MEDICAL WEBSITE SOLUTIONS

"10 features your practice's website must have to improve income and patient care!"

"What are they and how can you best take advantage of them?"

White paper updated - 2019

"These strategic tips have proven very useful for the majority of the practices we help. If you have any questions please feel free to call me."

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David Douglas – Director
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From the author:

I know how busy medical practice staff are. Being married to a doctor I know the long hours and many stresses. So I decided to use my 15 years of website and online experience to help medical practice staff save time, improve patient care, reduce clinic running costs and maximize income.

MEDICAL WEBSITE SOLUTIONS

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We build and optimise websites for medical practices that:
◆*Maximise appointments* ◆*Reduce running costs*
◆*Improve patient care* ◆*Save time*

PURPOSE

"This whitepaper has been developed from extensive website and medical practice research from dentists, doctors and physiotherapists. Our aim is to help you transform your website into a powerful marketing and business management tool that improves income and patient care."

The challenges you face as a medical practice manager in 2019-20:

1. Attracting new and repeat patients

2. Why should patients use your practice and keep coming back?

3. Reducing practice running costs

4. Improving patient care and communication

5. Maximising your marketing dollar return on investment

6. Increased competition from similar and alternative health providers.

Towers Watson research – Global Medical Trends 2019

"This whitepaper has been designed to be strategic and practical. We have provided industry website facts, examples, recommendations and checklists to help you know what you should be doing or looking for to get the most from your website."

1. FIRSTLY - YOUR WEBSITE MUST BE MOBILE FRIENDLY

"Before you consider anything, ensure your website is…."

Mobile friendly

What does mobile friendly mean?
In short - Patients must be able to view and use your website on their phone, tablet, laptop and desktop computers.

Why – Let's look at the statistics:

- 82% of Australians access the internet via mobile devices - *Marketing insights 2019*

- 60% of patients leave websites if they encounter a poor user experience (UX) - *Marketing insights 2019*

Poor user website experience *(You could be losing 60% of your website visitors!)*
A poor user experience can be defined in many different ways. In this case if patients can't navigate around your website and access the information they are after, they are highly (60%) likely to leave and find one of your competitors.

Takeaway checklist -

☑ **Ensure your website looks great and functions on mobile devices.**

2. THINK ABOUT FUTURE WEBSITE NEEDS

"Whilst you can't predict the future…."

Your website needs and functionality will evolve
Your website needs to grow and evolve with your practice. So being able to insert features and switch functionality on or off when needed is very important.

Checklist - Ensure your website can easily insert the following:

☑ **Video**	☑ **Social media**	☑ **PDF's**
☑ **More pages**	☑ **Blog**	☑ **Testimonials**
☑ **Google maps**	☑ **Images**	☑ **Online chat**
☑ **RSS feed**	☑ **Email campaigns**	☑ **Update web copy**

3. WEBSITE STRATEGY -
WHAT SHOULD YOUR WEBSITE BE DOING?

"Where do most medical practice websites fall short?"

Your practice's website should push your:
- Practice's strategy and strengths
- Income streams and;
- Ethos.

What you probably don't realise is that your website is also ranked by:
- Design and features
- Website visitors (patients) and;
- Search engines – Like Google

Websites that do not take into account these all perspectives tend to:
- Perform poorly
- Have sub-optimal Google Analytics:
    - High bounce rate
    - Low time spent on site
    - Low pages per visit and;
    - Low conversion rate of website visitors into patients

So where do most medical practice websites fail?
Effective websites design takes into account these three perspectives:

Perspective 1 - Your practices strategy and services
Most practices address these items fairly well. I'll bet your website displays:
- Your services
- Contact details
- Location
- Some general practice and doctor details

Perspective 2 – Patient needs and wants
This is where most practice websites start to perform poorly. Does your website:
- Have a specific area welcoming new patients and giving them the information they need for their first visit?
- Have ample helpful information and tips to help build trust in your practice?
- Lead patients to a specific outcome – Sign up for information or book an appointment?
- Appeal to your different target audience/s and their emotional reasons for contacting you?

