

PLASTIC AND COSMETIC SURGERY EDITION

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO INCREASE YOUR INTERNET-BASED PATIENTS ALI HUSAYNI

Internet Marketing Simplified
(Plastic and Cosmetic
Surgery Edition): What You
Can Do To Increase Your
Internet-Based Patients

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Internet Marketing Simplified (Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery Edition): What You Can Do To Increase Your Internet-Based Patients

Revision: 1.10

ISBN: 978-0-9907820-0-1

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Front Range Press.

Printed in the United States of America.

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1 Introduction

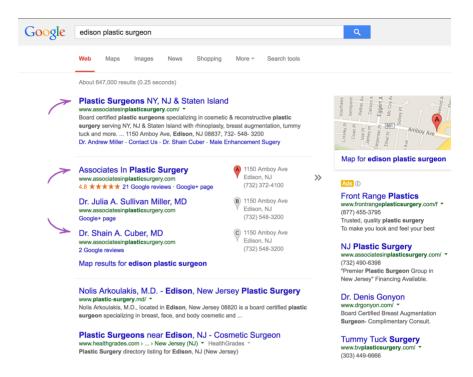
Twenty years ago, marketing and advertising were a one-way street. Your message was sent to potential patients through Yellow-Pages advertisements, TV commercials, and so forth. If someone within your target audience found your advertising appealing, that person would contact you to set up a consultation appointment. Then you would show the prospective patient your portfolio of, e.g., before and after photos of successful operations.

The Internet has changed that landscape. Today, your average patient may still be influenced by advertising, but will do one's own research **before** setting up a consultation with you. It's easy for them to just visit Google and search for *rhinoplasty* or *tummy tuck*.

The results of such a search are extensive. They can read about those procedures they are interested in from a multitude of viable sources such as Wikipedia and About; or perhaps from your own site, that of some of your colleagues, or even from your competitors. They will learn about the risks involved in the procedures, recovery time, cost and much more.

When they are close to choosing a surgeon, they may log into Google and search for *best plastic surgeon in New Jersey*. The results Google shows can be highly influenced by the work done by Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) companies; but for the most part patients are not aware of that. They trust Google to give them a good answer (and Google usually does).

Google shows several surgeon sites on the first page and, of course, there are advertisements at the top and on the right side.



The next logical step for a potential patient is to click the link of the very first site that comes up in the list of search results. Assuming that your site is at the top of the search results, the patient then clicks on the link to your site and goes through the pages and mines out more information and looks at Before/After pictures.

It's very typical for a serious patient to go back to the search results and look at some other sites (second, third) to see what other doctors have on their sites. As the prospective patient gets closer to making a decision on which surgeon to contact, he or she may search on Google for a particular doctor's reputation: For example, *Dr. John Smith cosmetic surgeon reviews*. (Like the initial search, the list of search results may be strongly influenced by the work of SEO and SEM companies.)

Introduction

Then, the patient may check your practice's Facebook page to analyze what can be called your social-proof status. Facebook also allows for patients to leave reviews for you.

After researching you extensively, the patient will contact your office to set up a consultation. At this point, the patient has all but already selected you as his/her preferred surgeon.

1.1 How Important Is Internet Marketing?

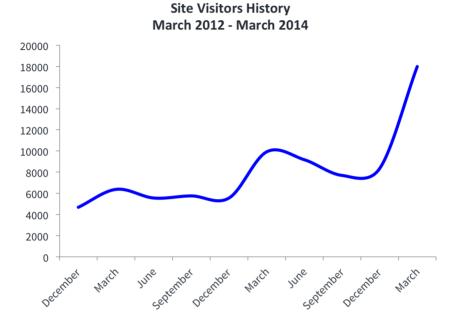
Although each person does one's online search differently, studies show that more than 81 percent of purchases conducted today are influenced by some sort of Internet activity¹; this makes Internet marketing today the most vital element of any company's marketing efforts.

One of our clients who has a number of offices in the New York and New Jersey area drives over 70% of his business through effective Internet marketing. Here is Dr. Miller's site traffic increase over the course of two years. There is another chart in Section 2.3 that shows his office's call logs in a single month:

Internet marketing is an ever-evolving enterprise; today that enterprise could be divided into the following segments:

- Conversion Rate Monitoring (CRM)
- Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- Social Media Marketing (SMM)

http://www.retailingtoday.com/article/study-81-research-online -making-big-purchases



- Inbound Marketing

Any successful Internet marketing requires that each of these aspects works in conjunction and harmony with the other.

My main goal in this book is to look at each of the above elements separately and provide you with simple and easy-to-implement tips on how to maximize their potential to increase your revenues.

1.2 Misconceptions

Before I start, I'd like to clear up some misconceptions about Internet marketing:

1.2.1 You Can Do It Yourself

It doesn't really matter how smart you are or how much you understand Internet marketing. You may have had success with online marketing in the past; you may even believe that you are continuing to beat everyone else in your market. That could be true. But that's only because your competition has not yet fully leveraged the Internet. With the right ingredients in place, Dr. X down the street could take away a big chunk of the Internet-based patients from you in a matter of months, if not weeks.

As I'll show you: You are much better off focusing on running your practice and taking care of your patients while an expert team handles your online marketing.

1.2.2 The Cheaper the Better

There is an old joke that an English man never bought anything cheap. Someone asked him, "Why?" He replied, "Because I'm not rich."

The point is that if you buy cheap items, you end up buying them again because cheap items do not last.

If your only criteria in choosing your Internet-marketing team is "inexpensive," then that means you will hire teams that are mediocre at best. And mediocre teams who are not the best don't deliver the best results. Or worse, they will waste your time while your competitors increase their market share.

The results are sometimes devastating. I've heard of stories where companies hold a client's website hostage and demand more payments. Or in some cases, Google may penalize your website for an Internet-marketing company's bad techniques; in some penalization scenarios, the damage is irreversible and you lose your beloved domain name (URL).

Domain Name: An identification string that defines a realm of administrative autonomy, authority or control on the Internet.

Domain names represent an Internet Protocol (IP) resource and are also used to indicate ownership of a resource, as well to establish a unique identity. (Source: Wikipedia)

Google Penalization: A negative impact on a site's search rankings based on updates to search algorithms and manual review.

