Elevating SEO at Cleveland Clinic: 43% Increase in Traffic, 16% Increase in Appointment Sessions, 2/3 of Visitors Now Come from Organic Search

BRIGHTEDGE
CASE STUDY

BACKGROUND

As recently as three years ago, Cleveland Clinic's focus on SEO for its 20,000+ page website was limited solely to the work of two employees. While SEO performance would steadily grow each year, they struggled to get the necessary traction to make the leap in visibility that they always felt could be done based on the content that gets generated in-house on a daily basis by other colleagues within the Marketing & Communications Division. In order to generate that growth, they realized that empowering their fellow caregivers with better SEO knowledge and helping them understand why this was critical for long-term success became one of their top priorities.

THE SOLUTION

After adding on a new member to lead our search engine marketing efforts, they continued to develop their own skills through online learning, including BrightEdge certification. That was followed by developing and presenting a comprehensive series of ongoing in-house SEO training and measurement sessions that were attended by more than 90 coworkers in the organization over the past three years. These additions to their in-house SEO partners include colleagues from individual service line marketing teams, content marketing, web development, patient education and website maintenance.

These groups also help spread the importance of the SEO mindset across the organization by connecting directly with clinical staff and leadership. This has been crucial in helping keep SEO as a primary topic when reshaping their content planning strategy. This strategy included gathering feedback that helped writers craft content that speaks in a manner used by actual patients instead of relying entirely on heavy medical jargon. The approach directly mirrors the organization's "Patients First" mantra.

During this time, BrightEdge has remained a key component in their content creation and optimization strategy. BrightEdge Data Cube has been invaluable for keyword research, competitive benchmarking, content gap opportunity analysis, and prioritizing content refresh opportunities for "striking distance" keywords related to key clinical areas of importance. StoryBuilder provides enhanced reporting. ContentIQ helps eliminate redundant pages. BrightEdge was also a critical resource that helped them restructure their entire library of health content during their responsive (mobile) website design project that ran from the end of 2016 through the first half of 2018.

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RESULTS

Since spreading the importance of SEO across the organization, these efforts helped drive significant lift in search engine visibility, traffic, and patient acquisition, including the following:

- Two out of every three visits to clevelandclinic.org now comes from Organic search
- A 43% increase in SEO traffic over the past two years including a 15% lift in Organic search traffic year-over-year in 2018 alone
- Closed more than 150 content gaps within their Health Library
- Boosted organic sessions by 3.5 million visits to their Health Library (19% year-over-year lift)
- Increased image search visibility by 87% for targeted keywords (July 2018 vs. Jan. 2017)
- Improved page load time by 97% by completing their website redesign project
- Lifted user sessions by 16% year-over-year for traffic to online appointment request form after entering our website through organic search

Cleveland Clinic