



# Digital Marketing Self-Checkup: Are You Following These **BEST PRACTICES?**

By Paul Dybala, PhD and Meghan Pendley

**A**re you confident that your digital marketing activities are converting to new patients as often as they should? It's important to give your digital marketing a checkup frequently as the digital landscape changes rapidly. AudiologyDesign digital marketing experts share practical strategies to make sure you are engaging in five-star digital marketing practices. AudiologyDesign (audiologydesign.com) manages the digital properties of over 1,300 hearing care locations around the US. Here are seven digital marketing best practices that you want to ensure you are following:

**1. Are you maximizing your online visibility and reputation?** It's not just about having a website anymore. Properties like Google My Business, online reviews, Google



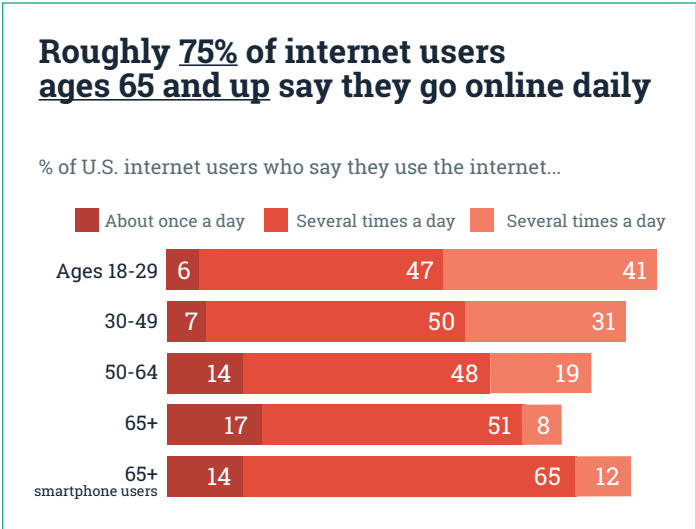
**of consumers trust online reviews\***

\*www.searchengineland.com

Map Pack, social media sites, and Google ads are all essential components of the SERP or Search Engine Results Page. If you are not maximizing your visibility here, your practice won't be found. Try doing a quick Google search for "hearing aids" in your city and state and see how you measure up.

**2. Do you know your Online Reputation score?** Reviews have become a new form of public relations (PR) in the business world. It's the new word of mouth. In fact, more than 80% of consumers read reviews before visiting a business or using a service, and 48% only pay attention to the reviews that were left in the past two weeks [Source: *BrightLocal, Local Consumer Review Survey*]. In today's culture, reviews equal trust, and with this gain in popularity of reviews, patients look to them as a snapshot view into your practice.

Adding patient reviews to your Google Business Listing can also help with your overall search ranking on Google. The more online presence you have, the easier it is to find you. It's also important to give your patients other platforms to leave you feedback, giving them the option for Google, Facebook, and Healthy Hearing, for example. This will ensure you cover the sites that provide an easily accessible log-in or simply one they prefer to review you on.



### 3. Do you have an online appointment scheduling feature integrated with your practice management software?

According to a recent GetApp survey, **70% of consumers** prefer online scheduling for setting appointments. And it's not hard to imagine why—consumers are becoming increasingly reliant on the Internet to meet all of their daily needs. With a few clicks you can order groceries, catch up on local news, and book your next vacation, all in just ten minutes!

Consumer reliance on digital resources can stem from simply being too busy, wanting the quickest solution to their question, or, especially in our industry, wanting to avoid speaking on the telephone. Allowing your patients to book an appointment online will meet all of these underlying needs and provide them the best experience possible.

At AudiologyDesign, we see an average of four appointments per location, per month booked on our client websites. The best part is that 45% of those appointments are booked outside of business hours, allowing these clinics to be always available to meet patient needs!



**of consumers prefer  
online scheduling\***

\*www.getapp.com

### 4. Do you have a content marketing strategy?

Content is still king when it comes to digital marketing and it can be an incredibly powerful marketing tool for your practice and brand, but great content takes time and effort. It means careful research on a particular topic, drafting your thoughts, and ensuring that the content is optimized properly for the web and search engines.

The needs and preferences of online users (and search engines) have changed and evolved over the years and it is important that your content marketing strategy keeps up. A few key items to consider in your content marketing strategy are:

**Length:** Blog articles and services content should be a minimum of 500 words for optimal search engine optimization (SEO) benefit. While this may seem lengthy,

Google looks for quality content that includes key services and topics that users are searching for.

**Delivery:** While posting content is a great start, you still need to ensure users are finding and interacting with the content. Think about including it in your next newsletter or share it on social media to increase your reach.