It is also true that not all expensive companies are reputable (or worthwhile). This book also helps you to cherry pick great companies from the average or bad ones.

1.2.3 Local Is Better

There are advantages in hiring a local firm to build your site, run your PPC campaign or do your SEO. However, there are only a few top firms in the country who can do the above scientifically. Furthermore, your dollars will go a lot further signing up with one of these firms. In most cases, they're not local.

1.2.4 Internet Marketing Is A One Man's Job

It's no longer the case that one person can take care of a serious plastic or cosmetic surgery office's Internet-marketing needs. You need a team of writers, designers, programmers; as well as SEO and SEM experts. Also, you and your staff need to be involved to get the maximum effect.

1.3 What Topics Does This Book Explain?

The following chapters will include discussion of these topics:

- **Conversion Rate Monitoring (CRM)**: The second chapter sheds light on how you can monitor your website's performance. It will answer the very important question, "Is your site making you money?"
- Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO): The third chapter discusses simple ways to increase your revenue without increasing your advertising budget (by increasing your site's performance).
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO): This chapter deals with what you need to know about SEO so you are able to hire the best SEO team.
- Search Engine Marketing (SEM): Advertising on Google and other search engines is easy, but you could end up wasting lots of money with minimal results if you don't know exactly what you are doing. This chapter helps you with hiring a good SEM company.
- Return on Investment (ROI): The final chapter deals with how
 you should track your marketing dollars to know where to increase your budget and where to decrease it.
- Your Office: The first chapter focuses on what you and your staff need to do to increase your patient base through Internet marketing.

1.4 Is This Book For You?

The primary audience of this book includes cosmetic and plastic surgeons, their staff, as well as their marketing directors and practice-management consultants. There is an enormous amount of information regarding Internet marketing out there; most of it is at best confusing and, at worst, outright false. This book will arm you with the knowledge you need to be able to navigate through the vast amount of information and find the best sources.

It will also help you manage your Internet-marketing teams effectively and get the best possible results with the least amount of investment.

Special thanks to those who supported me in writing this book including my family; and in particular my mother, my advisors, our long-term clients, and fantastic team members.

Note: The information in this book may change as time passes by. After all, Internet marketing is a fluid, ever-evolving enterprise. We try to keep the book up-to-date as often as possible.

2 Conversion Rate Monitoring (CRM)

2.1 Why Do You Have A Site?

That's the first question you should ask yourself when thinking about Internet marketing.

Do you have a website merely because everyone else does? Is it to introduce yourself and your team? Or is its primary function to educate your patients or the public on what you do?

A site may serve all of the above goals, but its main purpose is to get you new leads. Period.

If your site is not functional, outdated, empty or even too sophisticated, it will turn many of your potential patients elsewhere. After all, your competition is only two mouse clicks away.

If built and maintained properly, your website will become your best marketing tool. Having a top-of-the-line site, one which is built to turn visitors into leads (high conversion rate), is more important than all the other marketing campaigns combined.

Conversion Rate: *The percentage of your website visitors who decide to contact you (thus converting). This is different from* closed sales.

Conversion Rate Optimization: *Creating an experience for a website visitor with the goal of increasing the percentage of visitors that convert into customers.*

When managed properly, conversion rate optimization augments the scale effectiveness of your online campaign.

It's a waste of time, energy, and hard-earned money to get the right potential patients to your website and then have your site turn them toward your competition.

If you still think your site is not an important marketing tool, then think about how you dress when you are meeting patients for the first time. Do you show up in your pajamas, unshaven and with messy hair?

With that in mind note the following: You are no longer the one making the first impression on your patients; your site is.

2.2 How Well Is Your Site Performing?

When we sign up new clients, we ask them the above question; most don't know the answer to it. If you have Google Analytics set up and you're monitoring your site's traffic, then you may think that you know how your site is doing. That's partially true. But unless you monitor your site's conversions precisely, you wouldn't know.

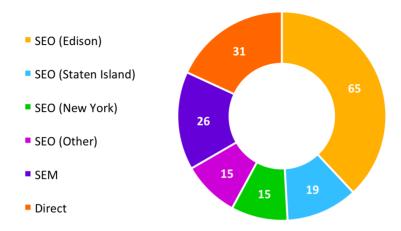
2.3 Where Are Your Patients Coming From?

The answer is easy if you are not doing any online marketing for your practice: referrals.

Once you start diversifying your marketing efforts, be it traditional marketing such as direct mail, TV ads, etc.; or more modern marketing methods such as SEO or SEM, you will not be able to easily answer the question.

As a matter of fact, if you're running multiple marketing campaigns simultaneously, you can never be 100% sure as to how your patients learned about you or what triggered them to contact you. But you can get very close – at least in the realm of Internet marketing.





With today's technology, we can monitor where your Internet-based patients are coming from with close to perfect precision. This allows us to monitor your return on investment (ROI) for virtually every dollar you spend on Internet marketing.

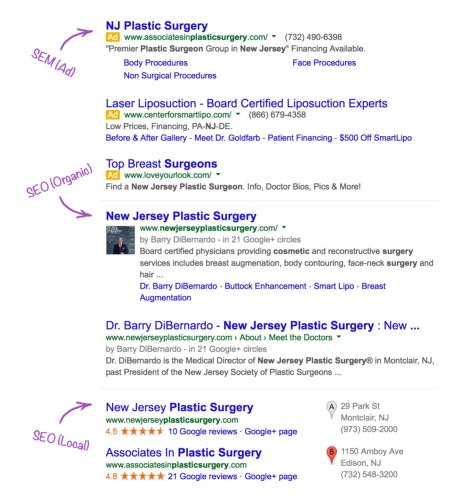
2.4 How to Measure Conversion Rates

There are usually two ways new patients contact you: online forms and phone calls.

Traditionally, we could monitor the forms; with some programming and Google Analytics help, we could determine where each patient originated from. For instance, if a potential patient filled out a contact form on your website, we could tell if he or she came through Google search, ads, as well as what keywords that patient used for his/her search.

Previously, the main problem was that we couldn't track phone calls. We didn't know how those who called you found your site.

