

IN DEPTH: No More Auld Lang Syne

by David Evans, PhD, MBA

Four New Year's resolutions guaranteed to boost your Internet presence in 2013

Did your practice Web site take a hit in 2012? If so, you are not alone. Last year, Google rolled out broad, sweeping changes that shook up the Internet and took no prisoners. Don't just reflect about what Evans-calendar you could have—or should have—done. Instead, resolve to make sure your Web presence comes back even stronger in 2013.

Many people fall short of keeping their New Year's resolutions. This is because they try to change too much too quickly. Don't get overwhelmed. Adopt these four easy-to-stick-with resolutions that are guaranteed to boost your Internet presence in 2013 and beyond.

1. I Will Review My Web Site Content and Design

Web sites filled with one-dimension procedural information are so 2012. Yes, consumers crave comprehensive information on risks, results, recovery, and cost. But today's savvy searcher wants more.

PEW research shows that 52% of the people who search for health care information online are looking for the experiences of others. This is why testimonials and photo galleries are the most heavily trafficked pages on practice Web sites. Don't be left out. Make sure your site contains updated patient stories and testimonials.



Also, many new aesthetic products and procedures have been introduced in the US. Prospective patients hear about them on talk shows, in tabloids, and everywhere else. Make sure you have these covered on your Web site (if you offer them). While you're at it, review the information on the more established procedures to make sure your content is up to snuff.

Your Web site better be mobile-compatible in 2013. View it on a mobile phone and see how it looks. A specific mobile site may not be necessary if your main Web site looks fine on the iPhone or Samsung.

Depending on how your site fares during your review, a new Web site may be a good use of your marketing budget.

2. I Will Own the Search Engine Real Estate for My Name

Do a simple search for your name, practice name, and derivations of each on Google. If your Web site does not appear at the top of the search results, contact your SEO company and have it fix this immediately. Analytics data show that most practice Web sites

receive the majority of their traffic from searches involving the surgeon or practice's name. Lock in that top position to own the search engine real estate for your name.

3. I Will Check My Web Site Rankings

Google shifts its algorithms around 500 times a year, and 2012 was no exception. Check your rankings on Google to see how your site has fared through all of the changes. If your rankings are not where you would like them to be, make a New Year's resolution to switch up your SEO strategy.

Also, check out the competition in similar-sized markets to see who has the best rankings. See something you like? At the bottom of the home page, there is usually a logo or name of the SEO company. Make a list of these companies, and resolve to contact them in 2013.

4. I Will Claim My Google + Local Page

If you don't manage your Google+ Local page, Google will gladly do it for you. To avoid this, go to Google, select "Places" on the search page, and search for your name. Look at all of the + Local pages that come up for your name, and make sure everything is as it should be.

All the best in 2013!