**Type:** While creating unique, educational content is best for SEO, that doesn't mean you only need to create lengthy, jargon-heavy articles every week. Change up your content to include eye-catching images, videos and infographics.

**Optimization:** Search engine algorithms are forever adapting and changing so you can no longer use the same SEO tactics that you were using a few years ago. Perform keyword research before you create your next batch of content in order to find out what your specific

*Continued on page 24*

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Continued from page 23

audience might be searching for. Stay away from outdated practices like keyword stuffing though. You should instead be creating unique, relevant content that is of interest to your prospective patients.

**5. Are you utilizing a provider that has hearing healthcare expertise?** The hearing industry is unique and having a digital marketing provider that understands the intricacies of the services you provide, and more importantly, the patients you service, is crucial. SEO and paid online advertising all rely on knowing what your target audience is searching for and ensuring that your digital properties show up.

A digital provider that specializes in hearing healthcare will know these top keywords and ensure that your content marketing strategy aligns properly. Another benefit of working with a hearing expert is knowledge of the latest hearing technologies, manufacturer-specific product information, hearing industry news, and content and lead generation tools geared toward your unique target audience.

**6. Are you integrating digital and print marketing to yield better results?** While digital marketing has become a crucial part of any hearing practice’s marketing strategy, a healthy mix of different tactics is still paramount to ensure you are realizing an optimal return on your marketing



**95% of unhappy consumers will return if you respond\***

\*www.vendasta.com

investment. If you are currently utilizing promotional and event marketing through traditional means, like direct mail and newspaper advertising, carrying these out through your digital marketing can ensure a higher response rate.

Promote your traditional marketing efforts through digital utilizing the following tactics:

- **Facebook Ads:** Facebook ads allow you to target a specific demographic and geographic radius similar to a direct mail campaign. You can take events and promotions you are already marketing and carry the messaging and branding over to a Facebook ads campaign to reach additional leads.
- **Social Posts:** Posting your events and promotions to your Facebook Business page is a free way to engage with your current followers and spread awareness about your practice.
- **Google Ads:** Add a call to action about your upcoming marketing initiatives to your Google Ads and landing page.
- **Website:** Incorporating an events page or highlighting your promotions on your website banner will boost visibility.

**7. Does your provider measure the right things?** Clicks and website visits are great, but do you know how many calls, qualified leads, and booked appointments you are receiving from each of your digital properties? Utilizing lead-tracking tools like call tracking, online appointment scheduling, and tracking lead form submissions will give you insight into your ROI (return on investment), so you know exactly what your cost per qualified lead is.

Make an appointment on your calendar to conduct a regular digital marketing checkup multiple times a year, as the digital landscape changes rapidly. Putting into practice the above digital marketing activities should convert digital onlookers into new patients for your hearing healthcare practice. ■

## SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS PAGES (SERP)

*If You're Not Listed Here, You Can't Be Found*

### 1 Paid Advertising

✓ Google Ads

### 2 Google My Business Listing

### 3 Map Pack

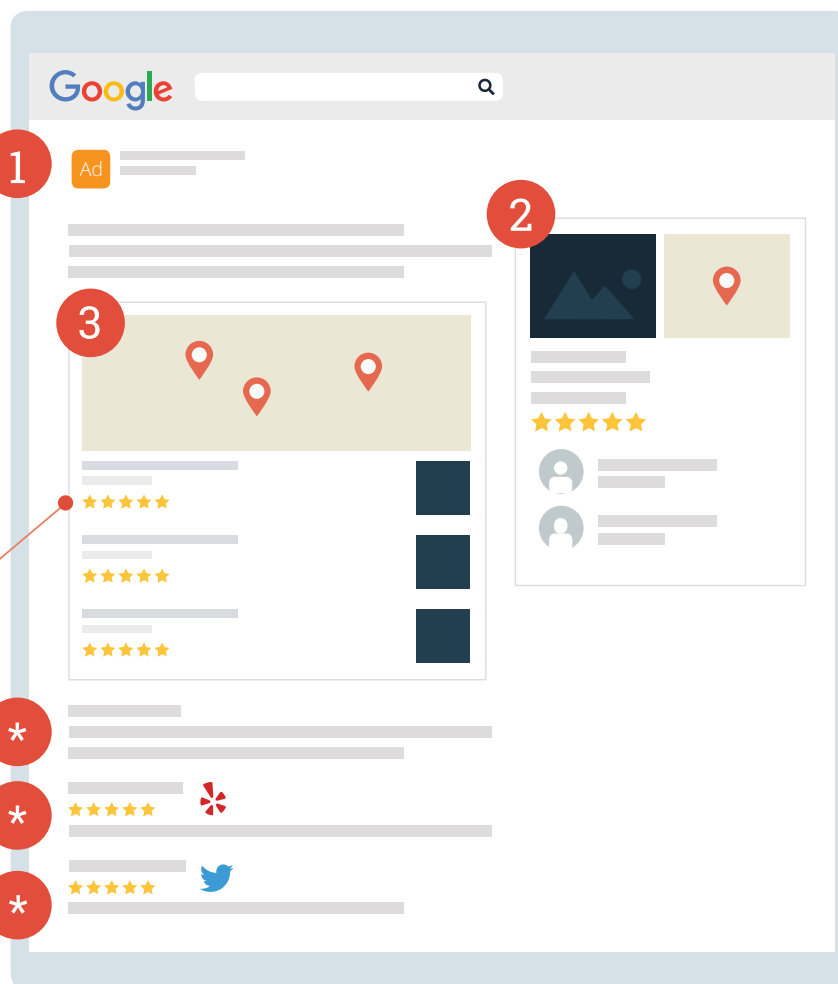
### \* Organic Listings (SEO)