Offices did, of course, ask questions from new patients to understand how they found them, but the answers were vague at best. In many cases, patients could not remember how exactly they found the site or could not tell the difference between Google Adwords and organic results.



This posed a problem. We couldn't pinpoint what ROI each marketing campaign had.

ROI: The amount of money you are generating from a marketing campaign compared to the investment you made in the campaign.

ROI helps evaluate an investment's efficiency or to compare the efficiency of multiple investments.

Today, with the availability of new technologies and services, such as those provided by Marchex, we can monitor every single phone call including its origins, time and duration of the call, and even record the calls for better understanding and improvement of the sales cycle.

Call Tracking: We turn the phone number on your site dynamic. It means based on the avenue/campaign the patient came through your site, a different number is shown on the site (predetermined). Once they call that number, the call will get redirected to your main office line (seamlessly).

We are then able to prepare reports which show us where the calls to the office were generated from, what time, date the patient called, duration of the call and even the name of the caller.

We are also able to record the conversion.

Dynamic numbers on your site are also called boutique or dummy numbers.

Many practices are attached to their office's main phone numbers, thinking as though some prospective or even current patients have memorized the phone number. For them, to see a different phone number on the site is not good customer service.

I dispute this from two angles. For one, harldy anyone memorizes phone numbers anymore. Can you tell me what your dentist's phone number is from memory? Finding his number is only 3 clicks away from turning on your smartphone (or any other phone for that matter). Plus, it's easier to just find the phone number on your phone than to try to dial it from memory.

And even if some patients are still calling the main number, they will go through just like before. The new numbers are forwarded to the main number anyway.

So, don't be attached to your primary phone numbers; give the go-ahead to your Internet marketing team to monitor your conversions.

Thus, even if you are running multiple marketing campaigns, you can easily monitor the conversion for each to determine your Return on Investment (ROI).

3 Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

This chapter would have been entitled 'Website Design and Development' a couple of years ago, because that is the core of the topic. The reason we don't call it that though is because designing and developing beautiful sites is no longer enough. Your website can no longer be a static place that you deal with once and are done with for a few years. It needs to be like a living, breathing entity, and it needs to be improved and updated on a continual basis.

Conversion Rate: *The percentage of your website visitors who decide to contact you (thus converting). This is different from* closed sales.

Conversion Rate Optimization: Creating an experience for a website visitor with the goal of increasing the percentage of visitors that convert into customers.

When managed properly, conversion rate optimization augments the scale effectiveness of your online campaign.

3.1 Why is Conversion Rate Optimization Important?

Imagine that your website designer developed a sterling website for you that is more beautiful than any of your competitors' sites. Nice pictures, beautiful colors and even graphical work. You love the design and approve it and the site goes live in a few weeks. Sadly, after a couple of weeks the flow of new patients coming from the site decreases. What went wrong?

The short answer is that the new site has a lower *conversion rate* than the older site.

Surprised?

This phenomenon happens more often than most realize. The reasons could be any of the following:

- Ranks on Google dropped after the new site went live;
- A lack of good selling content, including calls-to-action;
- Visitors cannot find the "Contact Us" form or the phone numbers;
- The website doesn't look good on mobile phones.

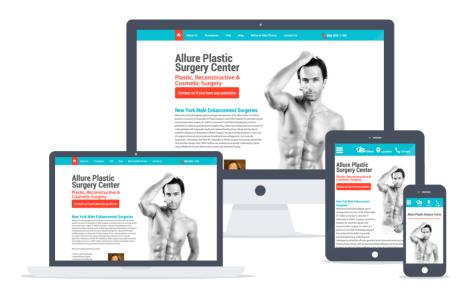
That's why we worry about conversion rate more than we do about the aesthetic look. As a matter of fact, we have shown that, time and time and again, simple, flat sites have a higher conversion rates than aesthetically beautiful sites. Why?

Flat Site: *Combine fine typography and carefully-chosen colors to create a relaxed experience for visitors.*

Flat sites have increased in popularity thanks to their mantra of focusing on content and nothing else. Here are some benefits of these designs. They are fast to load; user-friendly; SEO friendly; engaging; and have high conversion rates.

Flat design sites are not yet accepted by the majority of plastic-surgery professionals because no one else is doing it. And most don't want to look different than their competitors.

So, by changing your site design to a flat one, you will be a few steps ahead of your competition.



3.2 What's A Good Conversion Rate?

100 percent. But that will never happen. The right answer is that you should always try to improve your conversion rate, even if you think it's high. There are always tweaks you can make to improve it.

Anything below a two percent conversion rate is just unacceptable.

Please note that if your site is getting lots of traffic from outside of your geographical market, the conversion rate for that particular traffic tends to be lower. That's quite normal. What you need to do is to measure the conversion rate based upon the visitors of your site who hail from your geographical market.

3.3 How to Increase Your Site's Conversion Rate

You need to work with someone who understands what elements of a site increase or decrease the conversion rate. Someone who has monitored conversion rates for a long time can easily identify elements of your site that could be improved.

Then the consultant will direct your site's designer(s) to come up with design changes. The next step is for the site's developers to implement the changes without going live (i.e., without making the new website visible to the public). Instead, we use A/B/n testing to understand the effect of the new changes on the conversion rate before going live 100%.

A/B/n Testing: Your web traffic will be split randomly and evenly between an existing web page and different variations of that page. So, different site visitors will see a different variation of your site. The trick is that for each person, the design will remain the same even after they leave your site and come back.

A back-end software will monitor the conversion rate of each set of changes and you will be able to decide what changes to implement.

Once you have the data showing the new changes have indeed increased the conversion rate of a site, then you will implement them at all times (removing the A/B/n testing code). Don't stop there. Your conversion-rate testing and implementation should be an ongoing task. After all, there is always room for improvement.

If your site is not too obsolete and if it has a decent conversion rate, then I don't recommend redesigning it entirely. Instead, we can run A/B/n tests to improve its conversion rate.

3.4 When Do I Redesign My Site Entirely?

There are instances where you need a revolutionary design change – a new site. Here are some instances where merely working with

Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

your current site to improve it through A/B/n testing will not be beneficial:

- 1. You hate the design;
- 2. Less than two percent conversion rate;
- 3. Not responsive;
- 4. It is built in Flash;
- 5. It is a template-based site;
- 6. It has been penalized by Google.