3. WEBSITE STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

Perspective 3 – Professional website design, search and user experience

To attract new patients and build your practice, your website needs to be found. This requires:

- Optimisation so search engines can find <u>all your services</u>
- Copy and content focused on specific keywords that your patients use to find your practice
- Best practice website design and navigation features
- Focus on customer experience (CX) and user experience (UX).

"All these factors work in synergy to make your website, aesthetically pleasing, easy to use, engaging and above all effective in converting website browsers into patients."

4. YOUR WEBSITE'S FOCUS

"Improving practice income, service and driving cost efficiencies"

Your practice's website should be set up to:

1. Attract new potential patients
2. Convert potential patients into loyal long term patients
3. Help current patients
4. Reduce practice running costs

Why?

Your website is the only employee you have that works for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. So it's well worth investing time and money to get it working for you as hard as possible.

Did you know?

10% of your patients will leave your practice every year because they will move house.

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Attracting new patients

There are many ways you can attract new patients to your practice online. Some of the most popular include:

- Advertising on search networks such as Google, Bing and Yahoo
- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) – Organic search engine results
- Advertising in online business directories – Such as Yellow Pages

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The fact is:

90% of medical practices including GP's, Specialists, Dentists and Physiotherapists will attract the majority of patients from within a 5 kilometre radius of their clinic.

Medical Practice Research 2013

For this reason - We focus on local search

What will patients type into a search engine to find you?

Most patients are looking for a medical service close to their home or work. So you can bet that most will type into a search engine such as Google (If looking for a Physiotherapist in Brighton:

Physiotherapist Brighton
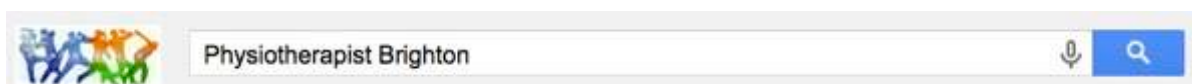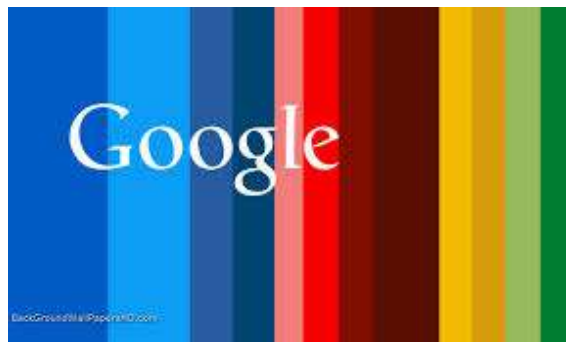
5. ATTRACTING PATIENTS

"Why optimise for Google local searches?"

Let's look at the statistics:

- Over 90% of Australians use Google as their primary search engine.
  Research - Webalive 2019

So in terms of reaching your largest potential target audience in Australia, Google will give the widest reach.

Why does optimising your website for Google local searches makes sense?

The below table shows the amount of potential organic traffic your practice's website could receive from being in the Number 1 position on Google:

Google organic search results	Average traffic share
Number 1 position	32.5%
Number 2 position	17.6%
Number 3 position	11.4%
Number 4 position	8.1%
Number 5 position	6.1%
Number 6 position	4.4%

Statics from Links Management 2019

Professional note - I have seen variations in the above statistics dependent on the study. The fact remains the higher you are on Google search results the more potential patients you could attract to your practice.

What do you need to do to optimise your website for Google local searches?

Step 1 - List out all of your practices services
Step 2 - Identify your key income drivers and most popular services and website pages
Step 3 - Identify keywords that most patients search for (e.g. Physiotherapy Brighton)
Step 4 - Ensure the keywords are placed strategically on the pages headlines and copy

Pointers - This work is about attracting more patients and income
- It's worth the effort and expenditure to engage a website copywriting specialist
- To optimise a page for local search expect to pay between $350 to $550

Takeaway checklist -

☑ **Optimise your website pages for Google local searches – Engage a Search Engine Optimisation website copywriting specialist for the best results.**

6. CONVERSION

"Converting your website visitors into patients."