Reviews

Website

Directory Listings

Social Media Channels



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Paul Dybala, PhD**, is a Partner and Vice President of Strategy for AudiologyDesign, the leading digital marketing agency in hearing healthcare that provides services for more than 1,300 clinics in the US and Canada. Dybala's 20-plus year career has focused on making the medium of the

Internet useful for hearing health professionals and the patients they serve. He earned his PhD in communication sciences from the University of Texas at Dallas/Callier Center where he worked as a clinical and research audiologist. He went on to serve as President of AudiologyOnline. He next served as President of Healthy Hearing, a hearing health consumer website. Connect with Dybala at paul@audiologydesign.com



**Meghan Pendley** is a digital marketing expert with more than 12 years experience in hearing industry-specific digital strategy and planning, business development, consultation, branding, and website design. In her current role as Director of Business Development with AudiologyDesign, she

leads the team that works with independent audiology clinics nationwide to manage their online presence and grow their businesses. Contact Pendley at meghan@audiologydesign.com

**REMEMBER TO TAKE THE QUIZ ON PAGE 61.**

# IHS Continuing Education Test

Digital Marketing Self-Checkup Quiz, article on page 22 .

1. Search Engine Results Page includes
  - a. organic listings.
  - b. Google My Business listings.
  - c. Google Ads.
  - d. All of the above
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the percentage of unhappy customers who will return if you respond to their complaint.
  - a. 25%
  - b. 35%
  - c. 40%
  - d. 95%
3. You should schedule a digital marketing check up for your practice
  - a. once a week.
  - b. once a month.
  - c. a few times a year.
  - d. once a year.
4. Search engine algorithms
  - a. remain the same, year after year.
  - b. are constantly adapting.
  - c. require the same SEO tactics each year.
  - d. None of the above
5. 70% of consumers prefer to schedule their appointments over the phone.
  - a. True
  - b. False
6. You should spend at least 90 % of your marketing efforts on your website and SEO.
  - a. True
  - b. False
7. You can know exactly what your cost per qualified lead is through
  - a. call tracking.
  - b. online appointment scheduling.
  - c. tracking lead form submissions.
  - d. All of the above
  - e. None of the above
8. Your digital marketing provider should
  - a. know what your target audience is searching for.
  - b. know the intricacies of your services.
  - c. understand the patients you see.
  - d. All of the above
9. Successful content marketing includes both regularly produced lengthy, jargon-heavy articles and eye catching images.
  - a. True
  - b. False
10. About 75% of Internet users aged 65 years and older claim to go online at least once a day.
  - a. True
  - b. False

**For continuing education credit, complete this test and send the answer section to:**  
**International Hearing Society • 16880 Middlebelt Rd., Ste. 4 • Livonia, MI 48154**  
**or [professionaldevelopment@ihsinfo.org](mailto:professionaldevelopment@ihsinfo.org)**

- After your test has been graded, you will receive a certificate of completion.
- All questions regarding the examination must be in writing and directed to IHS.
- Credit: IHS designates this professional development activity for one (1) continuing education credit.
- Fees: \$29.00 IHS member, \$59.00 non-member. (Payment in U.S. funds only.)

**DIGITAL MARKETING SELF-CHECKUP QUIZ**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Office Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Last Four Digits of SS/SI # \_\_\_\_\_

Professional and /or Academic Credentials \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:  \$29.00 (IHS member)  \$59.00 (non-member)

Payment:  Check Enclosed (payable to IHS)

Charge to:  American Express  Visa  MasterCard  Discover

Card Holder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

(PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM AS NEEDED.)

## Answer Section

(Circle the correct response from the test questions above.)

1. a b c d	6. a b
2. a b c d	7. a b c d e
3. a b c d	8. a b c d
4. a b c d	9. a b
5. a b	10. a b