If any of the above holds true for your website then, it is more beneficial for you to redesign/build the site from the ground up.

Revolutionary Approach: *Instead of making small changes to increase the conversion rate, you redesign the site entirely. The new site will look and feel very different from the previous site.*

Responsive Website: We call a site responsive when it has a different layout depending on the device it is being viewed on. From smartphones to desktop computers, users should be able to enjoy easy reading and minimal navigation of resizing, panning and scrolling.

Flash Site: Flash websites can deliver rich content to create motion, interactivity and a pleasing visual experience.

Flash sites load slowly and are not readable by the search engines; so they make bad choices in terms of marketing.

Template Site: A site that has been designed/developed previously and you will make yours by putting your own logo, name on it. Template sites create challenges for SEO and marketing in general. We do not recommend using template sites if you seriously want to market your practice.

3.5 Choosing A Design Team

Good site designers are hard to come by. If you are so fortunate as to find some, they're usually very busy and expensive. But they have characteristics that are well worth waiting for and are worth every penny you spend with them.

Choose a site designer or a website design company who understands the following two points:

Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

- Conversion rates (demand a higher conversion rate than your current site before signing up with them).
- SEO (insist that your new site rank as good or better on Google).

Once again, unless your site is outdated or fits one of the other criteria mentioned a little earlier, we don't recommend a revolutionary approach to designing/developing your site. Instead, we recommend that you increase your conversion rates by implementing small changes to your current site and testing them.

The conversion rate optimization (CRO) team normally consists of:

- a project manager;
- a writer;
- a designer; and
- a programmer.

Although one person could possibly excel at more than one of the above, it's normally not the case.

3.6 Website Design and SEO

The way your site has been designed and programmed plays a significant role in how well it ranks on Google and other search engines. If your website design team doesn't understand SEO and especially Google SEO, your new website alone will not help to increase your site's traffic.

3.6.1 Responsive vs. Adaptive Sites

In 2013, 31 percent of Americans used their cell phones to access the Internet.² This number is significantly higher for plastic surgeon patients.

Our study shows that, on average, more than 47 percent of our clients' site visitors are using mobile devices. In one case, close to 59 percent of the site visitors used either a tablet or a smartphone to visit a plastic surgery site. Our estimation is that this number will continue to grow as more Americans get their hands on smartphones and tablets.

Both responsive and adaptive sites have been develped in part to address the need to have mobile-friendly sites. The difference between them is that a responsive site uses one HTML code and, depending on the size of the browser, shows the same information (or slightly less) in a different layout (usually longer). The font size doesn't change much to make it easier for the viewer to still comfortably read the text.

In summary: With a *responsive* site your entire site is viewable via a smartphone or a tablet.

In contrast: An *adaptive* site will send a different code/content depending on what device is used. Therefore, the site that is seen is very different on multiple platforms (usually significantly smaller site on a mobile version).

Another difference is the URL (domain) for a responsive site will not change from the original, whereas a mobile site is usually hosted on a subdomain i.e. http://mobile.yoursite.com.

From both a usability as well as SEO perspective, we highly recommend a responsive website over an adaptive site.

http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/mobile-technology-fact-sheet, http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/16/tech/mobile/phone-internet-usage/

Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)



Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

4 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

In this chapter, I don't intend to teach the details of Search Engine Optimization (SEO). I already do that on a regular basis through articles, seminars and consulting sessions. In this section, I want to give you tools and tips you can use to choose a good SEO company. In the last section of the book, I describe how to measure the success of any of your Internet-marketing companies, including SEO.

Your SEO company could alternatively be your best friend or your worst nightmare. If you are in the right hands, you will enjoy continued increase of your site's traffic and leads. If Google comes up with a new update, you come out of the waters more prosperous.

But if you're in the wrong hands, you could see moderate to no improvements at all. You could even see your site get penalized by Google now or when the next update arrives. In most cases, a Google slap means you will need a new domain, a new website and a new SEO firm.

Algorithm: Google's powerful software behind the search engine. It crawls the web (spider is its other name) and reads all the content it finds (billions of web pages). Then it sorts the data based on a set of criteria to rank them later when a searcher types a set of keywords into the search box.

Google Updates: Google regularly updates this algorithm to weed out spam.

Why Just Google? There are many search engines and most of them are irrelevant (because hardly anyone uses them). Google has over 75% of the US and over 65% of the global search market. This means, it is the unchallenged search engine. Your marketing success depends on becoming successful on Google.

4.1 How to Choose an Effective SEO Company

Maybe a better title would be how to avoid a bad one. Here are a few tips that will help you stay away from the more shady SEO companies:

- 1. Free or low-cost service. It may be appealing, and they may speak the lingo, but the fact that their quote is too good to be true tells you that it is.
- 2. **You'll see big results in a few days/weeks**. Never. Unless you're dealing with a *black hat* company. Effective SEO takes months and sometimes years (in tough markets). Patience is golden when it comes to SEO.

Black Hat: In the hope of improving a site's rankings and/or profitability, some SEO's use unethical tactics to try outsmarting the latest search engine algorithm changes.

- 3. Hundreds of backlinks to your site in a short time-frame. This is an obvious black-hat pitch. They believe in getting you ranked high and reaping the benefits while they last, and when Google penalizes you, well, let's start with a new site. The problem is you need your website and unique domain name.
- 4. **One-time SEO**. SEO is not something to be done in a sweep. It requires continual effort over time.
- 5. **Not sharing our "secrets"**. There are no secrets to SEO. It's studying search engines, writing good content and building your site's popularity (naturally). So, if they're "hiding" their secrets, they probably don't have anything to share with you.
- 6. **Guaranteeing the number one spot**. Even Google cannot do that (because it's an algorithm).

Note: put link to explain why we're not guaranteeing specific ranks.

4.2 How Important Is My Keywords List?

Specific keywords or keyword combos are not as important as you may think. For one thing, a typical plastic surgeon may have over 800 known primary keywords that need to be targeted. Most of these will not be near the top. However, working on them helps the site to rank for thousands of terms, which in turn multiplies the site's traffic. Of course, it would be nice to be ranked on the first page or top of the first page for keywords such as "plastic surgery" and

many of our clients do; however, that one term may only bring in a very small fraction of your site's traffic. So, don't be hung up on it. Instead, look for traffic increase to your site and, more importantly, more leads (conversions).

