



# **13 WAYS TO GET MORE NEW PATIENTS FROM YOUR DENTAL WEBSITE**

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# Executive Summary

More than ever before, information about healthcare is going digital. According to a recent study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 72% of Internet users say they looked online for health information within the past year.<sup>1</sup>

Customers have also become accustomed to banking and shopping online. They now expect to engage with their dentists the same way.

Many dentists want to create a compelling web presence, both to attract prospective patients and to maintain relationships with their existing base. Though many dental practices recognize the value of well-designed websites with compelling content, the task of identifying and implementing the best practices for bringing in new patients can be overwhelming.

In this whitepaper, we provide insight on what it takes to have a great website that engages and converts visitors to new patients. We also look at the latest market research on the topic and explore how to determine whether a custom website is best for your practice.

This whitepaper recommends 13 ways to engage, inform, and convert visitors as follows:

1. Be Visual
2. Present a Clear Identity
3. Organize Your Information
4. Create a Site that Converts
5. Develop Patient-Focused Content
6. Use Testimonials to Your Advantage
7. Optimize for Speed
8. Go Mobile
9. Help Patients Find You Online
10. Provide Secure Access
11. Be Compliant
12. Measure Your ROI
13. Know the Don'ts of Good Web Design

# #1 Be Visual

Amid the noise and distraction of the online world, you have just seconds to capture your site visitors' attention before they move on to another dentist's website.<sup>2</sup> Visual content, such as videos and images, is a surefire way to instantly appeal to visitors.

Statistics abound in support of online video's runaway popularity. For instance, one-third of all online hours are spent watching videos; half of the viewers watch videos on their mobile devices and the vast majority share it with others.<sup>3</sup>

Static images are also highly effective which may explain why content with photographs or infographics receives 94% more views than text-only pages.<sup>4</sup>

Before you break out your iPhone camera, though, keep these guidelines in mind:

- **Quality counts:** Your website is an online representation of your practice. Just as you take care to decorate your office with quality prints, photos and even paintings, website images deserve the same level of attention. Use a pro photographer or videographer wherever possible.

- **Select images that resonate with patients:** The right image can instantly convey "this practice treats people just like me." If you are using stock photos, consider your target market. Are you speaking to parents of urban teenagers who need braces? Does your practice specialize in cosmetic dentistry for the patient who has everything?

Don't forget to factor in your geographic area. A practice located in New York City may opt for a photo that incorporates city landmarks or a scene in a crowded coffee shop. An office in Colorado would do better to incorporate mountains in the background.

Patients have come to expect personalized, authentic marketing, and they interpret carefully produced or curated images as an indication the practice will treat them as a unique individual as well.

## ▶ TAKEAWAY

Use video and images and make sure to reflect your patients' age, ethnicity, location and treatment needs. And remember, you can use repurpose video and images for posting to your social media accounts.

## #2 Present a Clear Identity

Who are you and what do you do? What differentiates your practice from your competitors? These messages should be front and center on your website.

Some website visitors may find you from Google by searching “dentist” + “location,” and they may be completely unfamiliar with your practice. It’s important to help prospective patients understand your area of expertise, such as orthodontics, cosmetic, or family dentistry. Use a blend of images, videos and taglines that work together to convey a cohesive marketing message.

### TAKEAWAY

Immediately communicate your identity through the copy and visuals on your homepage. If you aren’t sure what makes your practice stand out from others, read what patients say about you on third party review sites, see which areas they emphasize, and build off that (e.g. flexible hours, personalized care, etc.).

### EXAMPLE



The homepage of dentist Michael J Landry, in Houston, Texas, is a good example of a practice that makes its message clear. The practice’s name “CDA Consultants in Dental Aesthetics” and the tagline “A Totally Pampering Experience” are featured prominently and tell you exactly what to expect. Banner images show a woman flashing a nice smile and carrying shopping bags.

The marketing message is cohesive and clear: CDA is for discerning clients who enjoy a spa-like atmosphere while working on their smiles.

# #3 Organize Your Information

When patients visit your site, can they find what they're looking for? HubSpot, a world leader in inbound marketing, reported that three-quarters of respondents from a recent study say the most important element in website design is ease of finding information.<sup>5</sup>

If people must hunt for the information they want, they're likely to give up and try again with your competition. According to ROI Media, people can't find the information they're looking for on a website about 60% of the time.<sup>6</sup>

When visitors come to your webpage, they want to know the following information quickly:

- [Practice expertise](#)
- [Location](#)
- [Hours](#)
- [Contact information](#)
- [Special offers for new patients](#)

Putting this information on your homepage, or through clearly identified links in the primary navigation, is recommended. Limiting the number of pages calling for your patients' attention is also a smart idea.

