No. 1 way to find a dentist: Healthgrades

More than 225 million visitors use www.healthgrades.com yearly to find, choose and connect with health care providers

When consumers fire up their Web browsers, the vast majority of them start at a search engine. According to research from Pew Internet, 93 percent of online activities begin with a search. Health is a popular topic: 72 percent of Internet users looked online for health information within the last year.

As you may expect, Google dominates search with a market share of about 65 percent. However, health care-specific search portals are growing in popularity as tools for helping prospective patients find a new dental care provider in their local area. Today, the No. 1 source for new patients searching and scheduling appointments with health care providers in the United States is Healthgrades, at www.healthgrades.com.

Healthgrades — the most popular way to search for a new dentist

Healthgrades is a leading online resource for consumers seeking comprehensive health care information. Each year, more than 225 million visitors use the Healthgrades website to search, evaluate and connect with health care providers that best meet their treatment needs.

Healthgrades visitors represent the ideal demographic for dentistry. They are overwhelmingly female (72 percent), highly educated (84 percent have some post-secondary education) and affluent (52 percent have annual household incomes greater than $75,000).

In New Orleans

To learn more about the Healthgrades Enhanced Profiles available through Sesame Communications, visit the Sesame booth (No. 101) in the exhibit hall at the ADA Annual Session. You also can learn more online by visiting www.sesamecommunications.com/healthgrades.

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During the past 12 months Healthgrades tracked more than 20 million searches for dental care providers. But just as important, Healthgrades users don’t just search — they schedule appointments. More than half (54 percent) of Healthgrades visitors will schedule an appointment. Among those who schedule, 95 percent make an appointment within the first week that they search, and 38 percent schedule the same day.

Healthgrades visitors appear to be an ideal target audience for growth-minded dental care providers. So what should your practice do to harness this traffic and fill your schedule?

Optimize visibility and patient conversion with Healthgrades enhanced profile

Healthgrades offers a basic profile that practitioners can “claim” for free. It includes limited information about your practice such as name and address. However, the basic profiles also include third-party ads and advertisements from competitor practices. Most critically, the basic profile does not provide visitors with a way to schedule an appointment with your practice.

Healthgrades visitors can submit a review of your practice, but they are not verified as your patients. While a basic profile is better than no profile, its ability to earn your practice top ranking or convert visitors into patients is severely limited.

Partnership with Sesame Communications

Healthgrades has established a partnership with Sesame Communications, and as of October 2013, dentists will be able to work with Sesame to secure an enhanced profile, which will offer several strategic advantages over a standard profile — giving your practice better access and exposure to prospective patients seeking a new dentist.

Enhanced profile benefits

A Healthgrades Enhanced Profile from Sesame provides practices with:

- Priority placement in searches: A Healthgrades Enhanced Profile gives your practice higher placement and greater visibility to patients searching for a dentist in your area. The enhanced profile provides premium positioning in the “Featured Listing” section at the top of the page as well as in organic searches.

- Click-to-request appointments: Enhanced profiles enable patients to request an appointment with your practice simply by clicking a button on your Healthgrades profile. This quick, automated process removes a potential barrier for patients looking to make an appointment, enabling your practice to optimize the conversion of site visitors into new patients.

- Complete, practice-branded profile: Enhanced Profiles offer comprehensive doctor and practice branding, including full bio, address, procedures, location directions and detailed contact information. Healthgrades research shows that visitors to a complete enhanced profile will spend four times longer on your profile, which, again, will drive new patient conversions.

While you can claim as basic profile at www.healthgrades.com, today Healthgrades Enhanced Profiles are available only from Sesame Communications.

To get more information on Healthgrades Enhanced Profiles, visit www.sesamecommunications.com/healthgrades or visit Sesame’s exhibit booth, No. 101, at the ADA Annual Session.

Final thoughts

New patient acquisition is the bloodline of practice growth and profitability. For many dental practices, online search has become a primary source for new patient opportunities. Healthgrades is a highly compelling channel, with millions of prospective patients ready to schedule an appointment the moment they find the right dentist. A Healthgrades Enhanced Profile is your best opportunity to engage this valuable audience and fill your schedule with new patients.

Sources: Sesame Communications and Healthgrades

References

2. www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Health-online/Summary-of-Findings.aspx