

Does your website pass the **8 second test?**

50% of website visitors leave a typical website within 8 seconds!

By **Ian Shapland** MBA



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For the past decade or so I have been helping dental practices create the physical environment they would like to work from. Some of you may know me from my work at Elite Fitout Solutions, where I held the role of director, marketing and business development and board member. During my time at Elite Fitout Solutions, I assisted with the creation of some of the finest dental practices in Australia, I came to realise that no matter how well-appointed a practice is, without a steady flow of new patients, the ROI would be limited.

With this as a backdrop, when I was presented with the opportunity to use my marketing and business development skills to make a material difference to the success of Australian and New Zealand dental practices, I grabbed it with both hands. Now in my role as sales director for Integrated Dental Marketing, I get to assist practices with their strategies and marketing that justifies fitout or new equipment.

Clearly, one strategy that every dental practice needs to have is a solid online presence. There are many elements to this, but at the core of all your online activities



is your website and if that does not 'cut the mustard' then money spent on Google Ads, Facebook Ads and SEO will not be maximised.

The nature of how people surf the internet, together with the ever-decreasing attention span of the public, means you only have a few seconds to answer some fundamental and often subconscious questions:

- ◆ Am I in the right place?
- ◆ What can I do here?
- ◆ Why should I do it here?

So, how do you make sure you can pass the 8 second test?

Firstly, you need your website to be designed in a 'mobile first' fashion. Well over 70% of all search traffic now originates from handheld devices and statistics show that the public are brutal when a website does not render well on their smartphone of choice. Even today, some web designers, design websites using giant monitors and then try and adapt the website for the mobile view. The opposite should be true as what appears first on those few square millimetres of screen will have a major effect on whether a potential patient interacts with your website or instantly leaves in search of a site more to their liking.

The next thing to ensure to gain maximum interaction is to ensure everything you want a potential new patient to know about you is 'Above the Fold,' which simply means the viewer does not need to scroll, either on a laptop or a smartphone. You may want to consider using a professional photo of you and

your team in the main banner. This injects personality and differentiates you from all the sites that rely on stock images.

If you have a particular promotion, such as a fixed price for an exam, scale and clean, this should be prominent as should the Book an appointment and Call Now buttons. Clearly, different practices have different core messages that they need to get across and these should be professionally crafted for maximum effect.

The use of video is another excellent way of engaging a viewer, however, it needs to be succinct, remember able and if possible, a bit different.

With the amount of video content now consumed by the public, you need to stand out. A five-minute video telling people how gentle you are will no longer cut it, your video needs to resonate quickly and again, there is no one size fits all approach. Promoting a specialist orthodontic practice needs a different approach to a suburban family practice or city-based cosmetic practice. There are some highly creative people who specialise in high impact short videos and seeking their help is a great first step.

I will endeavour to make these articles as useful as possible with practical advice you can implement however, if you have any questions about any of your marketing needs, please do not hesitate to book a Zoom meeting with me as I am always happy to share strategies and insights. ◆

To book a Zoom meeting with Ian Shapland simply call Sonia Kingman on 02 9211 1477 or e-mail ian@idm.com.au

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