Primary navigation elements, located near the top of the home page, should include the following:

- [Meet the Doctor or Our Practice page](#)
- [Services or Procedures](#)
- [Smile Gallery, to showcase before-and-after photos](#)
- [Contact page](#)

A website with this navigation hierarchy tells patients everything they need to know without asking them to sort through mountains of information. On the web, less is more.

## TAKEAWAY

Help patients quickly find the information they need with clear organization and navigation.



## #4 Create a Site That Converts

You'll often hear designers talk about conversion – the art and science of prompting a website visitor to take action. At its most literal, conversion means making a sale or turning a visitor into a patient. But conversion can refer to a visitor taking less immediate actions, such as requesting an appointment, watching a video, viewing a “before and after” gallery, or clicking the “meet our team” tab.

Different practices may have varying conversion goals for their web presence. Before embarking on the web design process, you should first take a good hard look at what you want to accomplish by presenting yourself online. What is the desired action? By thinking strategically about what the desired action is for each page, you can design an overall site that encourages conversion.

Some dentists prefer a contact form that routes to the office staff for follow-up. Other practices prefer real-time phone calls so they can answer patient questions and schedule appointments on the spot. These practices eschew contact forms in favor of placing their phone number front and center. If your goal is new appointments, though, keep in mind 41.5% of patients prefer online scheduling to calling the practice.<sup>7</sup> Once you define your call to action, you can then build your website to meet those goals.

### TAKEAWAY

By establishing your goals upfront and designing specific to your needs, you can create a site that converts.

# #5 Develop Patient-Focused Content

In the past, marketing was all about trumpeting your expertise to a willing audience. But today, and especially online, the name of the game is showing your patients how you can solve their problems. The focus is on creating content that's informative, useful and interesting – for your patients.

The procedures section of your website is a great place to explore topics that your patients want to learn more about. Talking about procedures establishes you as an expert and someone who prioritizes sharing information and answering questions.

Your goal should not be merely to describe how a procedure works at your office, but to put patients at ease by proactively answering common questions. A section about dental implants might briefly describe what implants are, the procedure and benefits. It might also mention your care and concern for the patient's comfort throughout treatment. It's best to write like you're having a conversation with the patient.

Though patient-focused articles are undeniably important, it can be difficult for practices to take time away from patients to write web content. For those without in-house marketing staff, ProSites offers a content library written by professionals specifically for dentists and their patients.

Valuable content drives organic traffic to your website. It can also position you as a thought-leader in your industry.

## TAKEAWAY

Quality content helps earn customer confidence and improves site ranking.



## #6 Use Testimonials to Your Advantage

You've heard it before: patients rely heavily on online reviews and testimonials before deciding on a new dentist. Nonetheless, even though 80% of dental professionals feel a strong online presence is essential, the majority receive very few patient reviews. Additionally, most use outdated or limited methods of gathering and managing their reviews.<sup>8</sup>

Quality customer testimonials support your marketing message with real-world examples. Building trust with prospective patients means proving you're skilled at the work they require, whether they need crowns, implants or teeth-whitening services. Make sure to collect reviews from a diverse patient population regarding a wide variety of services.

Place testimonials prominently in various locations on your website; don't hide references and testimonials on their own page or tab. Consider including video testimonials, photos of happy patients, and even selfies submitted by your clients. Proudly display the positive results of your services!

Some website design firms include a reputation marketing feature, in which case patients can opt to leave a review directly on your website. In such cases, the site notifies you when a new review comes in and allows you to select which you'd like to highlight directly on your site. It also prompts patients who've given 4- and 5-star ratings to share their reviews on key platforms such as Google, Yelp and Bing.

Since happy client reviews are one of the most powerful marketing tools a business can have, it's important not to leave them to chance. Create real goals for your customer references and be strategic about which services to highlight.

Not only should you consider which services you would most like to promote, but also take into consideration the time of year in which certain services may be most in demand. Quality web design makes it easy to update reviews as needed.

### TAKEAWAY

Prominently display testimonials to build trust with prospective patients and highlight specific services that you provide.

# #7 Optimize for Speed

Site speed is a very important yet often overlooked factor in website success. Forty percent of people will abandon a web page if it takes more than three seconds to load.<sup>9</sup>

A speedy site will also improve your ranking, as Google’s search engine crawlers won’t wait around for information to load.

To ensure a faster load time, avoid Flash web players, music and auto-loading slideshows. If you choose to include a video or slideshow on your homepage, let the visitor decide if and when to press the “play” button. And be sure to have a professional website developer set up a slideshow or video on the site to ensure rapid load times.

It’s best to avoid overusing animation on your page, also. While intended to entertain and draw attention, animation more often obscures a website’s intended goal.