4.3 Finding a Good SEO Company

Good SEO companies do exist, but there are very few of them. Most of the good ones stay away from promising the moon, and their fees are not cheap. Consider them like an engineering firm (their staffs consist primarily of software engineers and writers). So, don't expect them to get paid minimum wage.

The top things a good SEO company must include in its strategy include the things discussed in the following nine subsections.

4.3.1 Focusing on Google

One commonality amongst the good SEO companies is that they focus on Google. Google has more than 65 percent of the total search market. The rest mostly belong to Bing (around 18 percent) and Yahoo! (about 11 percent).

So, search engine optimization for Google is by far the most important SEO one needs to be concerned with, especially since you can rarely simultaneously rank at the very top on all the search engines (what Google looks for, Yahoo! and Bing ignore, and visa versa).

On the other hand, Google is the most difficult search engine on which to increase your ranks. So when you do rise in rank, you'll remain there for a while (unless you hire a black-hat operator, in which case you will eventually lose your rankings altogether once Google finds out).

4.3.2 Simple Formula

Most good Google SEO companies more or less follow my simplified SEO model:

Content + Relevancy + Popularity = Top of Google Ranks

A good SEO company will spend time writing quality content for your website, will optimize your site, and will and get natural links for you. They will not be shy to share what they have done if you ask them.

Note: We do a class entitled *Google SEO Simplified*. If you are interested to learn more about the aforementioned formula, I suggest you watch the video of my lecture on this topic done at an ASPS conference in October 2013 (available on our website and on YouTube).³

4.3.3 Periodic Reports

Since SEO takes a long time to show its full results, a good SEO company will send you periodic reports so you can see what they have been doing, including your site's traffic and rankings on Google.

4.3.4 References

If you ask for references and the SEO company refuses to provide them for different reasons, stay away from them. A solid SEO company has many references to share – even if they're not in your field (SEO practice is the same across different industries).

4.3.5 Good Online Reputation

Check the company's history. How long have they been around? Do your homework before signing up.

 $^{^3}$ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmDPOESHpzk

4.3.6 Measuring Success

I suggest measuring the success of your SEO company by how much they can increase your leads. After all, the reason you want to "rank" on Google is to have more patients.

4.3.7 Has A Strategy with for Google Plus

Your site's SEO is now tied into Google Plus on multiple levels. Your SEO company needs to understand how Google Plus works, including setting up your authorship.

4.3.8 Google Authorship

With Google Authorship, you can link content you publish on a specific domain to your Google Plus profile. This will help you get your profile and picture listed in search results.

4.3.9 Google Maps

Your Google reviews show up on your Google Plus page, and Google Maps is now tied to this as well. Without setting up your Google Plus properly, you won't be able to rank well on Google or Google Maps for many keywords.

5 SEM Agency

Search engines make their money mainly through their pay-per-click services. Their backends are very similar and are relatively easy to use (compared to SEO). However, there are many benefits in hiring a professional firm to take care of your SEM.

5.1 Knowing the System in and Out

Google and Bing are the most important search engines (Bing also provides ads for Yahoo!). Their back-ends are similar, but have differences. Learning all the ins and outs of the back-end requires serious training. If you don't know what you're doing, you could easily waste hundreds or thousands of dollars without getting the results you're looking for.

An agency which runs ads for multiple clients understands the system and can save you money and time to the point that their fees usually get covered and you don't have to lift a finger.

Note that I've witnessed clients wasting their hard-earned money on Google just because Google sent their *representatives* to train them on how to use Google Adwords. The fact is, if you're wasting your money on Google, Google is making more money off of you than any benefits you are accruing.

5.2 Understanding Patients' Online Behavior

An SEM agency studies your patient base; its demographics, likes and fears. They will take that into account when setting up your accounts, and through the power of persuasion, they can build their trust and send many of them your way.

5.3 Choosing Keywords

Selecting the appropriate keywords is crucial in any SEM campaign. If you don't select all of your relevant keywords, you'll be losing the traffic those keywords generate. If you choose irrelevant keywords, you'll waste money on ads that will not increase your leads.

On the other hand, having a slightly different setting in your SEM campaigns could mean a huge change in how your ads show up. An example of that would be setting your keywords to be "exact match" versus "broad match". Each has its own benefits and drawbacks.

5.4 Setting Up Ads That Work

Not every ad has a good click-through-rate (CTR). The ads must be persuasive and unique to induce the viewer to click on them. An agency understands how to set up the ads so they have a high CTR. The higher the CTR, the less money you have to spend to get someone to click on your ads.

5.5 Setting Up Landing Pages

A good SEM company uses different landing pages for different ad groups. It also tests the conversions of different landing pages and optimizes them to increase the effectiveness of your ads.

A more sophisticated system would allow for an A/B testing to see which landing pages work the best.

Ad Group: A set of keywords, ads and bids that you manage together as a way to show ads to people likely to be interested in them. Ad Groups can include targeting methods other than keywords, like use of demographics or remarketing lists.

Landing Page: A webpage designed specifically to be the first page the visitors of a website land upon* (visit) when clicking on an ad or upon search engine results.*

A/B/n Testing: Your web traffic will be split randomly and evenly between an existing web page and different variations of that page. So, different site visitors will see a different variation of your site. The trick is that for each person, the design will remain the same even after they leave your site and come back.

A back-end software will monitor the conversion rate of each set of changes and you will be able to decide what changes to implement.

5.6 Dedication

Your SEM firm has the resources to be fully dedicated to your diverse marketing campaigns. In contrast, you or your team are busy running the office and may not have the time to pay it the full attention it needs.

SEM Agency

6 PR Firm

Traditional public relations could play a significant role in increasing your patient base. If done while having SEO in mind, it could also increase the effectiveness of your overall SEO campaign.

PR campaigns must be ongoing to yield proper results, as it takes time to build your reputation with the reporters and bloggers who will be involved.

The difficulty with PR campaigns is that your stories must be so unique that the publications or news media find them interesting enough to write about or report on. Here, your efforts in your own community – including your charity work – become important factors in getting media attention.

At the end of the day, PR campaigns are hit or miss, and they could become expensive to run. I only recommend PR campaigns for those who see themselves as extraordinary and are determined to take their Internet marketing to an even higher level.

PR Firm

7 How to Measure ROI

Without measuring your *return on investment* (ROI), the chances are that you're spending money on marketing avenues that are not worth the money you invest in them. For instance, if you spend \$10K on a mailing campaign and only sign up one patient, the campaign is a failure, and you're worse off than if you hadn't run the campaign.

You could have, perhaps, spent the same money on Google ads, for instance, and gotten 10 patients instead.

But how do you measure ROI?

If you monitor the leads that come to your office precisely, then you know exactly how many leads were generated through which avenues. You add to this what each patient paid for the services, and then you have all the data you need.

Let's, for a second, imagine that Plastic Surgery Alliance has five offices in a major city like Los Angeles and spent a total of \$367,410 on their marketing in 2013. By recording their leads, they know that as a direct result of their marketing efforts, they were able to generate an additional \$1,346,100 in revenue.

This makes their ROI for their entire marketing campaign roughly 366 percent.

They are monitoring the ROI for each marketing avenue they're investing in. The results are given in the accompanying table.

As you can see in the table, their best ROI was generated through Internet marketing in general and SEO in particular. On the other hand, they realize that their mailing campaign didn't have a significant result (only 73 percent ROI). They didn't even make the money they spent on the campaign.

Sample ROI Analysis						
	Internet Marketing				Traditional Marketing	
Avenue	SEO	SEM	Website	PR	Radio Ads	Mailings
Budget	\$96,200	\$121,500	\$44,550	\$60,000	\$23,160	\$22,000
New Leads	505	546	N/A	52	45	19
New Patients	155	121	N/A	12	11	5
Revenue	\$757,100	\$509,400	N/A	\$83,000	\$63,500	\$16,100
ROI	787%	419%	N/A	138%	274%	73%
Total Marketing Expense	\$322,250				\$45,160	
Total Revenue	\$1,349,500				\$79,600	
Total ROI	419%				176%	

PR also had a low ROI (138 percent). However, the PR campaign helps the SEO efforts and the general image of the practice (*branding*).

For 2014, they decided to cancel their mailing campaign and to spend a greater portion of their marketing budget to increase their Internet presence.

Through conversion-rate monitoring, any plastic and cosmetic surgery practice can understand how well they are spending their marketing dollars.

There are two reasons why your office plays a significant role in your online-marketing campaign. First, after patients leave your office, they have a lot more influence in marketing for you or against you, while making their judgment based upon how well they are treated at your office. Second, you need your team to participate in making you popular and socially accepted.

8.1 Your Patients Are Powerful

The Internet has given patients powerful tools that were not available 15 years ago. Today, all they have to do is to log in to their favorite customer-review platform (Yelp, Google, RealSelf, Ripoff, etc.) and talk about their experiences at your office. Many of your future patients will read these reviews and base their decisions partly on other patients' judgments.

So, you must aim for your customer service levels to be better than that of all of your competitors. Even one unhappy patient is too many.

8.2 Provide Outstanding Customer Service

Excellent customer service must be at the top of everyone's agenda at your practice. Your receptionist's good phone attitude, friendly behavior and courtesy play huge roles in your reputation.

The office staff is the key to your success. Most complaints I've seen on the Internet have *not* been about the surgeons, but the gatekeepers or office managers. The staff needs to be friendly and take care of the patients; all the while communicating effectively with them and addressing their concerns.

Before patients leave your office, the staff needs to ask them about their experience and if there was anything your team could have done better to serve them.

8.3 Be on Time

As the surgeon, are you late to your appointments? This is another complaint I've seen time and again online. Just like you, your patients don't want their time to be wasted, especially if they're investing thousands of dollars with you. Be punctual.

8.4 Give Your Best

Then comes what you do for the patients. Of course, you've been trained over many years to perform outstanding surgery with excellent results. At the end of the day, patients are looking for results and your reputation will mainly depend on that. I haven't seen many complaints online about a plastic or cosmetic surgery going awry, but even one complaint like that is enough to ruin your reputation. Patients choose a doctor with no reviews over a surgeon with tons of good reviews and one bad one.

Plus, that one person who had a negative experience could use the Internet to totally demolish your reputation. They could write a blog about you, tweet to their followers, put pictures on Facebook, create YouTube videos, provide interviews with magazines, and the nightmare continues.

8.5 Respond to Inquiries Fast

Companies who excel at sales have a very short response time. As a matter of fact, the most successful lead-generation companies have less than a few minutes of average response time to Internet inquiries.

A Harvard Business Review article has revealed that, if you respond to your Internet-based inquiry within an hour, you are seven times more likely to "qualify" that lead.⁴

Another study published by the same source revealed that most U.S. companies are way too slow in responding to the leads they receive, and that about 47 percent take more than 24 hours to respond or never do.

How long does it take your office to respond to Internet-based inquiries? Your goal should be within one hour.

However, busy surgeons obviously do not answer the inquiries themselves. They have a staff member do that for them. If you generally answer inquiries personally, the chances are that you are giving the impression of someone who is less than successful in one's practice.

8.6 Always Answer Your Office Phones

Voicemails are still useful, but most customers don't like leaving voicemails and most office personnel don't like listening to them. The solution is to have a 24-hour answering service. The receptionists will be trained to act as your staff and will take messages for you when you're not at the office. They will email the messages to you and/or your staff as needed.

(By the way: We use PAT Live and have been happy with their services.)

8.7 Manage Your Reputation

When someone leaves a negative review for you, there are a few constructive things you can do to minimize the damage.

⁴ http://hbr.org/2011/03/the-short-life-of-online-sales-leads/ar/1

In most cases, you don't have access to patients' personal pages such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. But you do have access to other, more public platforms.

First, watch the platforms on which your patients are leaving reviews on a regular basis. This includes Yelp, Google Plus, Real Self, Healthgrades, YouTube and others. When you do see a negative review (or a video), it is crucial for you to respond, but not immediately.

When you see a negative review, don't respond right away. First, find out more facts about the situation. Is this person a real patient or someone hired by a competitor to ruin your reputation (I've seen those many times). What would your staff say about the situation?

Then write an apology letter regardless of the review's accuracy or its source of origination. It won't even matter if the review is by a person who has never been your patient. You always start with an apology.

Then state that the specific experience at issue is not typical of or does not reflect how your office works. Even offer to help change their negative experience with a positive one. But don't offer a discount (that could encourage others to follow suit and leave a bad review).

Many plastic and cosmetic surgeons are proud of their work and their staff, to the point that they may overlook shortcomings and blame the patient for his or her dissatisfaction. In marketing and public relations, nothing is more damaging than being defensive and/or appearing to be arrogant.

The approach outlined above will have the following benefits. You are showing that

- you care for your reputation;
- you are humble;
- you care how your practice operates;

- you are willing to change.

As a result, the effect of the negative review is minimized when others read them (because they will also read your response).

Google is the most helpful in removing negative reviews. First, you and others can "flag" a review as inappropriate. If enough people flag a review, it will be dropped from the seearch-engine results.

Second, your lawyer could write a letter to Google's legal department. Because they're not looking for trouble, they will quickly remove the negative reviews without investigation.

Google reviews show up on your business Google Plus page, and you can write a reply to them through your Google account.

Google Plus: A social networking and identity service that buttresses many of Google's online properties.

The second-largest social networking site after Facebook, Google Plus acts as an authorship tool that ties web content back to is owner. Very important for your online marketing.

Yelp is trickier and they try to blackmail you into paying them a monthly subscription fee. When you do, they slowly drop the negative reviews. Once you stop paying them, the negative reviews start to creep back up.

Facebook has recently included a reviewing system as well. Patients can leave reviews for you and it will show up on your business page.

8.8 Ask Patients for Positive Reviews

The more positive reviews you have, the less the effect that the negative ones will have overall.

The easiest way to generate more positive reviews is to email your patients a link to your business Google Plus and Yelp pages. I personally recommend Google Plus over Yelp because currently both of these reviews come up on Google search results, but in the near future, Google will be using their reviews more often (in the algorithm that is).

Algorithm: Google's powerful software behind the search engine. It crawls the web (spider is its other name) and reads all the content it finds (billions of web pages). Then it sorts the data based on a set of criteria to rank them later when a searcher types a set of keywords into the search box.

Be careful not to offer any incentives for those who leave you reviews. That's against Google's and others' rules and guidelines.

8.9 Get Involved in Your Community

Internet marketing is no longer solely the work of a third-party company. Consequently, if you're not involved in your community, you won't have the edge over your competition. When you and your staff are participating in community affairs or donating money or time, you have stories to share. You will then receive more positive media attention.

Involvement in the community and volunteer work doesn't need to be very time-consuming or difficult. A simple donation of money to a local youth sports team, offering free services on a limited basis to the underprivileged (like abused patients or cancer survivors) and similar actions of that nature will help you build your online reputation rapidly.

8.10 Write for Your Site

One thing that is going to make your website very popular is quality content. Many site owners or website designers don't pay much attention to the content, but your site content plays a significant role in increasing the number of your leads.

Your content is what sells you. Through written text, images and videos, patients are able to understand who you are, what your values are, and whether or not you care for them. The educational articles you write and share with the public will stay on your site forever. These articles (if written professionally and if they include useful information) will serve as the backbone of your Internet-marketing efforts.

If you are a good writer, you have an advantage over your competitors; if you are not, then no problem. Just hire a professional writer to do the job for you. That person can ghostwrite web copy, including articles on your behalf by interviewing you on different subjects while conducting his or her research. The writer will then hand you the finalized copy which you can post on your website.

The length of your articles and text depends on its use. As a rule of thumb, your home page's *top of the fold* (what people see when they land on your website) should not have too much text. But you should have longer text blocks on every page of your site. Longer text that's informative and well written creates trust with both audience and the search engines.

8.11 Create A Blog on Your Site

If you don't have a blog on your site, then have your webmaster create one. A blog allows you to write content and post on your site very easily. It also provides a platform for your audience to get engaged with you (via comments, shares).

If written well, the articles you post on your site will induce others to talk about your content, share it on their social media platforms, and to link to your site – and links are the bloodline of any SEO campaign.

The content you provide will also educate your patients and establish you as an authority in the field, which helps increase your site's traffic, as well as leads.

Your blog must be hosted on your site and within a subfolder (e.g., www.yoursite.com/blog). It should not be a subdomain (e.g., blog.yoursite.com).

It must also be "optimized" so the search engines can easily index it and rank it high on the search results.

Optimization: Making sure your site is measurable by search engine algorithms. Also making sure it contains the right keywords and provides the search engines what they are looking for in terms of raking the site well.

WordPress provides the best blog platform for SEO purposes. It is also easy to use for you and your staff.

The more often you write quality articles for your site, the better. Remember that longer articles positively affect your site's rankings, as well as conversion rate (see the discussion in Section 3.1).

Discuss these things with your carefully-chosen new website designer and developer; he or she can explain further.

8.12 Get Involved in Social Media

If your practice doesn't have Google Plus, Facebook and LinkedIn pages, create them. If you have them but never used them, then learn

how to utilize them. These platforms are very helpful in establishing your authority in your field.

Google Plus is what helps you get found on Google Maps and keep in contact with your patients (similar to Facebook). It also holds your Google business reviews.

Facebook creates an enormous opportunity to connect with your community, as well. You can also use its highly targeted pay-per-click advertising platform to increase your exposure.

Posting regularly on Google Plus and Facebook helps you stay in front of your audience.

You can post news about your office, celebrations, hires, articles and more importantly, Before/Afters. There is nothing like the success stories of your patients to grab your audience's attention.

LinkedIn is most useful for you personally. Your patients can leave testimonials for you and you can connect with colleagues easily. Just like Facebook and Google Plus, LinkedIn allows you to have a business page as well.

8.13 Build Your Audience through Social Media

Building a large constituency on social media is the dream of every serious practice. The more popularity you have on social-media sites, the more important you look to your potential patients. It's the celebrity love effect: if many people love you, you must be lovable.

Seldom does this sort of popularity happen naturally, (unless you happen to be a star of a popular TV show).

