

seeker |



Healthcare SEO

A guide to organic growth for CQC-regulated brands

hi@seeker.digital +44 0117 422 8686



We're the undisputed #1 online pharmacy SEO team in the UK



As the SEO team behind the UK's fastest-growing online pharmacy, we know what it takes to succeed in this highly-regulated, fiercely-competitive space. Our expertise in the healthcare SEO sector is unparalleled in our industry, and we've consistently demonstrated our ability to navigate the intricate web of regulatory requirements while delivering significant yet sustainable organic growth.

This success is no accident; it's the result of a meticulously honed strategy that blends in-depth research and analysis, authoritative content creation, influential digital PR tactics, and laser-targeted link building techniques. Moreover, we understand that SEO is an ever-evolving field, especially in the dynamic landscape of online healthcare. Our agility and adaptability are key drivers of progress.

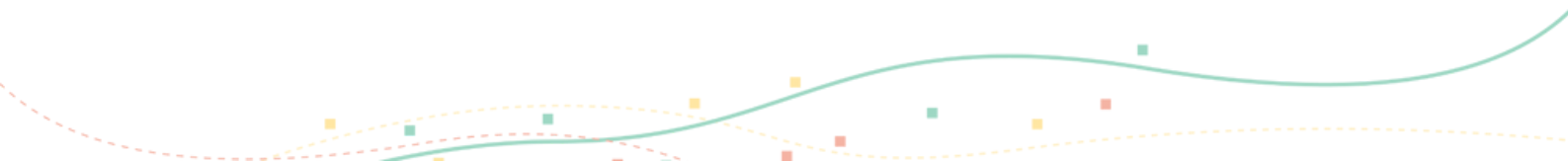
Healthcare SEO is different. Success is dependent on an acute understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that define health-related niches, from the need to adhere to strict ethical standards to the paramount importance of accuracy and trust in digital content. The rewards for brands that get it right are ample, but getting it right is notoriously difficult.

In our expert guide to SEO for brands in CQC-regulated industries, we break down the steps to organic success in the health sector. We explore the specific challenges associated with healthcare SEO, explaining how a diverse range of tactics and approaches - encompassing content marketing, digital PR, link building, and more - can propel a healthcare brand from below par to peak health.

Discover how SEO can drive sustainable traffic and revenue in healthcare.

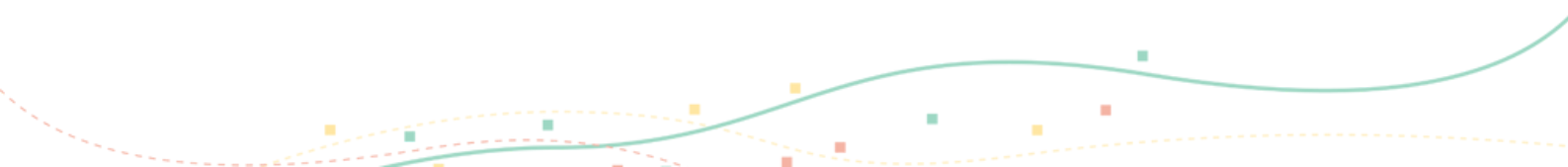
**Prefer to talk to an expert straight away?
Get in touch with us today.**

hi@seeker.digital +44 0117 422 8686



Contents

What is SEO and why does it matter?	4
Why is SEO important in the healthcare sector?	5
SEO challenges for regulated brands	7
Why organic vs paid advertising?	4
Technical SEO	5
Keyword optimisation	6
Digital PR	18
Link building	23
Content marketing	27
Social media	30
Performance tracking	32
The future of online healthcare and SEO	34
Key takeaways	35
Case study: The Independent Pharmacy	36



What is SEO and why does it matter?

Search engine optimisation (SEO) refers to a combination of techniques aimed at improving a website's organic ranking in search engine results pages (SERPs), thereby driving organic traffic and enhancing online visibility.

Think of it as a series of strategically-placed signposts guiding potential clients or patients to your digital content; if you don't take the time to ensure your pages are organically visible, you can end up being repeatedly overlooked in favour of competing brands or services.

Search engines such as Google utilise sophisticated algorithms, drawing from hundreds of separate 'ranking factors' when determining where to rank web pages in the SERPs. These ranking factors focus on a range of fundamental components, including:

- The relevance and quality of the page content
- The domain's level of authority and trustworthiness
- The number of relevant and good quality backlinks
- The overall user experience of the page

Because of the sheer number of factors considered by search engines, an SEO strategy is inherently multi-faceted, encompassing a diverse range of tactics and techniques designed to grow visibility through search — from the on-site user experience (UX) to the external links that point to the domain.

SEO is typically split into three primary categories: on-site SEO, off-site SEO, and technical SEO. Each of these elements plays an essential role in the organic performance of a website, with a number of individual factors falling under each category.

On-site SEO includes elements that you can control on your own website, such as content quality and keyword optimisation, while off-site SEO involves external factors like building backlinks and social media engagement. Technical SEO covers the technical aspects - such as site speed and structure - that help search engines crawl and index your site more effectively.

On-site SEO	Off-site SEO	Technical SEO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content creation• Keyword optimisation• Internal linking• Image alt tags• Meta information• URL structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link building• Content marketing• Digital PR• Influencer marketing• Social media engagement• Local directories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site speed optimisation• Mobile optimisation• Site security (HTTPS)• Structured data markup• XML sitemaps• Crawl error resolution



Additionally, users' search habits — and indeed, search engines' complex algorithms — are continually evolving, meaning an SEO strategy must not only be holistic but agile and adaptable, ensuring adherence to up-to-date best practices and guidelines.

An integrated SEO strategy might therefore involve, among other factors:

- Performing industry and competitor research
- Identifying high-value search keywords and phrases
- Producing high-quality content tailored to specific search intent
- Building links from authoritative external sources
- Optimising on-site elements such as page structure and titles
- Ensuring a smooth UX, with mobile-friendly pages
- Keeping up-to-date with user behaviour and search algorithms
- Tracking key search metrics and refining strategies accordingly

Why is SEO important in the healthcare sector?

Despite the slightly outdated joke about not turning to Google for medical advice, around 1 in every 14 global searches are concerned with health in some way, with users turning to search engines to seek information, research symptoms, purchase treatments, and locate healthcare services - more than 8 in 10 of us have used a search engine to find a healthcare provider.

7% of all Google searches are health-related.

WebFX

This means that organic visibility is fundamental to healthcare brands. As a starting point, an effective SEO strategy helps healthcare providers reach a wider audience, improving patient engagement and education. But while organic marketing can help healthcare brands generate broad visibility, it also enables them to attract more targeted traffic, generating warm leads and conversions by ranking for precise terms that signal high search intent from users.

83% of patients use a search engine to find a healthcare provider.

Digitalis

Most importantly, however, in a sector where reputation and trust are paramount, SEO plays a critical role in establishing authority in the eyes of users and search engines. Google's principles of experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness (E-E-A-T) are especially important factors in any health-related digital marketing strategy, with accurate, well-researched, and comprehensive content helping to establish credibility.



Increased visibility in a competitive sphere

Google processes 70,000+ health-related searches every minute, and three quarters of those searching will never look beyond the first page of results. To be in with a chance of capturing this vast potential audience, you need to be visible - and for that you require a strong SEO strategy.

Enhanced authority and user trust

More than almost any other industry, healthcare is built on trust. If search engines don't trust your brand, you'll struggle to show up in searches. If users are wary of your credentials, they'll steer clear of your services. Authority and credibility are crucial, and SEO can help you become a trusted name.



Targeted audience reach

SEO allows healthcare brands to get granular, targeting specific keywords that potential patients and clients are actively searching for. This enables you to put your website in front of people who are engaged and interested, generating qualified traffic that's more likely to convert.

Improved brand perception

A key aspect of SEO is brand building, with activities such as Digital PR helping to spread awareness while building a notable reputation in an industry where brand perception is key. More coverage, more referrals, and more links = a brand that shines brighter than its competitors in a tough industry.



Cost-effective traffic

No, SEO isn't free. But once established, an SEO strategy can yield long-term traffic and revenue without the ongoing costs often associated with other forms of marketing. For example: by working with Seeker, The Independent Pharmacy generated a cool 1,177% return on their organic investment.

Sustainable success

Digital marketing tactics such as pay-per-click advertising (PPC) are great if your objectives are short-term, but an integrated SEO strategy is all about sustainability. It will require time, effort, and investment to maintain success, of course, but a consistent approach can lead to a long-term payoff.



SEO challenges for regulated brands

In many ways, healthcare isn't like other industries, primarily owing to the stringent regulations and ethical considerations involved. Healthcare brands and organisations face unique SEO challenges due to the nature of the industry and the very specific needs of their audiences; balancing regulatory compliance, patient privacy concerns, and effective SEO tactics requires a singular and nuanced approach.

71% of patients will search for a new provider if the website is lacking information.

Digitalis

Governed by strict guidelines to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information, it's crucial for healthcare-related content to be authentic and thoroughly compliant. This often limits the use of certain marketing strategies commonly employed in SEO. Additionally, there's a high level of competition for relevant keywords in healthcare, and the need for comprehensiveness, trustworthiness, and authority in content is paramount in order for regulated brands to stand out.

Let's dive a little deeper into the unique challenges faced by healthcare organisations when it comes to SEO and digital marketing in general.

Complex and sensitive content

Healthcare-related topics can be complex, sensitive, and often highly technical. Balancing the need for accuracy and comprehensiveness with user-friendly, accessible language is challenging, and ensuring content is both medically accurate and optimised for search engines requires a deep understanding of both healthcare and SEO best practices.

Compliance with regulations

The healthcare industry is heavily regulated, not only by the CQC but by laws such as HIPAA in the United States and the Data Protection Act in the UK. These laws impose strict guidelines on how information is handled, and failure to adhere to these regulations within a digital marketing strategy can severely harm the credibility of a healthcare brand, potentially leading to compliance issues and even fines.

High keyword competition

Many healthcare-related keywords are highly competitive, with large, established entities such as government health departments and major health organisations tending to dominate the SERPs. Smaller or more niche healthcare brands often struggle to rank for these keywords, meaning they often need to adopt more nuanced and strategic SEO tactics.

E-E-A-T requirements

Google places strong emphasis on the need for experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness in digital content, especially in YMYL (Your Money or Your Life) niches such as healthcare. Demonstrating experience, conveying expertise, establishing authority, and evoking user trust in content is crucial yet challenging, particularly for unestablished healthcare brands.

Local SEO challenges

For local healthcare providers like pharmacies, clinics or individual practitioners, local SEO is vital. However, it can be challenging to stand out in local search results, especially in areas with many competitors.

Constantly changing health information

Just like SEO, the healthcare field is continuously evolving, with new research, treatments, and guidelines emerging almost constantly. Keeping content up-to-date and relevant is crucial for maintaining the trust of patients and search engines, but requires constant vigilance and adaptability.

Patient privacy concerns

While user engagement metrics like reviews and testimonials transmit important trust signals to search engines, healthcare providers must navigate patient privacy concerns when using these tools. Encouraging patients to leave honest feedback without compromising their privacy can be difficult.

Diverse user intent

Users searching for healthcare information can have vastly different intents – from researching symptoms, to finding a nearby clinic, to looking to purchase a specific treatment. Catering to this diverse range of user intents in SEO strategies requires a holistic approach to keyword research and content creation.

Misinformation and trust issues

The internet is rife with health misinformation and inaccuracies, often making it difficult for legitimate healthcare providers to establish trust. Content must be seen as credible and comprehensive in a landscape filled with conflicting information.

Google algorithm updates

Google algorithm updates can significantly impact how medical content ranks in search results. Accurate, authoritative information is crucial in healthcare, and understanding and adapting to these updates ensures that valuable, trustworthy content reaches those seeking medical advice, enhancing brand visibility and credibility in a highly regulated field.