**TAKEAWAY**  
Potential patients are too busy to wait. Don’t add features that slow down your site.

**AVOID THESE COMMON MISTAKES FOR FASTER LOAD TIMES**

-  Flash
-  Music
-  Auto-playing slideshows
-  Unnecessary or overused animation

## #8 Go Mobile

In 2015, for the first time in history, more Google searches took place on mobile devices than on desktop computers.<sup>10</sup> Because more and more people are accessing your website on a smartphone or tablet, your site needs to look good on any browser and any device. This is accomplished by having a “responsive” design, a critical website feature that interprets the device in use and automatically scales your site to display properly on the screen. Per industry metrics, nearly 80% of users will exit a site that is not mobile-friendly and 57% will refuse to recommend one.<sup>11</sup>

“Consumers, particularly on mobile devices, now have higher expectations than ever before – they want everything right, and they want everything right away,” says Google’s official blog. “This requires that marketers answer their needs in the moment, whenever and wherever they are.”

Google places so much importance on the mobile user experience, it is now giving precedence to mobile-friendly websites in its search engine results.



Websites that aren’t mobile-friendly also cause higher bounce rates. “Bounce rates” refer to the percentage of visitors who leave a site after viewing only one page. High bounce rates are problematic because they imply site visitors aren’t finding the content they’re looking for – and they also decrease rankings in Google.

### TAKEAWAY

Your website should function just as well on a smartphone as a desktop computer. Incorporate responsive design for the best user experience and Google ranking.

# #9 Help Patients Find You Online

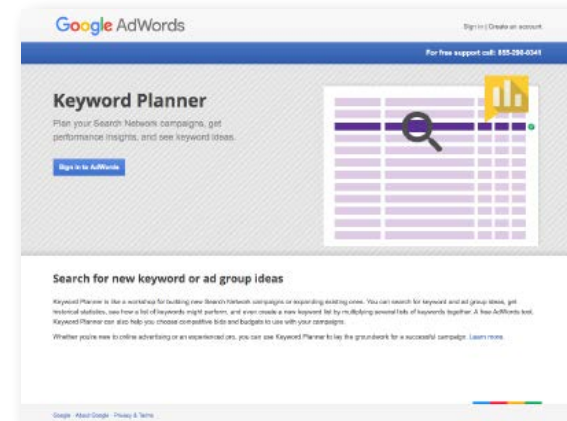
Make sure new and current patients can find your business online when they search.

## Keywords for Success

One of the key ways to make sure your practice is easy to find online is with strategic use of keywords on your website. Keywords are words and phrases that customers may search for when looking for a dental practice like yours.

Not sure which keywords to start with? Find keywords for your practice with Google's [free keyword planner](#). Look for words and phrases that identify your general practice, specialties, and location.

Now that you know your keywords, resist the temptation to engage in keyword “stuffing.” Instead, use keywords on your pages in the areas that make sense. Your website content provides the vehicle to tell your story in keywords that a potential patient is most likely to use.



Use Google's free keyword planner to help find keywords for your practice.

## Remember to NAP

Besides keywords, it's also important to NAP. NAPing isn't just for babies - NAP stands for Name, Address, Phone. Keeping this information clear is critical to rank well in local organic search results.

To NAP properly, you must include your company contact information (name, address, phone number, and website URL) in your website header and footer. Make sure your contact information is typed with text, rather than contained in an image. This allows search engines to “read” the information and share it with searchers.

Additionally, many businesses don’t realize that the main phone number listed on their site should be a local number with a local area code, rather than a toll-free number. Having a local number is another way to ensure your business appears in local searches.

## Google My Business

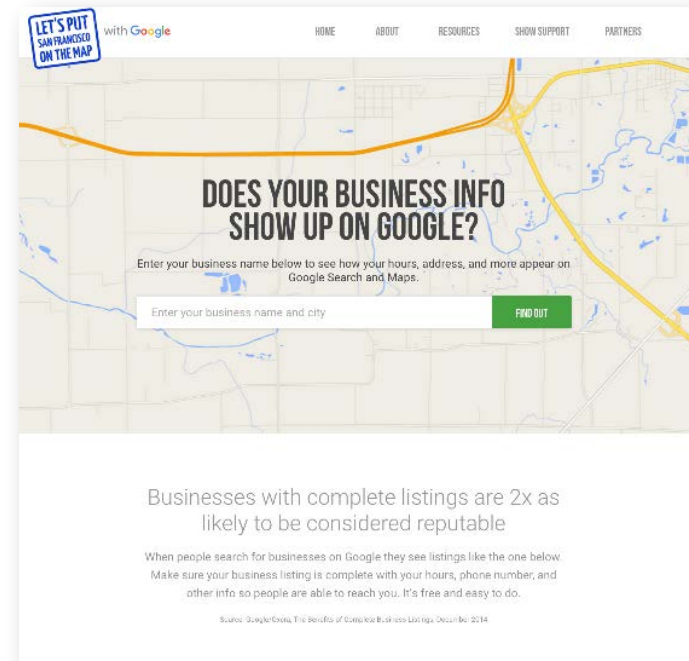
Another tip for being found online is to register your company with **Google My Business**. Google is the most popular search engine in the United States, and by registering your business with Google you make it easier for customers to find you via Google search and Google Maps.

