

SEO Starter Kit: Use Search Engine Optimization to Power Practice Growth

By Daniel Rostenne



Search engine optimization (SEO) can spur practice growth by publicizing your full range of services to patients while helping potential new patients to find you.

Five Steps to SEO

1. Keywords.

Understand the most important keywords to your practice.

"Optometrist" is a good keyword, but the name of a drug you prescribe to patients is not. Put yourself in the mind of the person searching and understand what they're looking for.

2. Keywords in content. Your site content has to reflect the keywords that are important to you, or you won't get any traffic for those keywords! For example, if you optimize as a pediatric practice, your homepage should have

SEO Affects Your Growth

SEO is the process that results in a web site ranking at the top of the search engine results for specific searches. You have to know what you want to be ranked for to achieve results. If you're an ocular allergies specialist, you should optimize using the keywords "ocular allergies," along with your geographic area, so people looking for an eye doctor specializing in ocular allergies in, say, Oklahoma City, will find a link to your practice first when doing a Google search.

Understanding what SEO is, and how to use it, is a key practice growth--and revenues--driver. One of our clients, Barry Nolt, OD, of Edmonton, Alberta, reported to us: "We get over 10 new patients a month that found us on Google, sometimes we get a few a day." Without optimizing your site for the search engines, you won't get this business. Ten new patients a month represent thousands of dollars in business a month. If half of those remain as long-term patients, you're adding serious income to your practice.

SEO Investment

SEO is broken down into the areas of site structure, content and incoming links. Most ODs have the ability to make changes to their web site themselves, but don't have the technical skills to ensure the site's HTML code is well suited for the search engines. Most ODs can figure out where to get good links from (different product providers, associations and directories), but they lack the time to find those links and come up with ways to best use them to improve SEO. In addition, most ODs need help with their overall SEO strategy. An outside company such as EyeCarePro, which specializes in working only with optometrists, already has the experience, the strategy, the skills and the list of sites that can link to a practice, saving the OD time that is better spent managing the practice.

EyeCarePro provides a complete SEO solution that includes writers, technical staff and analysts that explain the whole process to the OD. We write content for the practice, make sure the underlying site structure is search engine friendly, obtain numerous links for the practice and ensure that a steady supply of new optometry-related articles are added to the site to keep the search engine robots busy.

ROB Bottom Line

Daniel Rostenne notes how the practices he works with easily recoup the money they spend on SEO consultation.

EyeCarePro Fee

\$249 per
month

headlines and content publicizing that specialty.

3. Links to you. Links to your site are like votes. The more links you get from different sources, the more votes the search engines see for your site.

4. Update. Keep your site up-to-date. Why should the search engines put your site at the top of the search results when you haven't updated it in six months?

5. Be truthful. Don't bother cheating by putting a phrase on your site to get hits, but which has no relation to anything offered on your site or in your business. You'll get caught, and possibly penalized. Be honest in your efforts to optimize your site and the rewards will follow.

SEO ROI

As a rule of thumb, practices typically assign a value of \$100 per new patient. Whether the practice is doing SEO on their own, or they're hiring an outside firm such as EyeCarePro to do the work, they need to track their costs, and track the number of new patients obtained from the search engines to determine the ROI.

EyeCarePro's search engine optimization services are \$249 per month. With two new patients a month, and at least one of them coming back as a return patient, the practice has recovered its investment in SEO. As the traffic to the web site grows, it will generate more new patients a month, improving the ROI as time goes on. The longer a practice does SEO, the greater the ROI, and the more chance they'll keep doing it. Our experience has been that if practices get over the learning curve hump and turn SEO into a cash flow positive effort, they tend to keep doing it for years.

Each New Patient
\$100

Typical growth Following SEO Consultation
At least 2 new patients per month, with at least one per month coming back for a second visit=\$300

ROI Calculation For Each New Patient

Eye Exam \$:

Additional Procedures:
\$_____

Glasses / Contacts:
\$_____

Other:
\$_____

% of patients that refer others: _____

% of returning patients:
