

A GUIDE TO BUYING YOUR FIRST WEBSITE

By William Esteb

A photograph of two men sitting together, looking at a laptop. The man on the left is younger, with dark hair and a beard, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt over a dark t-shirt. The man on the right is older, with grey hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. They are both smiling and looking at the laptop screen. The background is a bright, out-of-focus window with a grid pattern. The overall tone is professional and collaborative.

PerfectPatients
New Patient Website Service

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Introduction

You've made the decision. You're ready to take that big step of buying your first website. But where do you begin?

Maybe you're a recent grad just starting your practice. Maybe you've been practicing chiropractic for two decades and you're finally ready to take the leap into the digital world.

Or perhaps it's your second website, but this time you want to do it right.

Or, maybe, something else happened. Someone made the case that you're missing out. They've been telling you, "It's time. You have to deal with the online world."

No matter the reason, it's not something to be taken lightly. The process of building and marketing your website is important. Equally important is the buying process. Indeed, there is research to be performed before you even choose your website's name.

There are many reasons to get a practice website. Extend your branding. Get more referrals. Bring back inactive patients. Have a digital business card.

Attract new patients to your practice.

Buying your first website can be an intimidating affair, so we've put together this guide to help you in your first steps. This eBook outlines the fundamentals of securing a new website, how to optimize it for patient conversion, and how to vet your prospective provider.

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Terms You'll Encounter

Browser:

The computer program people use to explore the Internet.

Domain name:

The unique identifier people use to find your website, your domain name is like a digital "address" (i.e. www.abcchiropractor.com).

Domain authority:

A factor search engines use to rank websites, domain authority is based on the age, size, and popularity of a website.

Google Analytics:

A statistics platform that shows website performance metrics like unique visitors, average time on site, and number of page visits.

Hosting:

The activity of providing storage space and access for a website to those on the Internet.

Keywords:

Search terms users type in Google or other search engines to find websites.

Mobile-friendly:

Factored into Google's ranking algorithm, a mobile-friendly website adjusts the resolution and display based on the device being used (mobile, desktop, and tablet).

Online directories:

Digital "yellow pages" that list the name, address, and contact information of a business.

Patient conversion:

The process of converting website visitors into reception room patients.

Search engine optimization (SEO):

A methodology of strategies and techniques used to increase the visibility of a website by obtaining a high-ranking placement in Google search results.

Search engine rankings:

The position at which a website appears in the results for a keyword search. A site is said to have a high ranking when it appears at or near the top of the search results.

Unique Selling Proposition (USP):

The factor presented by a business as the reason their product or service is different from and better than that of the competition.

User experience:

The journey a user takes on your site. Ease-of-use, beautiful photography, and mobile-friendliness are a few things that enhance the user experience.

Types of Website Providers

Before securing your domain and hosting, and before starting to design your website, you must decide how the process will play out. The type of company you use to build your site determines whether it **will** or **will not** produce new patients. Or even whether it will effectively serve your current patients.

Sure, you can make tweaks to an existing website. But starting with a solid foundation will save you time, money, and heartache in the long run.

First, ask yourself these questions:

- ❓ Are you a do-it-yourselfer with experience designing websites?
- ❓ Are you looking for a flashy-looking work of “digital art?”
- ❓ Are you looking to buy a product that you’ll have to maintain and market yourself?
- ❓ Are you looking to partner with a company that serves you on an ongoing basis?



You have many options when it comes to choosing a website provider. Below, you’ll learn about the “do-it-yourselfer” option, as well as the three main types of chiropractic website companies.



Do-it-Yourselfer

It might be tempting to keep things in house. After all, you can build a “free” website that costs as little as \$10 per month. But, there’s a problem.

It’s rare that a \$10/mo. website produces new patients.

While you could have gotten away with such a “deal” when there was little competition, Google’s constantly changing algorithm, and the investment made by your competitors, requires ongoing website management.

Before the Internet, it was not uncommon for a chiropractor to invest over \$1,000 a month for a yellow page ad. It made sense. It’s where most people went to find a chiropractor. Today, however, they turn to Google.

If new patients is the focal point of your new website, you’ll need great content, proper search engine optimization (SEO), and a design that converts digital visitors into reception room patients.

Here's the problem with the DIY approach: it takes a comprehensive strategy to launch a website that actually produces results.

To create the effect you're likely looking for (that is, getting new patients), you'd need to master each individual discipline – design, SEO, online marketing, etc. You'd then have to roll all these ingredients together to form a cohesive strategy.

Doing your own taxes used to be easy. So did building an online presence. There was a time when you could launch a basic, templated website and then wait for website visitors to roll in. All you needed was a free WordPress template. This might have worked ten years ago. But rising competition and increasing demands from search engines have made the DIY approach nearly impossible.

Unless, of course, you're an expert in website design and patient conversion.

Creating and maintaining your own website is like hiring yourself as your own attorney. It's simply impossible to be good at both – especially if your goal is new patients

The Digital Artist

The Digital Artist is typically a local website designer that has been referred to you or you found in an online search. They are a jack-of-all-trades. They serve anyone and everyone. Their portfolio might consist of a landscaper, an accountant, a software company, and several local retailers.

You might be their first chiropractor.


While they may possess a beautiful portfolio – and the promise of getting the website of your dreams, exactly the way you want it – the problem with the Digital Artist is it's difficult to design and market a website that is templated for several different industries.

A chiropractic patient is much different from a mattress buyer. A chiropractic patient thinks differently, acts differently, and has different expectations when searching the Internet for a healthcare solution. Odds are, your local digital artist is not a chiropractic expert.



The benefit of the local Digital Artist is that you can sit down face to face with them. The problem is, you'll likely end up doing most of the work. Yes, you'll have the pride of ownership.

But...

A diagram consisting of three overlapping circles. The top circle is light blue and contains the question 'Do you know the right keywords to incorporate into your site for SEO?'. The bottom-left circle is dark purple and contains the question 'Are you a skilled copywriter?'. The bottom-right circle is orange and contains the question 'Do you know what persuades a website visitor to choose you as their chiropractor?'.

Do you know the right keywords to incorporate into your site for SEO?

Are you a skilled copywriter?

Do you know what persuades a website visitor to choose you as their chiropractor?

If not, you might consider another option.

If you think educating patients about chiropractic is challenging, just wait until you pay someone else to learn about it.

The Product Designer

The Product Designer is similar to the Digital Artist. They typically have clients in several industries. There are, however, some that specialize in the chiropractic field.

You might call them a “discount provider,” as they offer a templated solution that is, ultimately, nothing more than a “product.” Similar to the Digital Artist, hiring the Product Designer leaves you in charge of marketing, and maybe even updating, your website. And if you aren’t equipped to handle it, you’ll likely suffer from low traffic, subpar rankings, and a website that is little more than a novelty.

Simply having a website used to be enough. But today, the only way to get the full potential out of your website is to constantly “work” it. This includes making updates, adding content, incorporating social signals, and other ongoing activities. Tending to these obligations is outside the scope of vendors that offer website products.

Due to low margins that are unable to support ongoing service requests, the Product Designer believes their job is done as soon as a new website launches.



The Integrated Service Provider

To remain competitive online, you must promote interaction and community. This can be achieved only through a comprehensive marketing plan that stimulates long-term growth.

The Service Provider is unique in that they offer an integrated online marketing solution. They not only specialize in the chiropractic field, they design a patient-generating website and provide the long-term support required to achieve your new patient goals.

Rather than following a “set-it-and-forget-it” strategy, the Service Provider markets to patients on your behalf. The strategy goes full circle by converting new patients and educating them along the way to improve patient retention and stimulate referrals.

Their service doesn't just build your site, it markets your practice around the clock.



Here's what an integrated marketing plan from The Service Provider might look like:

- ✓ An attractive website designed with the patient in mind
- ✓ Professionally written content that persuades visitors to choose you
- ✓ Ongoing SEO that sends qualified traffic to your website
- ✓ Social media content that promotes top-of-mind awareness
- ✓ Blog posts that educate readers on the importance of chiropractic health
- ✓ Monthly newsletters that keep patients engaged
- ✓ Online patient learning that improves patient retention

For a practice website to be successful, it must be viewed as a marketing tool – not simply a piece of “digital art.” Competition in the online space is rising, so it's important to keep up with the changing digital landscape.

This underscores the importance of partnering with an integrated service provider, one that will work **with** you to keep your schedule openings a little less open.

Identify Your Ideal Patient



Have you identified your tribe of ideal patients? If you've been in practice for a while, you might already know. The best way to identify your ideal patient is to look at who's currently on your patient roster.

Over the years, you may have had hundreds of patients walk through your doors.

Or, you're in the process of discovering who you'd prefer to serve in your new chiropractic career.

To refine your target audience, ask yourself a few questions:

- ② What is my bread-and-butter service (i.e. sports chiropractic, family medicine, etc.)
- ② How far are my patients willing to commute? (i.e. within 20 miles of my office)
- ② Is there a demographic I typically serve? (i.e. age, lower income, etc.)

It's impossible to serve all types of patients successfully. The policies and procedures that work for cash-paying patients won't work well for Medicare patients. Similarly, the ability to be successful with personal injury cases is an entirely different skillset than what is required to win at pediatrics.

Rather than aiming for an ever-increasing quantity of patients, you can improve your practice by refining your audience. These refinements should then translate over to your new website.

It's tempting to want a website that you resonate with – photos that you like, content you enjoy reading, and a design that matches your personal tastes. After all, you're the one footing the bill. But resist this temptation.



Your website is not for you.

It is for prospective patients. Therefore, your website needs to be designed with your ideal patients in mind.

For example, most health care decisions are made by women (take a quick inventory of your current active patients and you'll discover it may be as high 65% female). Thus, your website design should have a feminine bias. This means focusing more on people rather than things, feelings rather than services, and warmer colors and curves.

Research Your Competition

While the Internet is by and large the most profitable marketing channel, it's crowded. Depending on how many chiropractors practice in your jurisdiction, it might take time to rank competitively in the search engines.

But it's a must, as Google is the number-one source of new patients.

It's not your Facebook page. Not your direct mail pieces. And certainly not your yellow page ads.

So perform a local search in Google (i.e. "chiropractor in Baltimore") to see what you're going up against. Look at these competing websites and see how you are different. Gather this knowledge and use it when planning the content for your new site.

Also, keep in mind that the Internet is dynamic. You zig. Your competitors zag. Which means you need to zig again.

As the Internet evolves, the cycle continues. This is yet another reason why you need a website service to keep up with the constant change and dynamic nature of the digital world.

Jumping on the digital marketing train late can present challenges. You may have competitors who have been online for a decade. While competing with them isn't impossible, it's important to manage your expectations. That is, don't expect an instant flow of new patients.

It's no different from the real world. It takes time to build a reputation. Most importantly, you have to build a reputation with Google. Search engines gauge a website's reputation on many factors.

One factor is something called “domain authority.”

Over time, your domain authority will increase. Google determines that if a website has been around for a while, it must have a decent reputation. Of course, this is a waiting game. There are, however, things you can do to begin building trust:

- ✓ **Link building**
Earn links from relevant, authoritative sources, including blogs, directory websites, and online publications.
- ✓ **Online reviews**
Get five-star patient feedback on review sites like Google, Facebook, and Yelp.
- ✓ **Search engine optimization (SEO)**
Optimize your website for search engines by writing compelling content with naturally-placed keywords.
- ✓ **User experience**
Create an engaging website that is mobile-friendly and easy to read and navigate (simplify your menu navigation, structure your content with brief paragraphs and headings, etc.).