### TAKEAWAY

Make your website easy to find by using keywords, following protocol for NAP (Name/Address/Phone) listings, by creating a Google My Business profile and having a mobile-friendly site.

## Be Mobile-Friendly

As previously mentioned, Google gives preference to mobile-friendly sites in its search engine results. Be sure to have a properly designed mobile version of your site for mobile device users.



**Register your practice to Google My Business to make it easier for prospective patients to find you online.**

# #10 Provide Secure Access

With the rising incidence of phishing scams, malware infections and identity theft, it's no surprise that nearly 70% of Americans are concerned with online security and privacy.<sup>12</sup>

Unbeknown to most Internet users, the connection between websites and website visitors is easily hacked. Cybercriminals can steal personal information, propagate malware and redirect users to “spoofed” locations—scam sites which imitate legitimate sites—with no hint of any wrongdoing.

Google shares these concerns and has been working to provide a safer online user experience. In fact, the search engine giant recently announced that all sites viewed by a Google Chrome browser must now provide an encrypted connection to site visitors. The technical name for this encryption is “HTTPS;” it encodes data transmitted via the Internet.

If you neglect to implement HTTPS encryption, Google will warn users with a Chrome browser that your site is unsafe. To make matters worse, websites that are not HTTPS may be penalized with a lowered position in search results.

How to add HTTPS encryption to your site? Ask your web design firm. Most website designers should offer a HTTPS option and renew your SSL certificate on your behalf.

## TAKEAWAY

Reassure Google and your site visitors that that your site is secure with HTTPS encryption.

# #11 Be in Compliance

There are two key legal points to address within your dental website.

## 1. Accessibility: Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (AwDA) protects disabled Americans from discrimination in public or private places which are open to the public. As the AwDA was passed before the World Wide Web existed in 1990, it omits the online world. Nonetheless, individuals with disabilities have since sued dental practices for failing to provide fully accessible sites.

As the courts and lawmakers tackle AwDA's application to the web, it's in your patients' best interests—and your practice's—to have a site that is accessible to individuals with disabilities. The World Wide Web Consortium, the main international Internet standards organization, has published Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) for this very purpose.

Some dental website design providers offer an accessibility option in the sites they create for clients. By simply enabling the accessibility feature, your site becomes WCAG-compliant. Consult a professional design firm for more information.

## 2. Protected Health Information: HIPAA Compliance

As you know, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires healthcare providers protect the confidentiality of a patient's health information.

While your “brick and mortar” dental office may be HIPAA-compliant, what about your website? When patients provide protected health information via your site, such as through online registration forms, certain privacy standards must be met. The patient's health information, for example, must be transmitted over a secure connection and reside on a HIPAA-compliant server.

Failure to meet HIPAA requirements can result in costly fines and, in the most extreme cases, jail time.

To safeguard your patient's privacy and your practice's legal liability, consult with a professional web design company to bring your online forms up to HIPAA standards.

### TAKEAWAY

Safeguard the interests of your patients and your practice with Americans with Disabilities Act and HIPAA compliance.



# #12 Measure Your ROI

When it comes to judging your website's effectiveness, the proof is in the numbers. That's why online "dashboards" are so worthwhile. Like your car's dash, data dashboards provide under-the-hood metrics to aid in your decision-making.

Some dental website providers include dashboards with a doctor's website. Although these tools differ, a dashboard should track your site's expenses and a range of metrics including number of site visitors, online appointments and callers. It would also indicate which of your services generate the most interest so you can adjust your marketing campaigns accordingly. For instance, if most site visitors navigated to your page on dental implants rather than veneers, you might decide to run a special offer on implants.

An ideal dashboard would allow you to measure the ROI on all of your marketing activities, such as postcards, marketing emails, referrals and so on. It would also integrate with your practice management software and utilize already-entered patient information.

With these analytics, rather than guessing at your website's effectiveness, you'll know if visitors are converting to leads, how much revenue they are generating and at what cost.

Some dashboard systems include call tracking and recording. You'll be able to listen in to see where your staff are performing well and where they need improvement.

