

The Role of the Web in Today's Medical Practice

The web is a vital business tool for your practice! As more patients turn to the web for everything from healthcare information to physician reviews, it is increasingly important for medical practices to make the most out of online tools. By making smart decisions about how to use the web, medical practices can grow their practice, operate more efficiently, differentiate themselves from the competition, and build rapport between specialties.

Creating a Virtual Extension of Your Practice

Patients looking for physicians or healthcare information often turn to the web first. An effective website acts as a virtual extension of your practice, providing a much higher level of interaction than any phone book listing, newspaper ad, or TV spot can provide. With information on services, location, staff, testimonials, and more, your website can serve as a comprehensive resource that patients can review in as much detail as they want. Additionally, a professional website that communicates your practice's message online provides a multitude of benefits – helping to differentiate your practice from competitors, improving practice efficiency, and building relationships with referring physicians. And, when combined with effective online marketing, your website can also become an essential referral source, allowing you to grow your patient base exponentially.

Grow Your Patient Base

Online marketing offers valuable opportunities to put your practice in front of potential patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to visitors who go to your website directly, web users can also find your site through other means online. Most often, web users visit search engines like Google and Yahoo to look for local physicians offering the care they need. A website that is developed to rank highly for these searches can connect your practice with the patients looking for your services. Other online marketing strategies can offer added options for enhancing the visibility of your practice on the web.

Additionally, unlike many other marketing channels, online marketing offers accurate, detailed information on the impact of your efforts. With website statistics, you can evaluate the effectiveness of different marketing campaigns to continue successfully connecting with new patients and building your practice.

Improve Practice Efficiency and Convenience

A website can streamline many daily operations to improve overall practice efficiency and provide added conveniences for patients. With just a few simple clicks, patients can download and fill out forms, shortening wait times before visits. Additionally, a website can incorporate everything from appointment scheduling and online bill payment to prescription refills, making it easier for both patients and staff to complete common tasks. Additions such as a "questions for the nurse" feature offer time-saving alternatives to standard patient communication options, and your website can also include educational materials to provide trusted health resource for patients.

Differentiate Your Practice from Competitors

A user-friendly, informative website can help differentiate your practice from competitors. With complete control over your online message, you can provide key details about your practice philosophy, physician expertise, and other aspects of your practice that distinguish it from competitors. You can show pictures of your facility and staff, include news features, add video or other multimedia components, and note any services that provide added convenience for patients to engage users and set your practice apart.

An added benefit of creating an online home for your practice is the ability to build and protect the reputation of your business. A website that encourages patient interaction and feedback serves as a proactive measure against negative reviews and gives you more control over the information that is available to prospective patients.

Build Relationships with Referring Physicians/Specialists

Your website can be integrated with a physician referral management application to offer even more functionality for your business. With online referral management, the patient referral process is simplified for both primary physicians and specialists. Patient data is easily accessed for review and confirmation, and essential details are stored in a centralized location to reduce the need for staff follow-up and improve workflow.

Does your practice have a website? If so, what does it say about your business? If not, can you afford to miss out on the opportunities of the online marketplace?

If you are ready to put the power of the web to work for your practice, look to The Doctor's Bag for comprehensive online solutions tailored to your needs. A local web design and development firm specializing in online solutions for the healthcare industry, The Doctor's Bag can help build your practice online. For more information, please see www.thedoctorsbag.com.