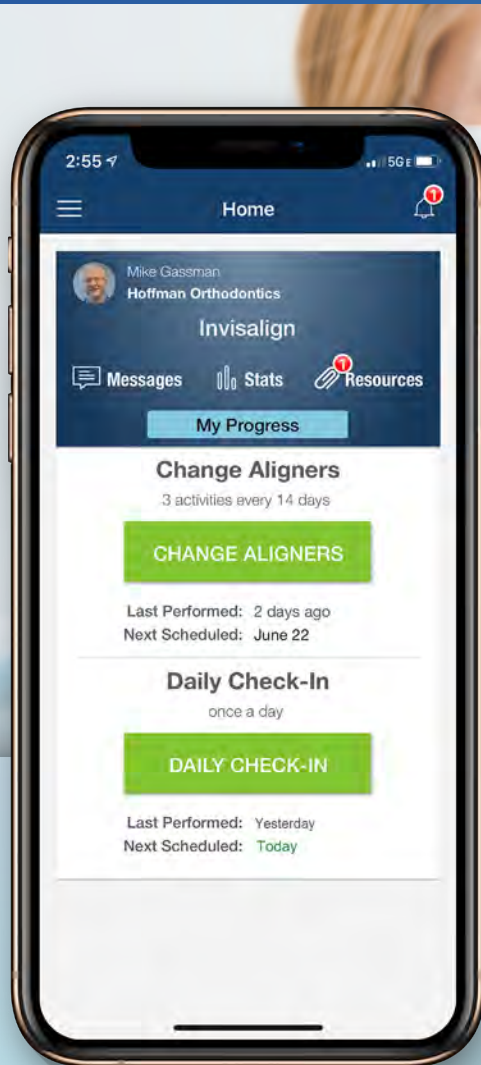


# The Most Effective Digital Marketing Efforts for Orthodontic Practices in 2021

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The orthodontics marketplace has never been more competitive, so it's **more important than ever** to get the most out of your orthodontic marketing efforts—in 2021, this means **committing to digital strategies like websites and social media**.

Far too many practice owners overlook the importance of digital marketing because it can be confusing and overwhelming, or because they don't understand the importance of digital efforts. While there are many different directions you can go in your digital marketing based upon your patients, demographics, and resources, the basics remain the same.

# The Importance of a Great Website for Orthodontists

**"It takes about 50 milliseconds (that's 0.05 seconds) for users to form an opinion about your website that determines whether they like your site or not, whether they'll stay or leave."**

The most important foundation of your practice is to have an easy-to-find and well-functioning website. A vast majority of prospective patients research their options online before deciding on which provider to choose.

Make sure your website not only functions well, but also shows up when someone searches for orthodontic providers in their area. Your website should include the services you provide and tons of reviews and pictures from happy patients.

Use your website to help patients get to know you and the value you provide. Show them

why they should choose your practice, and make it easy for them to get ahold of you by including your contact information on every single page.

**Don't forget to optimize your website for the mobile experience.** Why? More and more people are searching the web on their phone, or coming to your website from social media (more on that later!) and they want an excellent experience on mobile.

**In fact, in 2020, 85% of adults think that a website on mobile should be as good or better than on desktop!**

Don't lose a potential patient because your website is out of date or not updated for mobile experience.

So, if you are going to start with a place to use your marketing dollars? Get a nice, effective, easy-to-use website that is designed for mobile. Your patients (current and future!) will thank you!



## SEO Considerations

Search engine optimization, also known as SEO, is the practice of using various techniques to help boost your rank on internet search engines. The goal is to be on the first page of results, in the top spot, when a patient types in the word “Orthodontist” in your city or region.

Search engines like Google are always tinkering with the algorithm they use, so be careful about trying to cut corners or using services to game the system. Those things could come back to haunt you.

While there are many different ways you can go about improving your rank, there are a handful of tried-and-true things that you can do today that don’t cost you a lot of money, and will help boost your practice to a higher ranking.

### 1. **Pick a user-friendly platform that comes with free SEO tools.**

WordPress is the most used platform, used by almost a third of all websites, but there are others you can choose from depending on who will be designing and running your site. In the case of WordPress, they offer several free (as well as paid) tools and plugins that will help you improve your SEO ranking for your practice.

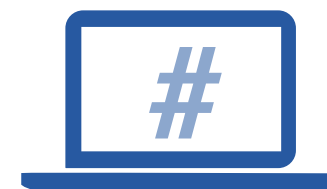
### 2. **Fast loading time and mobile responsiveness.** It’s not enough to have your site be “mobile friendly;” your website needs to be able to load quickly and look good on a variety of screen sizes, phones, and tablets.

### 3. **Optimized page titles and metadata descriptions.** Make sure the pages on your website have titles that make sense with your content and will match with what people are searching for. Use carefully-crafted descriptions to

explain what the page is about. If you are talking about the services you offer, be specific: do you use both wire braces and aligners? What about virtual care monitoring? Be specific here.

### 4. **Be strategic with your tags.**

Keyword meta tags help search engines recognize what key words or phrases match with your content. The same is true for image alt tags. The important part is finding consistency and relevance, instead of trying to mash a bunch of keywords together just to rank higher.