There is no point having a great website and lots of people visiting it unless you convert them into patients.

What factors will help your website convert visitors into patients?

Here are some great conversion tips:

☑   **Tip 1 - Ensure every page of your website focuses on one topic only.**
Why - Minimise distractions and focus on one outcome – Contacting you.

☑   **Tip 2 - Have elements on your website that build trust in your professional abilities.**
How - Create a staff bio page and:
  - ☑   Use logos from the university where you gained your degree/doctorate
  - ☑   Highlight years of experience/expertise and latest techniques you use
  - ☑   Use images of your practice team members
  - ☑   Highlight your privacy policy
  - ☑   Have a "Why use us' section

Why – These elements will help build patient confidence in your abilities and make them feel more comfortable about placing their health in your hands.

☑   **Tip 3 - Have multiple ways for patients to contact you – Phone, mail and email etc.**
Why - People have a preference in how they like to communicate with you so, make sure you give them as many options as you can.

☑   **Tip 4 - Show results, testimonials, research, case studies or before and after shots.**
  (If permitted by your national organisation governing body advertising guidelines).

Why - Showing real people with real results is a great way to build trust, show your expertise and display your clinic's approach to healthcare.

Think about the patient journey on your website -
Walk yourself through your website from a patients perspective. Can they:
  - Find the information they are after easily? (Within 3 clicks)
  - Is the copy on your website easy to read and understand?
  - Are they led to take action – Contact your practice?

6. CONVERSION (CONTINUED)

"Website analytics - How to ensure your website is converting visitors into patients?"

Measuring your websites conversion rate

How do you know your website is converting visitors into patients? Here are a few measurement ideas you can set up on your website:

☑ **Have a dedicated telephone number that is only displayed on your website**

☑ **Have a special offer only accessible on your website**

☑ **Measure the number of email responses coming from an email address exclusively available on your website.**

Website conversion definition = Measuring the conversion of website visitors into patients.

$$\text{Conversion rate} = \frac{\text{Number of Goal Achievements}}{\text{Visitors}}$$

Number of goal achievements = Leads from your website
Visitors = Your websites unique visitors

Example:
Unique website visitors for July = 500
40 new patients called and booked an appointment
(via dedicated phone number exclusive to your website)
A further 20 patients took up your online special offer

The calculation:
Number of goal achievers = 60 / Unique website visitors July = 500

July website conversion rate = 0.12% or 12% of your patients are coming via the website.

Takeaway -

☑   **Ensure you have a website analytics program attached to your website.**
(More information is included in section 10 of this whitepaper).

Note – A website analytics program tracks and reports on your website's traffic – It measures visitors, pages visited, time on site amongst a host of other data. I recommend Google Analytics. It's the most widely used website analytics service on the Internet and it's free – Visit **_Google Analytics_** for more information.

7. REDUCE PRACTICE RUNING COSTS

"Online appointment bookings"

To have or not to have…

I hear this response quite often – "We would never have online appointment bookings at our practice …it goes against the level of service we like to show our patients."

> **What does the research say about online bookings?**
> - Between 50% to 70% of people would like the option to book their appointments online at a time that is convenient to them.
>
> Research by - Get app Lab 2019.

Here are the perspectives you need to consider:

1. Your practice and patient service expectations and online booking benefits
2. What are the costs?
3. What are the challenges – Is it too hard and complex to implement?

1. Your practice's service levels

Online appointment bookings are about what the patient wants. Not what your practice wants. From a patient and practice service perspective benefits include:

- Ease of booking
- Online bookings are available 24/7
- A patient does not have to wait for your practice to open to book an appointment
- Online bookings will only become more popular in the future
- If an online appointment is cancelled via an integrated SMS response this allows you to immediately re-book another patient with no loss of revenue
- Reduce practice running costs (more on this soon).

