

BEST PRACTICES

Maintaining an Effective Blog for Your Healthcare Practice

Tips on Getting Started

- If you have a niche, focus on it. It will help differentiate your practice and attract your target market.
- Post entries that give perspective and insight about your practice; intersperse with current news or events related to the healthcare industry and/or your specialty. Blog about general health information, tips, product reviews, etc.
- A good strategy on posting content is to have a mix of both professional and personal entries.
- According to the AMA Social Media Policy, it's recommended to use privacy settings to safeguard personal information and content to the fullest extent possible.
- Remember that any harmful or inappropriate actions online can negatively affect reputations among patients and colleagues, which can result in further consequences.
- According to HIPAA compliance, do not post any patient-identifiable information on your practice blog without consent. Maintain appropriate boundaries of your patient-physician relationship. When interacting with patients online, be sure that patient privacy and confidentiality are always enforced.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Blogs are indexed by search engines. They have in-bound links, which are links from other blogs. The more in-bound links you have, the more relevant Google will find it, and therefore will help rank it higher in the organic search results. Here are some tips on how to increase your blog traffic:

- Add keywords in your posts that are relevant to your blog, in both your posts and your title. Ideally, these should be the same keywords that are used within your website.
- Register your blog/site with Google.
- Include a search engine-optimized patient education resource to help you rank high on search engines.
- Register your blog/site for Google Analytics, which is a free service that analyzes traffic to your site.
- Incorporating widgets/plugins can provide both functionality and enhancements to your blog.

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BEST PRACTICES

Maintaining an Effective Blog for Your Healthcare Practice (cont'd.)

Maintaining Your Practice Blog

- Interact with your audience, and respond to comments from readers in a timely manner. Be sure not to post any patient-identifiable data while responding.
- Appropriate photos and links are acceptable to post; be sure to put up web optimized-sized pictures, as this will help decrease the load time on your blog.
- Update content regularly. A lack of updates will result in lack of returning visitors.
- Remember to intermingle types of content such as News, Procedures, and Current Health Issues. This will allow you to make your content dynamic and will keep readers interested.
- A suggested amount of posts are one to two entries per week.
- Be sure to proofread and spell-check your blog posts before publishing.
- Make your practice blog search engine-friendly by tagging/labeling blog posts.
- Archive your blog posts, organized by date and topics to make it easier for readers to find relevant content.

Bringing Awareness to Your Practice

- Comment on other relevant blogs. Find your favorite medical blog(s) and leave comments linking back to your website/blog.
- Cross-promote. Post quotes from existing blogs, medical journals, etc., that are relevant to your practice blog. Be sure to include the source of the link.
- Have guest bloggers participate – other professionals or specialists in your niche market can be a great benefit and add further credibility to the content of your practice blog.

As of 2009, 70% of Internet users were reading blogs and more than 120,000 were healthcare-related blogs. Done correctly, blogs can provide your practice with an opportunity to share your expertise and knowledge with a larger audience.

Learn how our new e-media programs can make your online life for your practice easier. Talk to your Practice Builders marketing consultant today. Call 800.679.1262 or email info@PracticeBuilders.com.

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