Differentiate Your Practice

When building your website, it's important to position yourself as the kind of practice every prospective patient would want to visit.

Your website is the number-one place to differentiate your practice. Convincing a patient to trust you over a dozen other chiropractors in their area – who are just a click away – isn't easy.

Why should they?

To separate yourself from the competition, you must cultivate a bond that stirs an emotional connection. This bond includes providing a sense of belonging, a sense of freedom, and a sense of security.



Think about your story. Why did you, or why are you getting into, the chiropractic profession? Is it a personal experience? Is it a passion for helping people?

Now think about your unique selling proposition (USP). What makes your practice unique? Establish this from the get-go and pitch this message on your new website.

The goal is to tap into the emotions of prospective patients who have never heard of you. That means pitching them with concepts that actually matter to them. While you'll want to outline your services on your website, your services aren't your USP. Nor is the school you attended.

Here are some concepts that, depending on your practice, might differentiate you:



Secure Your Domain & Hosting

Once you've defined your ideal patient, and have researched your competition, it's time to take the first step in buying a website: **Securing your domain.**

A domain is the friendly naming system for giving addresses to web servers. It's like your address or phone number. It's how people find you on the Internet.

You'll have to find a domain name that isn't already being used by someone else. Or, you might be able to purchase it from someone willing to sell. This can be difficult, and in some cases, it can come at a premium price. So take time to identify a domain that is memorable and relevant to your practice.

Remember that you don't **own** your domain name. It's rented from a service provider. So always keep track of your renewal date. After all, if you forget to renew your domain name, a competitor can easily snag it up.

Here are some other tidbits about domain names:

- ✓ A brand new domain typically costs \$10 to \$15 per year.
- ✓ Purchasing an existing domain can cost hundreds, sometimes even, thousands of dollars.
- ✓ Registering your domain for a longer period of time can improve search engine confidence.
- ✓ A domain name that is easily remembered and pronounced can improve patient retention and referrals.