### 5. **Utilize a blog connected to your website** to showcase your knowledge, special services, and provide value upfront.



# Blogging Tips, Ideas, and Best Practices

While it's tempting to fill the main pages of your website with lots and lots of words, you should keep those areas simple and easy to skim, and reserve the more lengthy reading sections for your blog. As a bonus, blog posts are great for sharing on social media to help boost your traffic and relevance.

Keep the SEO topics above—titles, keywords, and image alt tags—in mind for all of your blog posts. Ideally, each blog post should be composed so it can be a landing page that you can use with newsletters, online ad campaigns, or social media.

Always keep in mind the big picture of how all the pages and posts on your site work together for the same purpose—sharing how you can help and why they should choose you as their provider to get the smile of their dreams.

Plan ahead what specific categories you would like to highlight on your blog. One example would be to have categories for patient success stories, special services you offer, frequently asked questions, and spotlights on your staff.

**With that in mind, here are some tips, ideas, and best practices for your blog:**

1. **Keep the writing conversational.** Try to limit the amount of jargon used so that the post is easy to read for all and contains your personal voice. Use each post as an opportunity to build rapport and connection.
2. **Show off your best success stories with simple case study narratives.** Make your blog visual with lots of before and after pictures and include video if possible. These are especially great for sharing on social media.
3. **Educate your prospective patients on your areas of specialty and why they should choose you.** This is where you can highlight things that set you apart from others—expertise, unique services, and special technology.
4. **Mix in some topical posts that deal with common questions you receive or that address myths associated with orthodontics.** Examples of this would be “At what age should I bring my child to see an orthodontist?” and “Orthodontics isn’t just for teens.”



## Use Social Media for your Practice

**“79% of all Americans are on social media”**



A huge portion of your target market is on at least one social media platform, and this is a very easy way for you to connect with them.

Patients might follow your practice on social media because they want to see additional resources, learn more about your practice, or see if you are running specials or offers.

And now, we are seeing that more than ever, people are using social media to stay up to date with the latest information, such as clinic hours, closings, and safety updates because of Covid-19.

Especially during a pandemic, you need to stay active on social media. Why? Because over one third of people think that if you are not posting on social media during a pandemic, it is because you are not financially solvent and you are closing!

Don't give your patients the wrong idea! Keep sharing information across social media in a timely, consistent manner.

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## Social Media Content

When it comes to the types of content you can post, the world is your oyster! Prospective (and current) patients love to see testimonials, and great testimonials-either words on a graphic, videos, or before and after pictures--really showcase your practice.

Sharing blog posts across social showcases your expertise, and helps people learn more about you, their doctor, and your practice.

You can share pictures and videos of your staff, live videos of you talking, interviews with a patient, before and after pictures, articles and “how to” videos that might be helpful to your patients.

An active social media channel for your orthodontics page isn't all about SELLING your services: Instead, it's about sharing resources, providing value for your current and prospective patients, and providing information.

If you're having a hard time coming up with ideas for content, look around at some of the more successful orthodontic related accounts and what gets the most engagement on those.

You should think of social media like your storefront, customer service desk, and a beautiful marketing pamphlet, all rolled up into one.

## Choosing the Right Social Media Platform for your Orthodontic Practice

When deciding what social platform to be on, **it's always a good idea to start with Facebook.** Why? Because with over 2 billion users, Facebook has more people than Twitter, Instagram, and SnapChat combined!

And of all the demographics, the most people from each age range are on Facebook. So, odds are that your target demographic is on this channel. Plus, the people who use Facebook are truly on the channel and checking in: the average Facebook user spends 75 minutes a day on the platform.

Want to market your orthodontic practice on Facebook? Use a free Facebook Business Page which gives you access to analytics, like knowing what location, age, and gender your followers are, or better understanding their habits.

A second platform that has really grown in popularity with orthodontists is Instagram, and it makes sense: all social media platforms are visual, but some of them, like Instagram, are especially good at showcasing before and after pictures of the great results you get with your patients.

**Instagram is the second most popular social media sharing site,** with the average user spending almost 53 minutes using Instagram.

If you are going to use Instagram, make sure you commit to some of the best practices of the channel, such as using Hashtags (data this year tell us that 11 is the magical number, but you can use up to 30), and sharing stories to really connect with your audience, ask them questions, and engage them in a more meaningful way.







## Advertising with Social Media

Unlike traditional media, one advantage to social media platforms is that they allow you to advertise and target people who live in a specific area and are interested in what you have to offer. You can create ads and boosted posts for whatever your budget is, and microtarget your audiences by using their email, or asking Facebook to create a lookalike audience from your email address (a very inexpensive, successful way to micro target new customers!)

Whichever platform you use for social media advertising, you can view insights, track your results, and turn off or adjust ads daily, weekly, or monthly, based on which is the most successful. This way, you can save money by stopping the ones that aren't performing as well. You can also build social media ads that have a particular CTA: you might want to build awareness for your orthodontics practice, or even drive traffic to your website.

No matter the type of social media ad you choose, remember to test it out before you spend a lot of money.

When you have a great website that is optimized for SEO, a helpful blog that shares tips and resources, and active social media to distribute all of the above plus engage with your patients, you are setting your practice up for success.

**Get started and kick off the new year successfully.**

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