment. Furthermore, many patients are tuning out or ignoring these types of advertisements, so you may be paying for marketing that patients aren't even paying attention to. Much as technology has evolved over time, your practice's marketing strategy needs to evolve to keep up with the times.

That isn't to say that your practice should never try these tactics, but they are very low on our list due to the high cost and difficult-to-track ROI. We only recommend trying these tactics if your practice has remaining budget after implementing online marketing tactics.

# Billboards

Billboard costs can vary depending on your location and how many billboards you want to run. However, billboards are likely to cost you several hundred, if not several thousand dollars each month. It's also very difficult to determine how many people saw your billboard, let alone the ROI of the effort. Billboard companies may be able to give you an estimate of how many people drive by your billboards, but that doesn't tell you whether or not those people were paying attention.

You could ask each and every patient if they found you through your billboards, but that can get very tedious with all of the other questions your patients need to answer for an office visit. Even if patients did first hear of your practice via your billboards, they are likely to go online to do a bit more research before making an appointment.

# TV Ads

TV ads are the most expensive of the traditional offline marketing tactics for orthopedic practices. To get professional-looking ads, you'll have to hire a crew to film and direct the commercial, and possibly hire someone to write scripts for those who are speaking. Logistically, it can be difficult to get the whole thing filmed in one day with the busy schedule most orthopedic practices have. Once the commercial is filmed and edited, you'll then have to pay (likely on a monthly basis) to have the ads run on TV.

From an ROI perspective, your advertising agency may be able to get you data on how many people were watching when your commercials ran, but it's difficult to track that down to patient appointments. Furthermore, those numbers don't tell you if viewers were actually paying attention to those commercials. The popularity of streaming services and DVRs has made it easy for people to fast-forward through commercials, or avoid them altogether. And, even when people do watch television live, there's no guarantee that they didn't run to the kitchen for a snack over the commercial break.

# Print Ads

Depending on where you run ads, print ads can potentially be the lowest-cost of the traditional orthopedic practice advertising tactics. With that said, it is still difficult to determine the ROI of your efforts unless you ask each patient specific questions about how they found you. While the publication should be able to give you numbers on their subscribers or distribution, they can't tell you how many people actually looked at the ads. Think about your own habits when reading a newspaper or magazine – how often do you pay close attention to the ads?

# Tracking ROI in Offline Channels

If your practice does want to move forward with marketing via billboards, commercials, and print ads, there are a couple of things you can do to get a better sense of ROI in offline channels.

- **Campaign URLs** – You can work with your web provider to setYou can work with your web provider to set up a campaign URL to use in offline advertising campaigns that will automatically redirect to your website. You can then use analytics to determine pageviews for that URL. By only using

the URL in your billboards, print ads, or TV commercials, you can deduce that those visitors found you via your offline ads.

- **Tracking phone numbers** – You can use call tracking numbers (like those discussed in Chapter 5) for your offline ads, as well. You would set up a dedicated number for your ad campaign, so that any calls to that number would be attributed to the campaign.

Whether you use dedicated URLs, tracking phone numbers, or both, we recommend that you use a different URL/phone number for each ad medium. If you're running ads in multiple publications, you may even want to set up different numbers/URLs for each so that you can see which publication has been most effective in driving traffic.

Another caveat to this type of tracking is that it likely won't give you the full picture. If people see your ad on a billboard, on TV, or in a magazine, they may not go to your website or call you right away. If they didn't take down your tracking phone number or dedicated URL from the ad, they might just end up searching for you online to find out how to contact you. In those cases, you'd have no way of definitively tracking those leads back to your offline ads.

# Spend Your Practice's Marketing Budget Wisely

While the marketing tactics discussed in this chapter have traditionally been the go-to marketing channels for orthopedic practices, patient behavior is shifting, and it's important to keep up with those changes so that you don't fall behind. More and more patients are turning to online sources to do research before booking an appointment.

It's also much easier to determine the true effectiveness and ROI of online marketing channels. The right tracking methods take a lot of the guesswork and uncertainty out of the equation. While none of the current tracking methods are 100% accurate, online tools give you much more data to work with than traditional advertising methods. We're not saying that traditional advertising methods are completely ineffective, but we do believe that you should allocate more budget toward the marketing efforts you can thoroughly measure and prove. If you have the budget, then sure, go ahead and do it all. We just recommend that you focus on your online presence first, and then have any traditional advertising methods come second.

# Conclusion

As we said at the beginning of this ebook, patient behaviors, search engines, and technology is constantly evolving. If your practice wants to keep up and compete with other local practices, it is critical for you to regularly evaluate and update your strategy. Our goal is to equip you with the tools and knowledge you need to effectively market your practice both now and in the future.

Your practice may already have a marketing person or marketing team on staff, but if you ever need additional strategy recommendations or tools to help you achieve your goals, P3 is here to help. We have over 20 years of experience in marketing for orthopaedic practices, and we have the solutions you need to attract more of the right patients.