If you are looking to improve your service isn't it better to have something a patient is seeking and letting them have access to your services when they want them and how they want to access them?

7. ONLINE APPOINTMENT BOOKINGS (CONTINUED)

"What are the costs?"

2. What are the costs of online appointment bookings?

I commonly hear – "The cost of putting online appointments in and having SMS appointment reminders is too expensive!"

Determining the costs relies on the following factors:

1. Does your practice's software allow online bookings?
2. What are the costs to implement and the ongoing costs of online bookings?
3. What are the savings?

What does the research indicate?

- 20% - 30% of front office staff time is spent booking appointments over the phone.

Research Medical Website Solutions 2015

Cost of staff time

About $11,000 to $16,500 per year of a single front office staff members time is spent on the phone booking appointments (assuming annual wage of $55,000 per year).

If online appointments bookings could give back 20% - 30% of a staff member's time; this equates to between $2,200 to $4,950 dollars per year per staff member. They could use this time to improve other areas of your practice.

"40% of our patient bookings are now done online."
Linda Osman (National Vice President – Australian Association of Practice Management).

What does it cost to implement online bookings?

This is dependant on your practice's software but once implemented the ongoing costs are around $200 – $400 per month. SMS appointments can be plugged into this service as well and are based on carrier rates of around 5c to 20c per reminder.

From a financial perspective – With the popularity of online appointment bookings only set to rise in the future, the savings in implementing are easily justifiable and reduce practice overhead running costs and lost appointment bookings.

Note – Online bookings are best integrated with your practice's software program. There are a number of providers that supply the service via an email system that front office staff then have to double handle into your practice's software. Not very efficient and emails can be missed.

7. ONLINE APPOINTMENT BOOKINGS (CONTINUED)

"Implementation challenges."

3. Online appointment bookings – Too hard and complex to implement

I hear this as a big drawback as most practices have a number of criteria including appointment lengths and costs dependant on the service required.

I was on my local dentists website the other day and they have fifteen different procedures available for online bookings. The website was well laid out and it was easy to find the appointment that best suited my needs.

Technology today can overcome any number of hurdles. Once you lay out the process the solution is far easier than you perceive. People have walked on the moon and your phone is probably a supercomputer, so online appointment bookings for your practice are possible.

> ### Online appointment bookings – The final say!
> **Time** is by the far the most important factor in a practice manager's day.
> **Wages** are one of the greatest overhead costs in practice management.
> **Online appointment bookings can save you in both areas.**

8. WEBSITE COPY

"Most medical websites simply do not…"

Have enough website copy?

Most medical practice websites including GP's, Dentists and Physiotherapists simply do not have enough quality information in the form of well written, easy to read, patient friendly copy.

How can you improve your website's copy?

Patients on your website want information quickly, so make your key practice information easy to find and read.

Serif

Vs.

Sans Serif

TYPOGRAPHY

Information checklist:

☑ Phone number   ☑ Address   ☑ Opening hours

☑ Map   ☑ Public transport info   ☑ First appointment needs

Easy to read information – Checklist:

A simple, clean and clear page will help patients find a digest the vital information they need. On your webpages:

☑ Use headlines and sub headlines   ☑ Use bullet points

☑ Easy to read typefaces   ☑ Easy to see font sizes (15 point+)

How much website copy do you need per page?

Website copy is not only about the patient; it's about search engines. Copy helps search engines determine the most relevant information potential patients are searching for. As a rule of thumb:

☑ **Try to have between 750 to 2000 words of copy on a page. One page per single topic and keep it relevant, useful and as interesting as possible.**

Engage a Search Engine Optimisation website copywriting specialist for the best results.

9. WEBSITE DESIGN
MUST HAVE ELEMENTS TO LOOK FOR

"Improve user experiences with…"

Images

A picture can speak a thousand words. Choosing the right images for your website can help with brand positioning and connecting with your target audience. If you don't have high quality professional photos on hand, consider purchasing stock photos to lift the look of your website. Also consider using info-graphics, videos and graphics as these can be much more effective at communicating than even the most well written piece of text.