Some of the most significant recent updates include:

Google Medic (2018)

- Emphasising expertise, authority, and trust, especially for health, legal, and financial sites.
- Impacting YMYL sites significantly, with a focus on reliable and accurate content.
- Prioritising high-quality, user-focused content, and penalising untrustworthy or 'thin' content.
- A broader impact beyond health, affecting a wide range of other niches.

Primarily affecting websites in YMYL niches such as medicine, health and fitness, Google Medic changed the game for healthcare SEO. This major algorithm update sought to clamp down on poor-quality, unreliable or 'thin' YMYL-type content, and rewarding websites that produced well-researched, trustworthy content that focused on providing genuine value to users.

The more recent Helpful Content update was a further drive by Google to prioritise what it refers to as 'human-first' content - content produced for users rather than to manipulate search engine rankings - with a view to ensuring the most relevant and valuable content is presented via the SERPs. This emphasised content quality and originality over tactics such as excessive keyword use.

Google Helpful Content (2022)

- Prioritising human-first content created for users, not just for search engine algorithms.
- Penalising content that attempts to manipulate search engine rankings (e.g. by excessively using keywords).
- Rewarding original, informative content that provides genuine value to users.
- Part of a broader initiative to improve user experience through the quality and relevance of search results.

Navigating Google Medic and Helpful Content

These two game-changing algorithmic shifts have meant that all brands with a digital presence - but particularly those in highly regulated industries such as healthcare, where accuracy and user confidence are paramount - have had to adapt, leaning into E-E-A-T principles by prioritising value-adding content that conveys expertise and evokes trust.

To successfully navigate these guiding standards, healthcare brands must prioritise the following:

- Producing high-quality, user-focused content which is not created solely for search engines.
- Offering unique content which does not simply summarise information that's already available.
- Ensuring content is properly researched, accurate, and verified by a specialist in the field.
- Using automation carefully, since generative AI tools may not produce reliable information.
- Focusing on topics closely related to the brand's primary niche, rather than producing lots of unrelated content for the purpose of ranking.
- Understanding search intent and creating content which addresses user needs or questions.
- Reviewing and optimising any existing content which is outdated or lacks value.
- Building backlinks from reliable and authoritative sources which enhance trust.

Future-proofing against search algorithm updates

In an ever-evolving search landscape, maintaining visibility and relevance can be challenging. Google frequently updates its algorithms to prioritise high-quality, accurate, and user-focused content, while emphasising user experience through factors such as mobile-friendliness and page loading speeds.

The important factor to remember about Google's algorithmic updates is that they're almost always done with the aim of benefiting the end user - ensuring relevant, high-quality search results and delivering a positive user experience.

Healthcare brands are better equipped to deal with these changes by keeping the user at the heart of everything they do; whether that's creating genuinely valuable, user-focused content or ensuring a fast-loading and seamlessly navigable website. Moreover, regularly updating existing content to reflect the latest medical research and guidelines ensures ongoing relevance and accuracy.

Why organic vs paid advertising?

While pay-per-click (PPC) advertising has its place as part of a well-rounded digital marketing strategy (particularly for generating immediate visibility and running targeted short-term campaigns), SEO enables healthcare brands to build a credible, authoritative online presence over time, attracting high-quality traffic and providing sustainable, cost-effective results.

On average, SEO converts at 3.4x the rate of PPC in the medical devices sector.

First Page Sage

Sustainable results

PPC can offer an immediate boost in visibility and revenue, but its impact is generally short-lived and ends as soon as the campaign does. In contrast, a well-maintained SEO strategy can help build a sustained online presence with consistent traffic and revenue growth. In medical terms, PPC is a little like a painkiller - instantly effective yet temporary - while SEO is more akin to a long-term treatment plan.

Comprehensive reach

SEO enables healthcare brands to reach broader and more diverse audiences, targeting a varied range of keywords and search intents to generate traffic and visibility. PPC is effective for very precisely targeted keywords and demographics, while organic search encompasses a greater breadth of search queries, enabling brands to rank for a wider scope of high-value keywords.

Hospital marketers are spending 85% of their budgets on Google ads.

Healthgrades

Cost-effectiveness

While PPC can only deliver value for as long you're willing to pay to keep your ads running, organically-generated revenue is more self-sustaining. In the medical devices category, SEO reportedly generates an average return on investment (ROI) of 1,183%*.

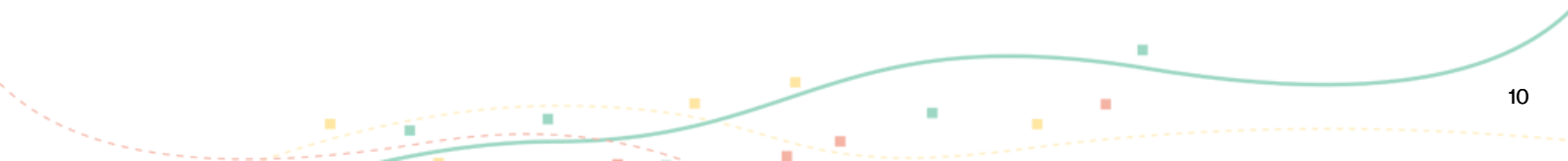
Avoidance of ad blindness

Internet users are increasingly savvy, and many have a tendency to ignore paid advertisements (a phenomenon known as 'ad blindness') in favour of organic content. Users often perceive organic search results as more credible and trustworthy than paid ads, and in a sector where trust is paramount, appearing organically in search results can help validate the reputation of a healthcare brand.

Better quality traffic

Users who click on organic search results as opposed to ads are often more informed and further along in their decision-making journeys. This means that traffic from organic search can be of higher quality and more likely to convert, with users actively seeking healthcare information, products or services.

Source: <https://firstpagesage.com/reports/digital-marketing-roi-statistics/>



Technical SEO

Optimising your digital DNA for peak website health

Technical SEO is like the cardiovascular system of your overall SEO strategy; it's the foundational network of 'vessels' and 'arteries' that ensure blood flow - or in this case, search engines - can navigate efficiently through your website. Just as a healthy heart and clear vessels are essential for distributing nutrients throughout the body, a well-structured technical SEO setup is crucial for guiding search engines to index your site's content properly.

We're starting here because the technical elements of an SEO strategy represent its very foundation. No matter how impressive your content marketing or link building strategies, failing to pay proper attention to the fundamental factors involved in technical SEO will render these efforts largely ineffective. After all, if search engines are unable to effectively crawl your content, and your users are offered a poor experience, your SEO strategy will have failed before you've even started.

What is technical SEO?

Technical SEO is a critical aspect of search engine optimisation that focuses on enhancing the architectural aspects of a website, with the primary aim of ensuring it's logically structured, secure, and can easily be crawled and indexed by search engines such as Google. Unlike other SEO practices that revolve around content creation and link building, technical SEO is concerned with the overall infrastructure of your website, encompassing factors such as site security and user experience (UX).

Some of the elements involved in a technical SEO strategy include:

- Website speed optimisation: fast-loading websites enhance UX and are favoured by search engines.
- Mobile responsiveness: mobile-friendliness is a crucial ranking factor, and more than half of users access health-related content via a smartphone.
- SSL and HTTPS: implementing SSL to secure the connection between the user's browser and the server is crucial for earning the trust of users and search engines.
- Crawlability and indexing: ensuring search engines can crawl your website and index its content involves managing robots.txt files, ensuring healthy crawl budget, and fixing crawl errors.
- Structured data (schema markup): implementing schema markup helps search engines understand the context of content, which can improve the likelihood of it ranking.
- XML sitemap optimisation: creating and maintaining an updated XML sitemap makes it easier for search engines to find and index content.
- URL structure: building SEO-friendly URLs that are concise and include relevant keywords helps to create easy-to-follow navigational paths for both users and search engines.
- 404s and redirect management: managing 404 error pages and implementing proper redirects (such as 301 redirects) conserves link equity while improving overall UX.
- Canonical tags: using canonical tags helps to prevent duplicate content issues.

Why is technical SEO important in healthcare?

Technical SEO is fundamental no matter what sector you're operating in, but it's not just concerned with ensuring search engines can crawl and index a site - it's also a crucial element in building user trust, something which is non-negotiable in the healthcare industry. As such, your technical SEO strategy can make or break important factors such as user engagement, conversion, and customer loyalty.

A one-second delay in mobile load times can reduce conversions by up to 20%

Think with Google

Technical SEO is particularly critical for healthcare brands when you consider the following:

Credibility and trust

A website that's properly optimised, secure, and structurally sound reflects professionalism and authority, crucial in the healthcare sector where building trust is key.

User experience

Given the often sensitive nature of healthcare information, a user-friendly website that loads quickly and is easy to navigate can greatly impact user engagement.

Compliance and privacy

Technical SEO encompasses aspects of website security, which is essential for protecting patient information and complying with healthcare privacy laws.

Brand perception and reputation

A technically optimised website reduces the risk of downtime or loss of performance, as well as errors such as broken links, which can negatively impact a brand's reputation and user trust.

Accessibility

Technical SEO includes optimising for accessibility, ensuring that healthcare information is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities, which is vital for inclusivity in healthcare.

Content discoverability

By maintaining a logical structure and hierarchy of website content, users can quickly and easily access the important information they need about healthcare services and treatments.

Visibility in a competitive market

Ultimately, an effective technical SEO strategy ensures greater visibility in search results, which is vital in a fiercely-competitive healthcare industry.

Technical SEO checklist for healthcare brands



Prioritise load speed

Optimise images and backend code for consistent speed on healthcare sites. Use tools like Google PageSpeed Insights for improvements.



Ensure mobile-friendliness

A mobile-responsive site is crucial for accessing health information. Check responsiveness with Google's Mobile-Friendly Test.



Secure your site with HTTPS

In healthcare, site security is vital. Use SSL and HTTPS to protect visitor privacy and security.



Implement structured data

Use schema markup for key details like contacts and services. This enhances search engine understanding and visibility.



Optimise website architecture

Develop a clear, logical site structure, which helps search engines to crawl content and aids user navigation.



Create SEO-friendly URLs

Make URLs simple, readable, and descriptive, including relevant keywords and avoiding complex strings.



Regularly update sitemaps

Keep XML sitemaps up-to-date to ensure that search engines index new content quickly and consistently.



Manage error pages

Regularly address 404 errors with appropriate 301 redirects to avoid broken links and user frustration.



Ensure accessibility compliance

Follow [Equality Act](#) guidelines for accessibility, including alt text for images, benefiting users with disabilities.



Perform regular health checks

Use tools such as SEMrush or Ahrefs for ongoing technical SEO audits, identifying and resolving issues quickly.

Keyword optimisation

Dissecting search terms for precision-targeted traffic

In the healthcare sector, keywords act much like a medical diagnostic tool. Just as these technologies are crucial in pinpointing the exact location and nature of a health issue, keywords are essential in the digital landscape for helping brands uncover gaps and opportunities, enabling them to tailor their content and marketing strategies to meet the specific needs of patients and customers.

In an industry where the accuracy and relevance of information can have profound implications, the right keywords ensure that healthcare providers appear in search results for those seeking specific medical advice or services. This targeted visibility is not just about driving web traffic but providing timely, reliable health information to those in need, enhancing patient engagement and building trust in your brand.

Understanding search intent

Understanding search intent is crucial in tailoring your keyword strategy to the unique needs and behaviours of your target audience. In healthcare, search intent ranges from informational concerns (such as “is it safe to take sleeping pills?”) to highly-motivated transactional queries (“buy the morning after pill”). Optimising content and keywords for a range of intents means you can meet your users at different stages of the funnel, whether they’re simply searching for general advice or ready to act.