Check to see if a domain is available with **this tool** ➤

Do's and Don'ts

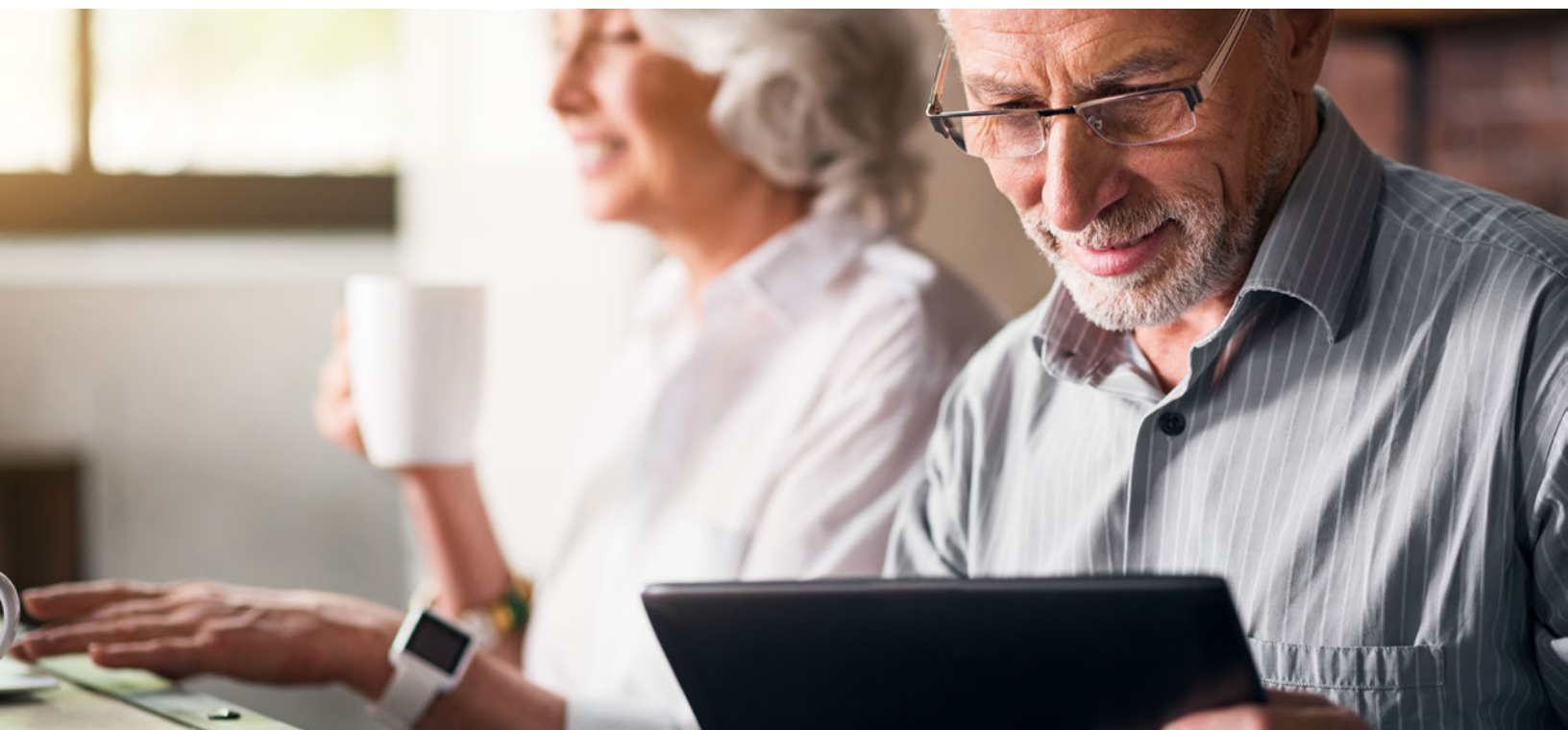
Choosing a domain name is similar to choosing a practice name.

Prospective and current patients will see it in all of your marketing materials and anywhere you have an online presence. For example, they'll see it on:





- ✓ Online directories
- ✓ Social media pages
- ✓ Email communication
- ✓ Brochures
- ✓ Office materials
- ✓ Traditional marketing initiatives

Your domain name should be concise and easy to remember. This is essential for both prospective patients and existing patients. If a prospective patient wants to further research your website, you want it to be easy for them to come back.







Consider these do's and don'ts to help secure a domain name that is clean, search engine friendly, and easily remembered:



Don'ts

-  Stuff your domain with too many keywords, as this can look unprofessional and deceptive to Google (i.e. BestChiropractorinBaltimoreMaryland.com).
-  Use dashes or numbers, as this can look spammy (i.e. Baltimore-Family-Chiropractic.com).
-  Join a plan that renews less than a year at a time. Renewing every few months can show Google that you're not in it for the long haul.
-  Buy a domain that has a history of questionable SEO tactics. Domains that used strategies to artificially inflate search engine rankings may already be blacklisted by Google – making it difficult to be found in online searches.

Do's

-  Make your domain relevant to your practice (i.e. BaltimoreChiropractor.com).
-  If possible, include a keyword that is relevant to your practice.
-  Keep it as short as possible.
-  Use a .com extension (depending on your country, it might be .ca, .com.au, etc.).
-  Make it easy to communicate verbally.
-  Keep consistent with your practice name (i.e. Baltimore Chiropractic & Wellness chooses the domain BaltimoreChiropractor.com).



What is Hosting?

Ultimately, a website is a compilation of computer files that connect to the Internet. These files can be requested over the Internet by anyone. A website host is needed to actually display those files on the Internet.