Navigation

Navigation is about how easy it is for people to take action and move around your website. Some tactics for effective navigation include a logical page hierarchy, using breadcrumbs, using clickable buttons, and following the 'three click rule', which means users, will be able to find the information they are looking for within three clicks.

Grid based layout

Placing content randomly on your web page can end up with a haphazard appearance that is messy. Grid based layouts arrange content into sections, columns and boxes that line up and feel balanced, which leads to a better looking website design.

"F" Pattern design

Eye tracking studies have identified that people scan computer screens in an "F" pattern. Most of what people see is in the top and left of the screen and the right side of the screen is rarely seen.

Rather than trying to force the viewer's visual flow, effectively designed websites will work with a reader's natural behavior and display information in order of importance (left to right, and top to bottom).

AND FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

We Like to Read
Left to Right

IN AN 'F' LAYOUT
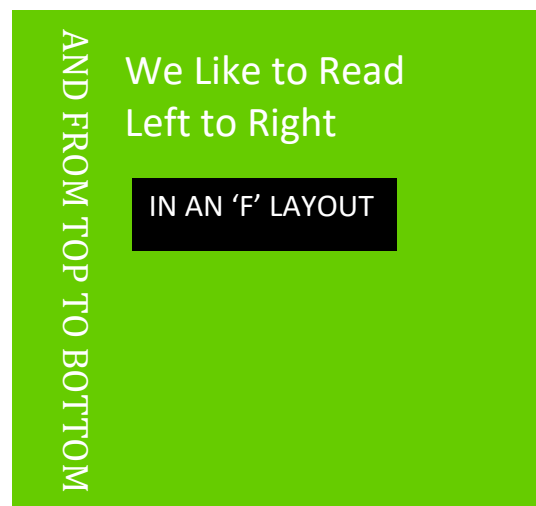
10. WEBSITE MEASUREMENT

"What do you need to measure to ensure your website is improving income and patient care?"

In section 6 we looked at website conversion and analytics. This section will expand on more of the website statistics you should monitor on a monthly basis to find out where you could improve your services, income and patient care. Here is what you should look for:

Website page loading time

Tip - Keep it as fast as possible.

Why - 40% of people will abandon a web page if it takes more than 5 seconds to load. Source – *Econsultancy*

What should you do with this information?
There are a lot of free tools you can use to measure your website loading speed. I recommend:

- *Website Speed Test* - Type the url address of your website into the test box. It will show you how fast it loads in different countries around the world (Please only take notice of "your nearest" time zone)

Most commonly images and tools slow down your website's loading time. As a rule of thumb; keep your images as small as possible without compromising image quality on mobile devices. For small images a good rule of thumb is to keep them around 10kb to 30kb in size. For large images keep them around 60kB to 80kB in size.

Bounce rate

Definition - Your website's Bounce Rate is the percentage of people who visit your website and only see a single page. They leave your website without interacting with the page or any other information on your website.

10. WEBSITE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

So what is considered a high website bounce rate?
This depends on the history of your website statistics (this is why you need to measure your website statistics on a monthly basis) and how your website is set up. Other factors why your website has a high bounce rate could include:

- Poor website design
- Poor website information
- Usability issues
- Not having a mobile friendly website
- You may even have a single page website
- Users may have found the information they are looking for
- User behavior – A user may bookmark a page, go to it and leave (that's considered a bounce).
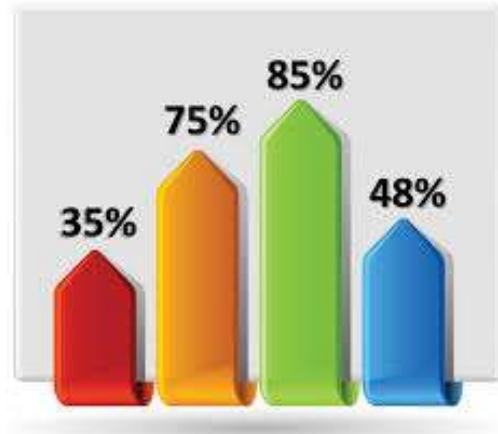
What should you do with this information?
Try to keep your bounce rate as small as possible in an historical sense. Most practices I see have bounce rate between 80% to 90%; which is too high.