There are typically four different types of search intent, and these can be categorised as follows:

	Objective	Example
Informational	Seeking general information or advice (e.g. symptoms, treatment options, or general health information)	"What are the symptoms of asthma?"
Navigational	Trying to find a specific healthcare website or page (e.g. a hospital website or health portal login page)	"Mayo Clinic patient portal login"
Commercial	Conducting research before making a decision (e.g. comparing treatments or health insurance plans)	"Best family health insurance plans"
Transactional	Looking to complete an action or transaction (e.g. purchasing a treatment or booking a medical appointment)	"Buy hay fever treatments online"

To align your content with these intents, the first task is to identify the most common queries within each category. Analysing search intent involves delving into keyword use within your niche, understanding the language of your audience, and creating content that directly addresses your audience's needs at different stages of the funnel. For example, the kind of content you can create to match each of your audience's search intent might look something like this:

- Informational intent: health guides and advice pages (e.g. "The Most Common Symptoms of Erectile Dysfunction" or "How To Get a Better Night's Sleep").
- Navigational intent: key landing and service pages, such as your homepage, support, about us, or patient login pages.
- Commercial intent: pages which compare or evaluate products and services (e.g. "The Best Treatments for Seasonal Flu" or "How to Choose a Health Insurance Plan").
- Transactional intent: product detail pages - which clearly outline features, benefits, and cost - or appointment booking and signup screens.

The importance of long-tail keywords

The balance between broad and long-tail keywords is a delicate one. Clearly, broad keywords such as "healthcare services" or "medical advice" draw in larger, more general audiences. They're typically high in volume, but also high in competition, and rarely generate conversions due to their generic nature.

Conversely, long-tail keywords, which include more specific phrases like "paediatric asthma specialist in London", have lower search volumes but are crucial for attracting a targeted audience. These keywords are particularly effective in capturing the attention of users at the all-important decision-making stage of their search - think commercial and transactional intent.

	Broad keywords	Long-tail keywords
Definition	Usually short, consisting of one or two words. They are general and cover a wide range of topics within a given field.	More specific and usually consisting of three or more words. They target a specific niche and have higher level of intent.
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High search volume• High competition• Lower conversion rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low search volume• Low competition• Higher conversion rates
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "GP surgery"• "dental care"• "weight loss"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "affordable dental care in Bristol"• "buy hay fever medication online"• "sexual health clinic near me"

Just as targeting a range of different search intents is key, so too is creating content that appeals to multiple keyword types. That said, while a diverse keyword strategy that combines broad appeal with specificity is advantageous, smaller and less established healthcare brands are extremely unlikely to rank for broad, short-tail keywords - these will be dominated by major organisations such as the NHS or the World Health Organisation (WHO), or by market-leading retailers and pharmacies.

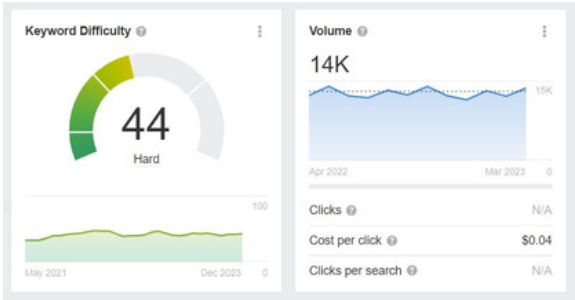
Long-tail keywords, on the other hand, are more up for grabs, and by strategically optimising content and landing pages for these very niche, high-intent phrases, you can rank for keywords at the bottom of the funnel (where users are typically ready to complete an action or purchase), capturing targeted and highly-motivated traffic and increasing the probability of a conversion.

There are a number of ways to discover long-tail keywords you may be able to rank for:

- Begin with broad or seed keywords related to your topic or industry.
- Enter these seed keywords into a tool such as Google Keyword Planner or Ahrefs to uncover more specific phrases related to the topic.
- Type your seed keywords into Google and observe the autocomplete suggestions (check out the “People also ask” and “Searches related to” sections, too).
- Visit social media and forums such as Reddit. Look for threads related to your seed keywords and note the specific questions and phrases people use.
- Visit competitor websites, and pay particular attention to content such as blog posts, FAQs, and product/service descriptions.
- Create topic clusters which contain more specific subsections (for example, a topic cluster around “health insurance” could include “affordable healthcare plans for families”).
- Analyse your existing website data to identify long-tail queries that are already bringing traffic to your site.
- Monitor customer reviews and feedback, as they often contain specific phrases used by your target audience.

Measuring search volume and keyword difficulty

Understanding keyword volume and difficulty is fundamental to tailoring your SEO efforts effectively. Keyword volume gives an indication of how many people are searching for a particular term, while keyword difficulty suggests how hard it would be to rank for it. In the healthcare sector, where competition is stiff and stakes are high, selecting the right keywords based on the relative probability and difficulty of ranking becomes even more critical.



High-volume keywords can bring in significant traffic, but tend to be highly competitive. Targeting them requires solid domain authority, high-quality content, and a strong backlink profile. On the other hand, lower-volume keywords might be easier to rank for, but won't bring in anywhere near the same amount of traffic. The trick lies in finding a middle ground – targeting those keywords that have a reasonable volume (3-5 figures, for example) but are not too prohibitively difficult to rank for. Continually monitoring your keyword performance using a tool such as Ahrefs will help in maintaining the right balance, ensuring your healthcare brand remains visible and can attract the right type of traffic.

Optimising for local SEO

For healthcare brands with physical locations, local SEO must be a lynchpin of their digital marketing strategy. Optimising for local keywords means incorporating specific geographical locations into your content and landing pages - for instance, "emergency dental services in Bristol" or "Manchester children's clinic."

**46% of Google searches
include local intent**

Safari Digital

This approach is essential in attracting users or patients who are searching for services in their immediate vicinity. It involves not only embedding local keywords into your web content, digital ads, and social media, but also ensuring your presence on local directories and Google My Business. Local SEO is about being visible and accessible to the community you serve, but it's also tied closely with reputation management, since local reviews and online word-of-mouth are crucial in cementing trust.

