

IN DEPTH: Sticky Notes- What is Your Website's "Stickiness" Quotient?

by David Evans, PhD, MBA

We don't typically think of stickiness as something desirable, but when it comes to your website, stickiness is where it is at.

For Internet marketing purposes, stickiness refers to how—and how long—users interact with your website. How long do they stay? How many pages do they view? Where do they go next? Is your site a layover or their final destination?

For example, if a prospective patient searches for a specific topic on Google, checks out your site, and immediately abandons ship and conducts another search on the same topic, your site is probably not "sticky" enough.

Don't confuse stickiness with bounce rate. The bounce rate measures how many consumers come to your site and then leave after visiting one page. It is a metric designed primarily to evaluate e-commerce sites. A high bounce rate for a plastic surgery site is not unusual or particularly telling because many consumers search for your name solely to grab your phone number. In these cases, a high bounce rate is not a sign of website troubles.

RAISING YOUR STICKINESS QUOTIENT

What makes a plastic surgery site sticky? For starters, unique content, testimonials, and before-and-after photos.

If a prospective patient searches for information about breast augmentation and finds vanilla content on your site, he or she will likely leave to search for more compelling content elsewhere.

Testimonials and before-and-after



photos also up your stickiness quotient. PEW research has shown that 52% of online health care seekers are looking for information about others' experiences. Here is where and why your photo galleries and testimonials will shine. For the galleries, include photos of a variety of patient types. The same holds true for testimonials. Emphasize a range of testimonials from different types of patients. Make sure they are easy to find and organized by procedure.

Videos and interactive tools such as quizzes and polls also increase the stickiness factor.

The longer patients stay on your site to interact with these features, the more favorable your site is viewed by Google and other search engines. (If you incorporate these features, make sure visitors don't have to leave your site to use them.)

Your site must be viewed and used as a resource. If your site shows up in the rankings for a search term but visitors immediately leave to visit other sites, the search engines will not respond positively.

Raise your website's stickiness quotient by incorporating:

Unique, compelling content
Before-and-after photos

Engaging testimonials
Easy-to-navigate web design
Interactive videos and features

IF YOU BUILD IT THEY WILL COME—BUT WILL THEY STAY?

Foundational aspects of web design can also affect the stickiness quotient. Ask yourself the following questions about your website:

Is it hard to navigate?
Does it load quickly?
Does it present complete or comprehensive information about a topic area?
Does it explain how the patient will benefit from your surgical services?

A poor showing in any of these areas can cause visitors to get out of Dodge quickly.

Stickiness counts when it comes to your marketing efforts, but it also helps foster patient loyalty. It doesn't keep your patients coming back—it actually prevents them from leaving in the first place.

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