Local Directories: What They Are and Why You Need Them

We get a lot of questions about local directories, so here’s a quick overview about what they are, and why we focus on your practice’s listings!

Local directories are essentially address books for the internet. They help people searching for information find what they’re looking for. And if you want patients to find your practice, directories are a great place to start! They include everything from big names like zocdoc.com and yellowpages.com to smaller, more localized services.

It’s easy to get listed in local directories, but the challenge lies in using them to their maximum potential. The more directories you are listed in, and the more detail those listings have, the better your local SEO gets. The better your SEO, the higher your Google rank. And the higher your Google rank, the more patients will ultimately come through your door.

Local SEO is very important for healthcare practices since most patients will visit your office due to its location. The most important component of local SEO is your “NAP” - Name, Address and Phone number. Sometimes, it’s called your NAP+W, when you include your website address.

It may sound like a no-brainer, but only half of small businesses have updated their online listings. In many cases, they even know they have inaccurate listings, but 70 percent say that they just don’t have the time to update them at all. This is a very bad move. Inaccuracies like these will kill your local SEO. Consistent NAP is extremely important.

Another good way to up your local ranking is to encourage reviews. Don’t make the mistake of explicitly asking for positive reviews (that would be unethical), but don’t
be afraid to let patients know you welcome their input. After all, reviews are essential for local search optimization; Google consistently delivers local results that favor establishments with higher reviews. And if you end up with a bad review, responding to it immediately may end up winning over not only an unsatisfied patient, but future patients as well. Create a page on your website that lets your patients know exactly how they can review your practice.

Also, Google has announced that they are testing a “neighborhood algorithm” in order to narrow down searches even more. Add your neighborhood name as a descriptor at the end of your practice name on your Google My Business page (e.g., “Dr. Jones East Side”). Also, add your neighborhood name in text and title tags to your website. As hyperlocal search evolves, it will become more and more important to make the biggest local impact in the smallest geographical area.

Interested in local directories, but not sure where to begin? Contact The Online Practice at 800-468-6632 today!