Optimising for local healthcare SEO involves a number of factors. For instance:

- Regularly spread local keywords throughout your content and landing pages, including in titles, meta descriptions, headers, and body content.
- Incorporate keywords that reflect the specific geographical areas you serve, such as "family doctor in Gloucester" or "urgent care services in Bristol city centre".
- Localise not just service pages and descriptions but also blog posts and informational content, referencing local issues, news, or health concerns.
- Develop content specifically for your local audience, like blog posts about local health events, community service, or common health issues in your area.
- Claim and verify the Google My Business (GMB) listing for your healthcare business, ensuring all information is kept accurate and up-to-date, including contact details and operating hours.
- Actively respond to reviews, both positive and negative, in a constructive and professional and manner. This shows engagement and can improve your local search rankings.
- Implement local schema markup (structured data) on your website. This helps search engines understand the geographic specificity of your service and can enhance local search result visibility.
- Engage in local link building by getting listed in local directories, partnering with other local businesses, and getting featured in local news outlets or blogs.

Digital PR

Placing your brand at the heart of the industry

In the age of digital transformation, traditional PR tactics have evolved into a more dynamic form known as digital PR (DPR). This evolution is crucial for healthcare brands seeking to dominate the online landscape. It not only helps establish SERP visibility, but also plays a pivotal role in spreading brand awareness, conveying trust signals, and cementing a strong reputation - all critical factors in the healthcare sector.

To summarise, a digital PR strategy is crucial for healthcare brands for the following reasons:

- Dominating the SERPs through link building
- Getting in front of your target audience
- Building brand awareness
- Demonstrating expertise
- Establishing industry authority
- Cementing trust
- Enhancing reputation

How does digital PR differ from ‘traditional’ PR?

Digital PR in the healthcare sector incorporates the foundational principles of traditional PR, but with a focus on outcomes that are more aligned with SEO objectives. This approach includes leveraging digital channels to not only build links, but also to bolster brand presence, drive traffic, and foster conversions. At its core, DPR should embody trust, authority, and relevance - values that are the cornerstone of traditional PR, but also play a vital role in a highly-regulated industry where expertise is valued.

- Digital PR employs the strategies of traditional PR while focusing on link building objectives, and delivers benefits from both disciplines.
- Digital PR is more than just link building (although that’s a core SEO benefit); it also builds your brand through digital channels which generate visibility, traffic and conversions.
- Your digital PR tactics need to be highly relevant and ultimately have trust, authority and relevance at the heart – values that are shared with traditional PR.
- The lines between digital and traditional PR are increasingly blurring, particularly as the online landscape becomes the primary source of health information and services.

The primary goals of PR have traditionally been managing public perception, handling crisis communications, and fostering relationships with journalists and stakeholders in traditional media. The core of digital PR is creating digital content and narratives that resonate with online communities, drive web traffic, and enhance brand awareness and perception. This shift reflects the broader change in media consumption patterns, with a growing emphasis on digital channels in healthcare.

The primary goals of health-focused digital PR

The objectives of digital PR can range from brand-centric goals, like building brand awareness and increasing share of voice, to more SEO-focused targets such as improving keyword rankings and backlink quality. For healthcare brands, goals might also include elevating product or service visibility, improving conversions, and promoting specific healthcare categories or products. Establishing clear aims and objectives a crucial first step in building an effective and impactful digital PR strategy.

Achieving widespread coverage

Digital PR allows you to secure links and coverage on top domain news and editorial sites which typically can't be accessed by traditional link building. These sites might include medical journals, health news sources, or even national and international publications. Additional coverage across other platforms - radio, TV, newsletters, and social media - presents additional, cross-channel strategic opportunities.

Building awareness

One of the primary aims of digital PR is getting your brand seen by the right audience. By achieving mentions and links in high-exposure yet relevant publications, you build the kind of targeted brand awareness that is typically hard to achieve through other forms of digital marketing. You can also build SERP prominence through keyword-targeted campaigns and strategic link building tactics.

Establishing authority and expertise

Digital PR plays directly into the hands of Google's crucial E-E-A-T requirements of experience, expertise, authority, and trust. Having your brand associated with respected industry publications conveys instant credibility, but you can also demonstrate your expertise through expert commentary on pertinent topics - for example, through journalists' HARO requests or thought-leadership press releases.

Forming long-term relationships with journalists

A key aspect of digital PR is relationship building. Your primary objective is offering compelling content and story opportunities that journalists want to cover in their publications - it's very much a mutually-beneficial deal - and forging a positive rapport with respected journalists in your industry through targeted and personalised outreach can open up future opportunities for coverage.

100% of journalists say their #1 method of finding stories is through press releases.

Reboot

Boosting SEO efforts

Of course, a digital PR strategy is ultimately part of an SEO strategy, and many of its principle goals and benefits are SEO-related. One of the central objectives of any digital PR campaign is high-quality link building, with the targeting of authoritative and highly relevant publications fundamental in securing links from strong domains and contributing to a healthy backlink profile. These efforts will enhance your healthcare site's own domain authority and dramatically improve ranking potential.

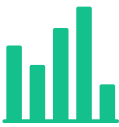
Proactive and reactive PR for healthcare brands

Proactive digital PR involves strategically planning and creating content, such as thought leadership articles or press releases, while reactive PR focuses on responding to trending or emerging topics and events such as healthcare developments or public health news. Together, these approaches help healthcare brands stay at the forefront of public discourse, whether shaping or responding to it.

For healthcare brands, some of the primary methods of proactive and reactive digital PR may include:

Data studies

- Running health-related surveys
- Creating industry reports and data analysis
- Analysing trend-led data (such as search or social trends)



Thought leadership

- Breaking down difficult topics for general audiences
- Providing an informed viewpoint on specific areas of concern
- Analysing and providing new perspectives on relevant sector news



Expert commentary

- Providing expert guidance on health-related topics
- Adding commentary to existing stories or discussions
- Responding to journalist requests for expert quotes



Thought leadership and expert commentary best practices

Thought leadership and expert commentary are invaluable assets for healthcare brands, especially in their interactions with journalists. Particularly in the realm of healthcare and other YMYL niches, journalists are consistently in need of authoritative voices to bolster the E-E-A-T of their own pieces. By providing expert insights and commentary, healthcare brands not only contribute significantly to the credibility of journalistic content, but also gain opportunities to assert their authority in the field and increase their brand exposure through direct mentions and links.