Your domain name isn't the only thing you need to secure when starting your online marketing journey. Without hosting, you essentially don't have a website.

When you have a prospective website visitor, they'll use your domain name to access your site. It may seem simple, but there is a process that occurs from the time a site visitor types in your domain and the time they press enter.

Website hosting is a separate service that secures space on the Internet for your website files to reside. Each page on your website may consist of dozens of individual files that are used to create the experience that a visitor will have on your website. Without publishing your site to a hosting service, prospective patients won't be able to find you.

Keep Your Website Updated

Letting your website sit for years is like letting a vehicle sit for years. It could, all of a sudden, stop working.

Launching a practice website is only half the battle. To stay ahead of the competition, your website must be dynamic, adapting to the constantly evolving digital landscape. It should engage visitors with valuable content and generate quality leads.

If you're not continually working your site, you're giving your competitors a huge advantage.

Here are three ways to keep your website alive:

- 1 Publish blog posts:**
Writing weekly blog posts shows both Google and patients that your site is alive and well.

- 2 Add new pages:**
While you don't want to add pages to your site just for the sake of doing so, you might consider adding a page that can be updated regularly. For instance, an events page would allow you to update your site with your latest charities and community activities.

- 3 Redesign regularly:**
Sure, it's hard to think about redesigning your website before you even have one. But keep in mind, the shelf-life of a website is only three to five years. Technology changes so rapidly that your website goes into decline after only a few years.

Evolve With the Trends

The online marketing world has a knack for shaking things up when you least expect it. Search engines will always be evolving and fine-tuning their algorithms and search results for a better user experience.

Internet users themselves evolve as well. Digital channels like social media have shortened attention spans, emphasizing the importance of professional photography and website browsability.

Long gone are the days when all your website needed was a high volume of keywords and a boatload of low quality backlinks. Today, a high performing website requires an integrated online marketing strategy. Blogging, email marketing, social media, and other initiatives are essential if you want a steady flow of new patients.

It all depends on your needs. If you are a referral-based practice, this might not be necessary. When researching website providers, think about your goals.

Review the three Perfect Patients service plans for an idea of how to best meet your goals.



Branding Your Online Presence

When you think about good branding, you might think of Coca Cola's distinctive red and white lettering; or Nike's simple, but iconic, swoosh symbol. Maybe Adidas's memorable three stripes come to mind.

You're providing chiropractic care, but you're the product! Promoting yourself is difficult, even if you're a veteran marketer.



Professional photography, mobile-friendly design, and other elements are critical pieces of an effective website design. Your branding should be part of the mix. Your brand communicates who you are, what you offer, and what you promise through your content, organization, and appearance.

As you go through the website-buying experience, think about how your practice should be portrayed. You wouldn't want to do a first-visit consultation sporting pajamas and bed-head. Similarly, you don't want a disheveled website.

So whether you plan to develop your website on your own, or outsource it to a third party, consider your website from a branding perspective.



Brands convey a uniform quality, credibility and experience.

-Scott Goodson, Branding Expert

Logo

While it might seem like a minor detail, your logo is a visual shorthand for attracting the types of patients you enjoy serving.

Creating a strong visual brand identity with a graphic mark that identifies your practice:

- ✓ Increases your credibility
- ✓ Gives greater impact to your practice signage, letterhead and business cards
- ✓ Separates your practice from competitors
- ✓ Projects a professional presence

One of the most important places you will showcase your logo is your website. Your logo is the identifying emblem people will recognize when landing on your site. It should stand proud as a statement of your site, your online presence, and your practice.



Logos are a graphic extension of the internal realities of a company.

-**Saul Bass**, Branding Expert

Content

Your content is what converts visitors after they land on your website. Before designing your new website, think about how you can make your practice stand out. Your content is one of the deciding factors in persuading prospective patients to choose you.

Generic, cookie-cutter content doesn't add to your branding. So how do you brand your content?