The easiest way to start building your popularity online is by using the patient database that you already have. All you have to do is find your satisfied customers on Facebook, Google Plus and LinkedIn and invite them to join your pages. This could be done by anyone on your team.

You also have a database of those leads that contacted you but didn't become patients. That list is very important because they have shown serious interest in your practice. Find them online and connect with them. Many of them will reciprocate the connection.

The more sophisticated approach is to use your site to build a database. This is assuming your site has significant traffic already. If it doesn't, see the earlier chapters on Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing.

Your website's conversion should be between 5-10 percent. If you don't know what your site's conversion rate is or if it is less than that, see the chapter on Conversion Rate Optimization.

Website Conversion Rate: *The number of those people who contact your office divided by the total number of your site's visitors.*

Let's assume your site's conversion rate in the best-case scenario is 20 percent. That means 80 percent of your site's visitors are leaving your site without contacting you, and you don't know who they are. If you can tap into that audience, then you can easily increase your online popularity.

By offering a useful and professional article that they can get for free, you may be able to get many of them to sign up with you. This is exactly what we did for Dr. Andrew Miller (www.associatesinplasticsurgery.com). As you notice, there is a pop-up window when you land on any of his site's pages for the first time that will offer a free article.

This article could be different for different landing pages of the site, allowing you to precisely target subdivisions of your potential clientele.

8.14 Get Involved in Forums

Today the Internet is where patients go to ask their questions. Sites such as Real Self have provided an ideal place for patients and doctors to interact. Many of our colleagues are benefiting from answering questions on these platforms.

There are other forums on the Internet for which you can sign up and get involved. That's an effective way to build your popularity and even get more patients.

8.15 Be A Part of Your Marketing

Your webmaster, web designer, SEO company, SEM agency, or reputation-management team all need your feedback and help. When you hire any of the above, make sure to be involved in the process. Ask questions and follow up with them. Request monthly reports and allocate the necessary time to understand the basics.

Provide them with your assistance in gathering data, interviews, providing Before/Afters, and giving stories about each. A successful Internet marketing campaign is a byproduct of all the above teams working together in harmony; you are the lynchpin that makes it all come together.

If one of the above teams refuses to work with the others, replace it immediately.

A few companies offer all the above services at once. If you find such a company, that will save you time and energy. A possible drawback

is that sometimes a single company may not have expertise in some areas while excelling in others.

8.16 Invest Where It Makes Sense

Internet marketing is rewarding, but it also requires investment on your end. Invest, but do it wisely. Expect a minimum of four to five times Return on Investment (ROI). Success of some of the above campaigns such as public-relations efforts cannot be measured independently of others. In other areas, however (such as SEO and SEM), you can precisely measure the success of the campaign.

9 Glossary of Terms

A/B/n Testing: Web traffic being split randomly and evenly between an existing web page and different variations of that page.

Ad Group: A set of keywords, ads and bids that you manage together as a way to show ads to people likely to be interested in them.

Authorship: Linking content you publish on a specific domain to your Google Plus profile.

Black Hat: Unethical tactics used by SEO's to try outsmarting the latest search engine algorithm changes.

Cloaking: Black hat tactic utilized when content given to the search engine differs from the content given to the user's browser.

Conversion: Occurs when someone clicks your ad and then takes an action deemed advantageous to your business, such as an online purchase.

Conversion Rate: The percentage of users who take an action considered beneficial by the website's standards.

Conversion Rate Optimization: Creates an experience for a website visitor with the goal of increasing the percentage of visitors that convert into customers.

Domain Name: An identification string that defies a realm of administrative autonomy, authority or control on the Internet.

Doorway Pages: Black hat tactic of combining little amounts of content with an excessive number of keywords.

Flash Site: Delivers rich content to create motion, interactivity and a pleasing visual experience.

Flat Site: Combines exotic typography and bright colors to create a relaxed experience for visitors.

Google Penalization: A negative impact on a site's search rankings based on updates to search algorithms and manual review.

Google Plus: A social networking and identity service that buttresses many of Google's online properties.

Hidden Text Black hat tactic of making unrelated text the same color as the background or using a tiny font size.

Interlinking: Black hat tactic that takes place when SEO's attempt to build multiple sites and eventually link them together.

Keyword Stuffing: Black hat tactic based on the methodical placement of a page's keywords to increase the density and variety of the page.

Landing Page: The section of a website accessed by clicking a hyperlink on another web page, typically the website's home page.

PageRank: The algorithm used by Google's search engine to rank websites in their results.

Responsive Website: Promote an optimal viewing experience for visitors.

Return on Investment (ROI): An investment that yields a benefit to the investor

Revolutionary Approach: Involve skeuomorphism, which is viewed as helpful in a user's understanding of a page.

Search Engine Optimization: The art and science of helping websites rank high on search engines.

Template Site: Web publishing tools that form finished pages.

10 Learn More

To learn more about how a carefully designed Internet-marketing campaign can help you to maximize the profits of your practice, visit our website's learning center:

http://www.millionairium.com/learning-center/



Ali Husayni has accumulated over a decade of experience in Internet marketing. His primary focus is Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) to heighten the website profile and presence for each of his clients. In many cases Ali's clients have increased their Internet revenue by many folds to over \$1M annually.

Ali started delving into the secrets of Google SEO in early 2004 and by 2007 he was finally able to break the code.

His love for teaching what he knows has prompted him to write over 200 articles related to the field; these have been be published on his popular blog and in various medical journals such as Aesthetic Guide, Surgical Aesthetics, Progressive Dentist, reSource, McGill Advisory, OrthoTown, and more.

He has also lectured medical professionals in prestigious conferences such as the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS).

In Internet Marketing Simplified (Plastic Surgery Edition), Ali seeks to provide plastic surgeons, their marketing staff, and practice-management consultants the tools they need to differentiate between the good and bad apples amongst prospective Internet-marketing firms. He also lays out important actions that plastic-surgery practices need to implement within their own organizations to help their online marketing campaigns to become more effective.

This book is a must read for those who understand the value of Internet marketing and are serious about taking their practice to the next level.



Ali Husayni Author, Public Speaker



To learn more, visit our site's learning center: www.millionairium.com/plastic-surgery/learning-center