When approaching opportunities to offer expert commentary of thought-leadership content:

- Ensure the individuals providing or commentary are genuine experts in their field. In healthcare, this often means qualified medical professionals, such as doctors or researchers.
- Your experts should look like experts. Ensure they have an up-to-date bio page displaying accreditations, a professional or LinkedIn profile, and a premium-looking headshot.
- Be consistent. To maintain brand authority and relevance within the medical field, it's important to continually look for opportunities to provide expert insight or analysis.
- Support viewpoints with data, research, and evidence where possible. In healthcare, factual accuracy and evidence-backed arguments are crucial for credibility.

Building and validating a healthcare DPR strategy

1. SEO and market analysis

- Align with top-performing healthcare categories, conditions, or products.
- Identify and focus on revenue-driving products or services.
- Develop content plans and campaigns that align with wider business goals.
- Conduct keyword mapping for campaigns, ensuring inclusion in asset pages and PR initiatives.

2. Competitor analysis

- Map and identify key competitors in the healthcare sector.
- Analyse competitors' news profiles using Google News, Buzzsumo, and other tools.
- Review competitors' backlink profiles and share of voice.
- Conduct checks for primary content pages and product lines of competitors.
- Explore competitors' presence across search engines and social media platforms.

3. Strategy creation

- Develop a topic list for brand association, mindful of areas to avoid due to CQC regulations.
- Discuss and define the brand's stance on controversial healthcare topics.
- Create an annual opportunity calendar, including awareness days, events, and sector news.
- Develop a topic map for year-round opportunities.
- Prepare thought leader and spokesperson bios for strategic dissemination.

4. Ideation and concept development

- Ensure research aligns with CQC standards: Trusted, up-to-date, valid, and ethically sound.
- Develop and test concepts for DPR campaigns and proactive messaging.
- Map campaign plans to key healthcare topics throughout the year.

5. Reputation management

- Develop an ORM plan covering the entire brand.
- Prepare for customer issues, thought leader challenges, and industry changes.
- Coordinate with PR and brand managers for a unified response strategy.
- Create templates for handling risk management areas such as complaints or controversial topics.

6. Social media integration

- Integrate DPR campaigns with social media channels.
- Identify and focus on the most effective platforms in the healthcare sector.
- Map keywords and engagement strategies for each chosen social platform.
- Plan for seamless integration of campaigns across various channels.

Healthcare digital PR campaign examples

Leading conversations through proactive PR

In 2022, Seeker helped The Independent Pharmacy launch and outreach a data-backed campaign around a male contraceptive pill. Based on the results of a nationwide survey of over 2,000 people, this campaign tapped into a socially important news story and enabled us to create and share genuinely newsworthy content.

Links from national media and lifestyle outlets followed, including The Guardian, Metro, Dazed, and Yahoo. These results show the power of proactive PR, with this study being a prime example of how a data or statistics-led campaign can capture public attention and convey expertise on a relevant and noteworthy topic.



Home / Weather

From nosebleeds to swollen feet – seven weird ways your body might react to hot weather

Stock photo

By Katie Wright, PA
Mon 18 Jul 2022 at 13:55

After days of Met Eireann warnings, we've been bracing ourselves for temperatures to soar above the 30C mark.

But now that the heat is here, are you experiencing symptoms you didn't expect? When the mercury rises way beyond its usual level, you may discover some unusual physical effects.

Boosting authority through reactive PR

By adding expert insight to current news stories or developments within the healthcare sector, brands can amplify their expertise and authority within the space. We've found this method of brand building to be particularly effective in this realm, with journalists perennially looking for authoritative voices to add validity and credence to their stories.

Through sourcing opportunities for expert commentary, we helped position The Independent Pharmacy as a trusted source of information that also had its finger on the pulse of the industry, providing reliable and relevant advice in areas where guidance is constantly evolving and misinformation is often the biggest risk.

By providing quickfire yet evidence-based commentary on topics such as heat protection and asthma triggers, we added the brand's voice to pertinent news stories in mainstream publications.

Link building

Cultivating a strong and healthy backlink profile

Despite claims to the contrary, backlinks remain one of Google’s most important ranking factors. If your business isn’t actively acquiring hyperlinks from reputable, relevant sources, its chances of appearing anywhere near the top of the SERPs are close to zero — especially in a niche as saturated as the healthcare sector.

The top-ranking results on Google have 3.8 times more links than their competitors.

Backlinko

But here’s the rub — gaining backlinks is tough. You’re relying on your site’s content being so stand-out that other website owners spontaneously link back to it. And sure, while you could purchase backlinks instead, this is an incredibly cost-intensive exercise, with the average cost of a single link standing at around \$360.

So, what do you do? Dedicate huge chunks of your budget to inserting links on sub-par sites? Spend valuable hours ideating, producing, and publishing content you’re uncertain will ever gain the attention it deserves? Thankfully, there’s a third option: strategic link building.

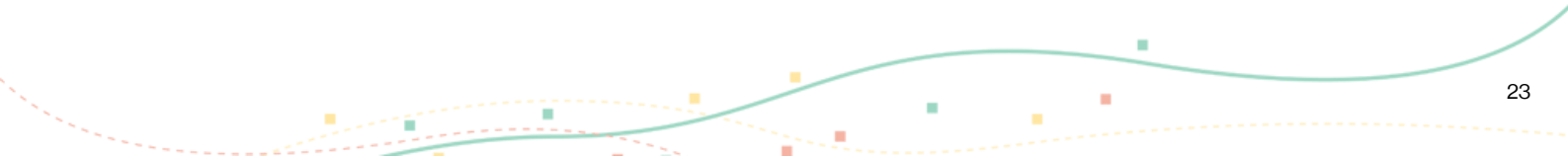
While link building is a numbers game at its heart, it’s also about quality as well as quantity. Links from authoritative sources will deliver the fuel your brand needs to rank for high-value health-related queries, enhancing your visibility, establishing credibility and trust, and ultimately contributing to a stronger digital presence in a highly complex and competitive industry.