By telling your story.

Sure, you have to describe what you offer. But be sure to enhance your offering by telling prospective patients how you are unique. Do you have an innovative way of doing things? Why did you get into the chiropractic profession?

Think about how you can persuade site visitors that you are the best solution for their healthcare needs.

Marketing

Consistency in branding is important to make your practice recognizable and trustworthy.

Your branding should be consistent throughout all of your marketing materials. And especially through your online marketing initiatives:



Social media:

Social channels like Facebook aren't replacements for a practice website. They're merely extensions. Still, your social media pages should have a similar look and feel. Think about how your practice website will carry across your profile photos, cover photos, etc.



Branded email address:

A generic, personal email account may show inexperience, and may even be a deal breaker. When securing your domain make sure you set up branded emails (i.e. info@abcchiropractor.com rather than abcchiropractor@gmail.com).

Maintaining a consistent brand online will make your practice memorable. If a prospective patient sees that your website, social media, and emails fall in line, they're more apt to remember you when they are ready to choose a chiropractor.

Questions to Ask Your Prospective Provider

The most important task to pursue when starting your digital journey is to vet your prospective provider.

Here are the top three questions we recommend asking before signing an agreement:

1

How long have you been serving chiropractors?

Providers still in this infancy stage of online chiropractic marketing tend to focus on goals that have little impact on new patient growth. We recommend choosing a provider that has at least five – ideally more than ten – years of experience in the chiropractic field.



2

How will you assure me page-one Google rankings?

The “page one rankings” sales pitch has become a moniker that has tainted the reputation of the SEO industry. If you’re offered a guarantee, run for the door. No website provider should guarantee rankings. They should be telling you what they plan to do to get you more new patients.

3

What will you do after my site goes live?

Most important is how your provider deals with client issues and requests. If you’ve hired a graphic designer whose emphasis lies on creating “digital art,” making website revisions often gets put on the backburner. If you have a change in services, hours, or a new staff member, you shouldn’t have to wait three weeks to get your website updated.

For a more in-depth look at these questions
(along with four additional questions)
download our free eBook,
“7 Questions to Ask Your Website Provider.”

DOWNLOAD HERE ➞



Conclusion

Buying your first website is a big decision. And it's not one to be taken lightly.

While challenging, it can be an exciting process. You might even learn more about your practice in the process.

Your new patient goals should determine your route.

Are you looking for a nice-looking site where patients can look up your address and phone number? You might be okay with a designer.

Are you looking to generate a steady flow of new patients? An integrated service provider is your best bet.

Either way, it's probably time to take the leap.

The 40-year bank robbing career of Willie Sutton originated "Sutton's Law" – a principle stating that when diagnosing something, one should first consider the obvious. It evolved from a simple answer, to a simple question from a reporter.

"Why, Mr. Sutton, do you rob banks?"

He allegedly replied, "Because that's where the money is."

So why have a website?

Because that's where the new patients are.

The Perfect Patients Website Service

Serving thousands of chiropractors across the globe, Perfect Patients helps practices grow their online presence with an integrated website service. This comprehensive solution includes mobile-friendly design, content development, search engine optimization, and more.

Also included in the Perfect Patients website service is an email marketing solution that promotes patient community and engagement.

From monthly newsletters to custom campaigns, these email marketing services help improve patient retention and stimulate more referrals. You can send messages to your entire patient database with the click of a mouse. Or, automate birthday emails, new patient surveys, custom campaigns, and more.

Want to learn more about the Perfect Patients website service?

Visit www.perfectpatients.com or contact us today at team@perfectpatients.com



Bill Esteb is a chiropractic advocate and new patient marketing specialist who has over three decades of experience in the profession. As the Co-Founder of Perfect Patients, Bill has been helping chiropractors generate more new patients from the Internet for over 10 years and leads a team of 50 online marketing experts who help chiropractors get and keep more new patients.