## TAKEAWAY

Know which marketing channels are most remunerative and profitable with a fully functional dashboard system.

# #13 Know the Don'ts of Good Design

So far, we've talked a lot about the "do's" of good design. Now let's take a moment to focus on the "don'ts."

## **Don't Have a Bad Logo Design**

Bad logos are ones that look too generic, may be cluttered with unnecessary text, and doesn't convey the practice's brand. When it comes to designing your logo, pick colors that resonate (e.g. red for a dental practice may make a patient think "blood" or "danger," so try cooler/more calming colors), ensure your logo is scalable (looks good in all sizes), and keep it relatively simple.

## **Don't Have Poor Website Usability**

The top navigation should not "wrap," or take up three or four lines of text. The links in the top (primary) navigation at the top of the home page should be prominent, easy-to-use, and limited to your core offerings.

## **Don't Use Too Many Colors**

Font and background colors should be used judiciously. Three is a good rule for total number of colors on a page, with one color being used as the primary, another as the secondary and the third as an occasional accent. Ultimately, the colors of your site should be complementary and contrast well for readability sake.

## **Don't Choose Difficult to Read Fonts**

Fonts that are too small or too hard to read won't win over patients. Aim for at least 14-point size and choose a clean, sans serif font for the body copy.

## **Don't Use Too Much Text**

Each page on your site should maintain a lot of content, but make sure it is easy to skim and scan by using some sort of hierarchy on the page. Use bolder and larger text to separate sections of the page, especially the section headers and calls-to-action. Bullet points, bolding within paragraphs, and selective use of imagery can help break up text, too.

## **Don't Forget to Maintain Your Website**

Be sure to keep your website in working order. Broken links or inoperable online scheduling reflects poorly on you and your practice.

## **Don't Be Inconsistent**

An important part of website design is consistency and flow. The art of good design, whether web-based or otherwise, is found through the ways in which design elements complement one another to make a whole - everything from color, space, typography, images, white space, and messaging must work well together to form a good design.

# Is Professional Web Design Right for You?

With so many website options available, how do you know if you should build a site yourself or hire a professional designer? Consider the following decision points.

## Who's on Your Team?

Developing a site that converts takes a special mix of content, design, technical expertise, and marketing know-how. If you're a large practice with an in-house marketing team or an ad agency on retain-er, chances are good you have the professional expertise needed to create and maintain a successful web presence.

If you're like many offices, most of your staff is dedicated to taking care of patients. Though you've done an excellent job of building your practice, probably no one on your staff has a background in design or marketing. You'd like to improve your website, but you have no idea where to start.

If this describes your office, you'll likely see a large return on investment by hiring a professional to design your site - leaving you free to focus on your patients.

## Is Cost a Factor?

There's no getting around it: using a do-it-yourself website builder is

a budget-friendly option. Business sites on Squarespace can cost as little as \$200 annually. However, many of these budget providers don't offer the level of flexibility you need to meet the goals discussed above, and certainly don't have compelling content specifically designed for dentists.

**For offices considering hiring a professional design firm, ProSites offers very competitive rates for the industry. Services include the following:**

- Over 150 pre-designed templates with responsive options
- Unlimited pages
- Free domain name + web hosting
- Secure email accounts
- A point-and-click site editor
- Live customer support
- Free upgrades to stay up-to-date with the latest features, designs, and enhancements (FutureNow Assurance™)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (AWDA) compliance features
- HTTPS websites with SSL certificate renewal each year
- Patient portal with HIPAA-compliant patient forms
- Call tracking and recording

## Do You Want Help?

If you want to upgrade your website to a current, state-of-the-art online marketing tool, custom web design is your best option. Hiring a person or a firm to design your site means that when you have a question, something breaks, or you need to make an update, there's a person you can contact for help.

Do-it-yourself website builders frequently look to the community's users for support, meaning that clients find answers to their questions by searching message boards for solutions. This can be time-consuming and frustrating if your business is trying to update its website in real time.

	Website Builder	vs. 
Content Provided		✓
High ROI		✓
Site Built Within Days	✓	✓
Unlimited Pages		✓
Dentist-Focused Designs		✓
SEO Optimized		✓
Human-Powered		✓
Customer Support		✓
Responsive Design		✓
FutureNow Assurance™		✓
Accessibility Options		✓
HTTPS Website		✓
Patient Portal		✓

Consider what is included with your website before making a decision on your provider.

## How's Your Content?

A website builder enables the average person to create a website almost overnight. But once the site is built, it needs to say something. If you have copywriters in-house or a robust content library ready to load, do-it-yourself providers can be a great option.

