

Chiropractic Blogging and Its Impact on Practice Growth

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The poor economy has crippled many practices in the last couple of years. The question is, what are the things that can be done inexpensively and get great results? Social media may be your answer.

There has been a lot of buzz lately about how social media can save any business tens of thousands of dollars a year on inbound marketing. But before April 2010 I had no idea what value there was to chiropractic blogging.

I then discovered the existence of Twitter and soon enough I was being "followed" by many bloggers who were promoting their content. Pretty soon, I was engulfed in the ocean of new and interesting information. The most influential blogs that I have come across on Twitter were by [Jeff Bullas](#) from Australia and by Dr. MacNamara from www.nextgenerationchiropractor.com. I would have to say that I have built my blog based on the knowledge I have gained from digesting the information from both of these blogs. I have to admit that reading and digesting the information from these blogs was time consuming, but was worth it in the long run. What I learned, opened opened my eyes to see things differently.

I began blogging about a month after I had discovered Twitter. I simply opened a free [WordPress](#) account and began posting articles about chiropractic. In just a few months, traffic to my main site jumped three-fold. And that just happened from posting regularly. At the time my site was not optimized for search engine traffic. Google Analytics, which is a free service by Google, is what I use to track my traffic, and I highly recommend it as a monitoring tool for your blog. (WordPress does include a built-in traffic counter, but it does not include the level of detail provided by Analytics).

In June, I decided that I would invest the money and time to build a self-hosted blog. The difference between a self-hosted WordPress blog and hosting on WordPress is huge. You actually own the content on a self-hosted blog versus publishing your content on the free WordPress platform. Plus on a self-hosted blog you have a great flexibility with designs and color themes. If you know CSS and HTML coding you can design your self-hosted WordPress blog by yourself. However, the majority of chiropractors do not have the knowledge or the time to do it. The solution is to hire someone to build this for you. The first person that comes to my mind is Dr. MacNamara. He specializes in helping chiropractors design their blog and tying it to social media channels. He also teaches how to use the new tool from point A to point Z.

Blogging Benefits

A majority of chiropractors utilize cookie-cutter Web sites that range from \$30-\$40 a month in services, which provide for updating content, hosting and design. For purposes of this article, I will not mention the names of these companies; however, I will go over their services as they pertain to the chiropractor.

The content that is updated on the cookie-cutter sites is (as you may have guessed) the same as on hundreds, if not thousands, of other sites hosted and serviced by the same provider. Google as a main search engine cannot provide any benefits to your site because of the duplicated content.

Your blog is a WEB 2.0 platform, which means that it is a dynamic platform with unique content that a doctor of chiropractic has to create. When Google's spider engine crawls your blog and finds your content unique, it will list that particular post in the Internet directory.

The more traffic you generate and the more other bloggers will link to your site, the better the page rank is going to be for each of the posts that you have created and will create in the future. In the long run it means more new patients to your practice because they can find you via your blog. I have to admit that blogging is a very slow process and you will not see results immediately. You must be patient and persistent with your posting schedule.

The reason why consistency in your schedule is important is because as time passes, you will gain more and more followers who enjoy reading your content. If you have prolonged breaks in your postings, they will eventually disappear and may even become someone else's patients. Inconsistency will also affect the frequency of Google crawling your content.

In March of 2011, it will be officially six months since I began blogging. Currently, the site generates between 2,500-3,000 visitors a month from different parts of the world, but most of the traffic comes from the United States.

Blogging provides an opportunity for a doctor of chiropractic to deliver a message to people from different parts of the world. People are constantly looking for health-related information on the Web. If you are not blogging about it, you are losing potential patients to someone else who provides answers to their questions.

[pb]Every chiropractor has miracle cases in their clinic. Why keep it to yourself? Share it with the world and be discovered. The Internet provides instant communication among people from different parts of the world via e-mail, Facebook, Twitter and other sources of communication, including blogs.

Someone from Australia found out about my practice through one of my blog posts. That person was pleased with the content and as a result, referred a friend who had chronic headaches and neck pain to my San Francisco clinic. Amazing, right? I got a referral from a person who has never met me and who lives thousands of miles away.

It gets better.

Cost Efficiencies

How many chiropractors spend thousands of dollars each year on advertising such as Yellow Pages, direct mail, newspaper ads, spinal screenings and other old school marketing techniques. I am not saying that you should stop using those marketing campaigns but ROI (return on investment) is much greater in the long run by blogging.

My current frequency of posting is three times a week. As of this writing my blog has generated 180 Facebook Fans, about 1,800 followers of Twitter, almost 200 LinkedIn connections and my e-mail list is growing every week.

Basically, I am generating a *buzz* around my content. Each new post is distributed via the channels mentioned, and almost always generates new followers. And, as also mentioned, the more traffic

you generate to your blog, the higher it is going to rank on Google.

You can write a blog post with geographic specific key words. For example, San Francisco Chiropractic or Manhattan Chiropractic. Of course these are general and very competitive key words. But those practicing in less populated areas can do this and get better search results.

I use video testimonials on my blog. Those who are not comfortable in front of a camera may consider writing a review on Google Places, Yahoo Local or Yelp.

Your blog is also a great source of patient education. Every time I get a new patient I get their e-mail address and send them a list of posts that I have published in the past. It saves me a lot of time and I have a great opportunity to educate my patient about the condition the he or she has.

Again, this is another opportunity to show your patient that you know what is happening to them and know how to help.

An educated patient is the best patient, and will always generate new referrals to your practice.

Monetizing Your Blog

There is an opportunity to monetize on your blog's content as well. If you generate plenty of traffic by blogging, you can offer your visitors spine support or health-related products.

1. Affiliate Marketing. This is done on a cost per action (CPA) basis, meaning the customers have to take some kind of action from signing up to a newsletter to actually buying a product.

This is where you can sell other people's products that you trust and know offer great value to potential buyers.

2. Write Sponsored Reviews. This is where you can write a review about a product, site or service and you are paid per review. [ReviewMe](#) allows advertisers to buy sponsored reviews on your blog. Review prices are based on your blog's Alexa, Technorati and estimated RSS numbers. Reviews must be at least 200 words.

3. Kontera Content Link allows you to make money from advertising without giving up any current advertising spots. Their technology reads your posts and turns certain words into an ad. They are highlighted with double underlines and an ad pops up when you hover over it.

4. Text Link Ads. This is done by selling text links you see under "Featured Sites" . The links offer advertisers traffic and search engine benefits and readers don't seem to mind because they are not intrusive.

5. Google Adsense displays simple text and image ads on your blog; they are targeted to what you are writing about.

6. Sell Banner Advertising. These banners generally measure 125 x 125 pixel size, and can provide a recurring source of income month after month.

7. Promote Your Presentations to obtain more keynote speaking bookings.

There are many other possibilities, but of course the main goal should be getting as many new patients as possible into your practice. See you in the blogosphere.