Ensure the information on your website pages is:

- Relevant to your target audience
- Contains keywords patients commonly search for
- Easy to read – Your website should have a reading age of a 13 year old
- Well spaced copy using images, tables and bullet points to break up information and make it easy to digest

Know your competition
Take a look at some of your competitions websites and see what they do well and poorly.

What should you do with this information?
Make a list of what you think they do well. Prioritise a list and look to improve some of the copy, features and functionality on your website.

10. WEBSITE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

Time on site

How long a person spends on your website is a fair indication of how interesting they find your information.

After the key information of:

- About your services
- Experience
- Why should they use your practice
- Facilities and;
- Location

Think about what else you could add to help a potential patient to build trust in your services.

You could have:

- Helpful "How to" or "Tips" section
- Photo gallery – Before and after shots
- Videos
- Frequently ask questions
- Health notices
- Useful statistics or latest research on…

Website visitors

It's always good to measure the amount of visitors you receive to your website. Pay attention to the "unique visitors". Unique visitors refers to the number of individuals visiting your website during a given period, no matter of how often they visit.

What should you do with this information?

This enables you to keep an eye on how many people are visiting your website per month. This allows you to set a benchmark and helps you monitor spikes or a decline in traffic. It's one of the first indicators that show you if there is a problem or your website efforts are working.

10. WEBSITE MEASUREMENT (CONTINUED)

Popular pages visited on your website

It's always useful to know what the popular pages are on your website. Most of the time these are the ones that can be tweaked to help drive more patients into your practice.

What should you do with this information?

There should be a high correlation between your practice's strategy, your main income streams (or your most popular services) and your websites most popular pages.

If there is not, the patient journey on your website needs to be analysed and refined.

Where is your websites traffic coming from?

How do you attract patients to your website? Is your practice:

- Advertising via Google ad words or a similar product?
- Active on social media?
- Advertising via social media?
- Advertising via online directories either free or paid (yellow pages)?
- Well placed in search engines such as Google?

What should you do with this information?

Monitor where your website traffic is coming from so you can see where your successful efforts lie. The beauty of a website is you can test and measure your efforts so you can optimise them. Any spikes in traffic or a drop in traffic can be identified. This can be an indicator of any problems or positive efforts that are helping drive patients to your practice.

What should you do with this information?

Monitoring these website statistics should only take 10 minutes a month. Put them in a spread-sheet and discuss them with your team in your monthly meeting. You will see the trends quickly appear. This will enable you to strategically pick the pages and efforts you need to focus on in line with your practice's strategy and income streams. You can then put a plan in place to test, measure and improve your website to drive more patients and improve their care.

HELPING YOUR WEBSITE DELIVER!

"Managing a great.."

Medical practice is all about:

- **Income** – Driving patients through your doors
- **Efficiency** – Driving down practice running costs
- **Service** – Providing great service to your patients.

Your website is a major area of your practice where you could spend a few hundred to a few thousand dollars and see a big return on investment.

This whitepaper is designed to help you think strategically about your website and the ways it could improve your practice by:

☑ Saving time
☑ Improving patient care
☑ Maximising income – Driving more patients
☑ Reducing practice running costs

Now you know what to look for, the next step is to make an improvement plan.

"I hope you have found this whitepaper useful. If you have any questions please feel free to call me."

Ph: 0438 325246

David Douglas – Director
Medical Website Solutions

We build and optimise websites for medical practices that:

◆**Maximise appointments** ◆Reduce running costs
◆Improve patient care ◆**Save time**