If content is a pain point for you, you may want to consider a web design firm that specializes in the dental industry. A design firm often has copywriters on staff who will create content for your practice. ProSites has a staff of professional writers who write articles and blog posts specifically for dentists to post on their sites. Another bonus – ProSites' professional content is optimized for improved SEO rankings.

## How Well Do You Know Yourself?

If you don't know what you want from your website, you aren't alone. The job of a good designer is to help clients figure out what they want and need – and why.

Remember: one of the most important things that separates a design firm from a do-it-yourself site builder is the human factor. A good designer can help you talk through your actual needs versus what

you think you need. A design firm will consult with clients and help them determine what the call-to-action should be and what the page hierarchy should look like.

If you know exactly what you want from a website, a site builder may be for you. If you know you need a site but you aren't sure how to make it convert, a consultation with a designer can help you define your goals.



Consider a web design firm that specializes in the dental industry to better meet your practice's goals.

# A Quick Guide to ProSites Design Options

## A Medley of Products to Choose From

If you're considering hiring a professional web design firm, we hope you'll consider working with ProSites. We offer options for every budget, from pre-designed dental styles to built-from-scratch custom websites.

Here's an overview:

- **Pre-Designed Website**

Ideal for practices who want an affordable, ready-to-go website that they can take live quickly.

**TIMEFRAME: SAME-DAY POTENTIAL LAUNCH.**

- **Semi-Custom Website**

A semi-custom website uses pre-designed styles as a base but enables dentists to change images and taglines throughout the site for a more personalized touch.

**TIMEFRAME: 14 BUSINESS DAYS.**

- **Custom Site with Mobile**

These sites are for practices that want their branding reflected in the design aesthetic. If an office has textured wood or rock in its physical space, for instance, it may want to carry over the feel to its online presence. This option uses one of several base layouts

and incorporates custom colors, images, textures and borders. It also includes three rotating homepage banners and three additional interior banners.

**TIMEFRAME: 4 MONTHS.**

- **Custom Site Pro**

This package is for the practice with a big vision. This can also be a good fit for larger practices with multiple offices. To initiate the custom design process, a discovery call is scheduled with the practice to discuss their vision for the site.

**TIMEFRAME: 4-6 MONTHS.**

- **Premier Website Suite**

This package is for the practice who wants greater engagement, analytics, security, and convenience. It combines a semi-custom HTTPS website with additional features such as secure client email, a patient portal with dynamic HIPAA compliant patient forms, accessibility by individuals with disabilities and call tracking and recording so you can see how well your marketing campaigns are performing.

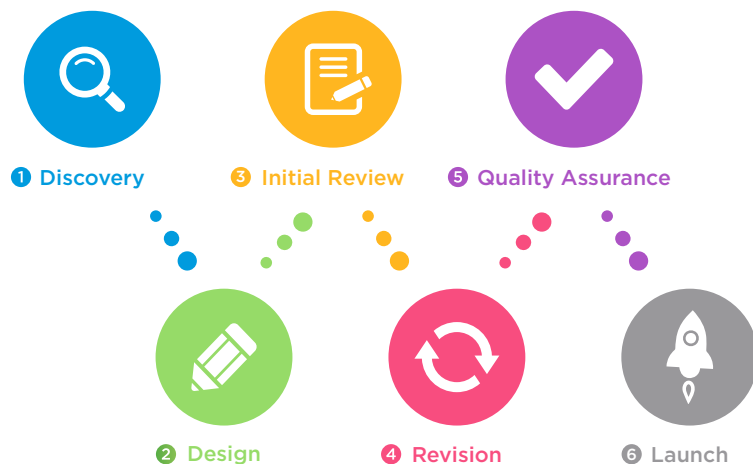
**TIMEFRAME: 14 BUSINESS DAYS.**

# Overview: The Custom Web Design Process

If you're deciding between a pre-designed style or a fully custom site, it may be helpful to learn more about what's involved in custom site design.

If you have a big vision for your website – one that doesn't fit a pre-designed style – custom web design can offer the flexibility you need. Custom design is only limited by your ability to dream up a concept.

Here's the process for a custom site:



## Discovery Call

The first step in a custom design process is the discovery call. This is when you will talk to the designer about all your hopes, dreams – and pain points. The design team learns more about your practice and will explore what you hope to accomplish through a new website. It's often helpful to walk through a website that you like as an example.

You'll likely dive into specifics, such as font and color preferences, the brand look and feel, and marketing messages. If you have an existing site, the team will discuss which content to carry over. Designers will get a feel for what you want and gather information. This is also a good way to begin building a relationship between you and your new website provider.



## Design Phase

After you and design team are aligned, the project moves into the design phase.

### INITIAL REVIEW

The design team will develop one or two mockups based on your input. Mockups are “flat” versions of the website, saved as an image file rather than published on the web. This enables you to visualize potential pages.

### REVISION PHASE

After you review the mockups, you’ll let the design team know what you like and what you’d like to change. The creative process includes a lot of back and forth feedback, and at least a couple rounds of edits are expected in a healthy client/designer relationship. You’ll then give final approval when you are fully satisfied with the site.

## Quality Assurance Phase

During the Q&A phase, the site is built on an internal server, meaning it becomes a functional site, but it is not yet published to the web. During this phase, the Q&A team reviews the site for potential problems, including everything from the code to broken links and browser compatibility.

### Time to Launch

Once the site is cleared for takeoff, the team launches the site for all the world to see! You should consider sending an email inviting patients to take a look. If the domain name has changed, re-directs help patients find the new homepage.

# The Takeaway: Questions to Ask Your Designer

Deciding which web design agency to hire is a tough decision. Here's a few questions to get the conversation started between you and a potential agency.

## **Q1: How does your team choose the right design for my practice?**

*Hint:* This should be a collaborative process between you and the designer.

## **Q2: What elements, if any, can we customize?**

*Hint:* Some templates are semi-customizable. For other projects, full-custom design is a better solution.

## **Q3: Is my site created for Search Engine Optimization?**

*Hint:* SEO is necessary for prospective and existing patients to find you online. It's also something that should be revisited often. For SEO to be successful your strategy needs to be adjusted regularly to keep pace with Google algorithm changes.

## **Q4: How is content updated? Is there a library we can choose from?**

*Hint:* Topical content is essential for driving current and prospective patients to your site and cementing a professional reputation. It's important to know what type of content an agency provides to ensure it fits the specific needs of your practice.

## **Q5: Will my site be mobile-friendly (i.e. easily viewed across devices)?**

*Hint:* More patients search from their mobile phones than desktop computers. Mobile-friendly, adaptive or responsive designs are a must have.

## **Q6: What type of customer support is available?**

*Hint:* Make sure you can get in touch with a live person for tech support, and find out if you will be charged extra for that support.

## **Q7: Can you provide examples and/or testimonials from current clients?:**

*Hint:* Whether you want a pre-designed or fully-custom website, ask for examples of the company's work before committing. Testimonials and case studies are also helpful.

### **Q8: Can I make updates to the website on my own?**

*Hint:* The ability to have control and make minor updates to your site can be helpful, as it allows you to make changes without relying on someone else or a customer service department. Not all content management systems (CMS) are created equal – so make sure you find the CMS easy to use and navigate.

### **Q9: Is there a contract?**

*Hint:* Lengthy website contracts may be a red flag. Technology and online trends change at the speed of light and if a company can't keep up, you may be stuck in a contract with a dated website.

### **Q10: How can you ensure that I will stay up-to-date? Will I need to pay more for updates?**

*Hint:* Technology and Internet trends are constantly changing. From algorithm updates that affect your rankings to design trends changing – it's nearly impossible (though critical), to keep up. Find out how the company reacts if and when there are major changes on the Internet and if you need to pay more to keep your website up-to-date.

### **Q11: What is included with my monthly hosting/software and support fees?**

*Hint:* Find out if the cost includes tech support, and if it's limited to a specific amount of time each month. You also want to understand if

domain management is included to see if you need to handle creating and renewing your domain each year, or if it's handled on your behalf.

### **Q12: What services do you offer?**

*Hint:* When comparing providers, ask what other services they offer. Chances are at some point (probably sooner than you think) your practice will benefit from search marketing (e.g. SEO and PPC) or social media. Knowing your options at the start can cut-down on third party engagements down the road.

### **Q13: Is there a way I can track results from my website?**

*Hint:* Tracking your website performance is key to helping you understand where you need to make improvements and what is working well. If you don't have insight into your website's statistics, there's no way to know if it's truly helping you bring in new patients. Ask a potential website provider what types of tools and dashboards they offer to help you track visitors and measure success.

### **Q14: Do you offer secure websites?**

*Hint:* Google Chrome now highlights HTTP websites as “not secure,” which can negatively impact website traffic and search engine rankings. This means having an SSL certificate that encrypts all information sent via your website is more important than ever – even if you only collect contact information.

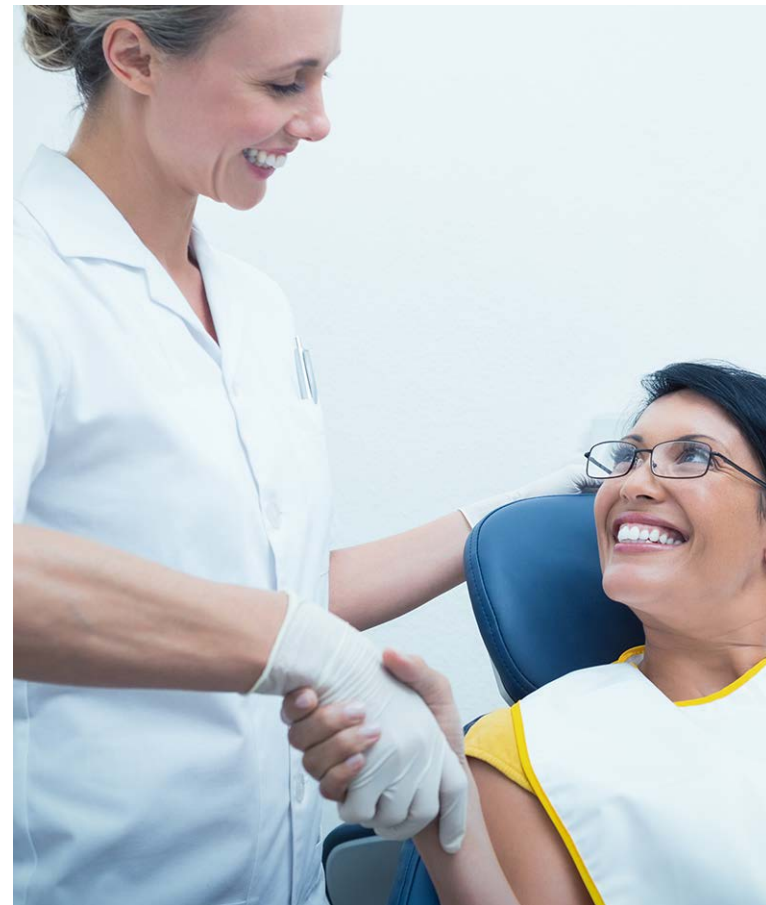
# Conclusion

Right or wrong, patients judge a dentist's professionalism by the image their website projects. And designing a quality website is a tall order. Your site needs to rank in Google, communicate a clear marketing message, prompt viewers to take action - and look good while doing it.

But developing an effective website is not impossible. By following the 13 recommendations outlined in this paper, your website can become your best marketing tool. New patients can find you through online searches, and existing patients can come to your site to learn more about the services you offer. Your testimonials will speak for themselves.

If you're interested in learning more about whether professional web design is right for your practice, visit [www.ProSites.com](http://www.ProSites.com) and sign up for a [free website trial](#). You'll be able to view web design templates, explore over a hundred pages of patient-focused content, and see just how easy it can be to edit your website.

If your practice provides quality care, you have phenomenal customer service, and your patients love you, then you deserve a website that projects all that and more.



## ABOUT PROSITES

ProSites helps dentists accelerate practice growth and acquire new patients through innovative online marketing solutions.

We take a consultative approach and create tailored marketing strategies that support your practice goals through our comprehensive suite of online marketing solutions.

- **Dental website design.** We communicate your expertise through professional designs, educational content, interactive features, and free upgrades to ensure that your website is always up-to-date.
- **Search engine optimization.** Clients of our most popular SEO package (Premium) see an 81% increase in the number of keywords they rank for on page 1 of Google.
- **Pay-per-click.** As verified Google partners, our team knows exactly how to create successful, cost-effective pay-per-click campaigns that deliver measurable results.
- **Social media management.** We will manage your entire social media presence with engaging posts and branded profiles that encourage followers to like, share, and connect with your practice.
- **Marketing ROI.** We track your marketing efforts through to your practice management system, so you can see which marketing efforts are bringing you the most profitable results
- **Patient Communications.** Build patient loyalty and reduce no-shows with ProSites' PracticeMojo automated patient communications. Our solutions are proven to help dentists add 2.5 new appointments to their practice per day!



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# Glossary

**Primary or Top Navigation:** The section of a website that helps visitors travel through the website. The primary or top navigation often refers to the series of main links at the top of the homepage.

**Conversion:** The point at which a recipient of a marketing message performs a desired action (MarketingSherpa).

**Traffic:** The number or amount of visitors that visit a website.

**User Experience:** The general experience of a website visitor, especially pertaining to ease of use.

**Responsive Design:** Design that can “interpret” the device in use and automatically scale to the user’s smartphone, laptop, desktop, or tablet.

**Keywords:** Words and phrases that customers may input into a search engine when looking for a business.

**NAP:** An acronym that stands for Name, Address, Phone Number. Listing this information in the website header and footer helps a site be found through local searches.

**Sans Serif:** A typeface without small lines at the ends of individual letters. Arial is a popular example.

**Body Copy:** The primary text on a page. Distinct from headlines and subheadings.

**White Space:** Blank space. Refers to the area of design without text or images.



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