What is link building?

Link building is the strategic process of acquiring hyperlinks from external websites back to your own. These links act as digital referrals — votes of confidence that signal to Google that your content is valuable and authoritative. As you might expect, websites with a strong, diverse backlink profile tend to rank far higher in search results pages.

Moz, an SEO research company and one of the leading voices in the SEO field, calls the practice of earning high-quality backlinks a ‘cornerstone of SEO work’, and we’re inclined to agree. Without backlinks, your site is highly unlikely to remain competitive, particularly in a highly crowded sector.

But not all links are equal. There are plenty of unscrupulous, spammy websites out there that are more than willing to host a link to your page for the right price. And while this might provide a temporary boost in your favour, these kinds of links won’t provide a sustainable, dependable benefit - and may be especially damaging in areas such as healthcare. If most of your backlinks come from untrustworthy sources, Google may even penalise your site, tanking your reputation and rankings in the process.



Why is link building important for healthcare brands?

For healthcare brands operating within the purview of Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulations, establishing online authority isn't just about maximising visibility; it's a critical component of building trust among patients and stakeholders alike.

Consumers, now more than ever, turn to the internet for information on their symptoms, treatment options, and advice for home remedies. By obtaining links from authoritative healthcare sites, medical journals, or news outlets, your brand is seen as a credible and reliable source of information.

This credibility is especially important in healthcare, where the accuracy and reliability of information can directly impact people's health and well-being. A strong online presence, supported by high-quality backlinks from reputable sources, not only elevates a brand's visibility in search engine results, but also solidifies its standing as a trusted resource.

Imagine a potential patient researching a specific medical condition and stumbling upon your well-linked content, supported by authoritative references and endorsements. This enhances your brand's credibility while also fostering a sense of assurance and expertise in the minds of your audience.

Link building challenges for regulated brands

Healthcare websites fall under Google's YMYL category, which means they're held to higher quality standards. For health-related brands, therefore, it's imperative to follow ethically sound link building practices. 'Black hat' tactics such as the use of private blog networks (PBNs) are fortunately becoming increasingly rare due to more robust search engine algorithms, and for YMYL brands in particular it's important to seek out relevant, trustworthy links from reputable industry sources.

Balancing quality with quantity

Having a healthy number of external links pointing to your site is crucial, but where healthcare is concerned, the quality of those backlinks is of the utmost importance. Managing this balance can be challenging since high-quality links are inevitably more difficult to attain, but a modest number of valuable backlinks from authoritative sources will have a greater impact than an abundance of poor-quality ones.

Navigating ethics and legalities

The healthcare sector, especially areas regulated by the CQC, is governed by strict quality standards, while Google also demands a high level of ethical integrity, particularly from YMYL brands. Every link you acquire must adhere to the stringent standards of industry regulators and search engines alike.

Establishing trust and avoiding misinformation

Links from sites harbouring dubious or misleading medical information could be highly damaging to your site's own reputation and rankings, so it's important to ensure you're not actively attracting links that could be deemed negative in your own market. Building good quality backlinks from industry-verified sites takes time and persistence, but ultimately will evoke trust in users and search engines over time.

Building links through high-value guest content

Whether you're outreaching for link opportunities or attempting to attract links naturally, link building typically starts with content - and in the healthcare sector especially, we're talking high-quality, unique, and authoritative content. It's not an exact science, of course, but the value and quality of links you generate more often than not directly correlates with the value and quality of the content you create.

As a link building tactic, guest blogging provides a platform to share expert knowledge and insights, thereby establishing authority in a field where trust and credibility are paramount. By contributing content to reputable external sites, healthcare brands can reach wider and more diverse audiences, earning relevant and valuable backlinks while incrementally increasing their visibility and reputation.

Valuable guest blogging approaches for healthcare brands can include:

Listicle guest posts

The clear and structured format of a listicle makes this type of content a favourite of search engines, but having your brand appear in a summary article on an external site ("Best Online Pharmacies in the UK", for example) can also help you rank for broad high-volume search terms. The advantages of your links appearing in listicle-type guest posts include:

- High-converting referral traffic
- Very high link relevance
- May enable you to indirectly rank for competitive keywords via third-party content

Guest posts on bottom-of-the-funnel (BOFU) keywords

BOFU keywords target individuals at the decision-making stage of their journey - they're actively seeking healthcare solutions, treatments, or products. By focusing on guest posts targeting BOFU keywords, healthcare brands can provide highly relevant and detailed information that addresses the immediate needs or concerns of their audience. They may enable you to rank for high-intent search terms such as:

- "Where to buy Viagra in the UK?"
- "Buy prescription glasses online"
- "Free diabetes test in London"

Guest posts on competitor brand keywords

By targeting guest posts which contain branded keywords of potential competitors ("Is It Safe To Buy Viagra From Lloyds Pharmacy?" for instance), we have been able to rank for high-volume keywords with relatively low competition. This approach also enables brands to intercept potential customers who might be considering a competitor. We have previously been able to rank for keywords such as:

- "Lloyds pharmacy morning after pill"
- "Pill box Lloyds pharmacy"
- "Lloyds pharmacy diabetes test"
- "Lloyds pharmacy Viagra"

What does a link building strategy involve?

A link building strategy is rarely one-size-fits-all; for it to be truly effective, it requires a tailored approach designed to align with the unique challenges and opportunities of the brand and the niche it operates in - particularly if that niche is one as complex and competition-heavy as healthcare.

Here's a glimpse into the methodology we use when building a link building strategy:

- Link profile analysis: conducting a comprehensive analysis of the brand's current link profile, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and uncovering key link and content gaps.
- Competitor benchmarking: analysing competitors' link profiles to gain insights into the volume and quality of their backlinks, and also to determine where they're generating links from.
- Campaign forecasting: strategically forecasting campaigns, highlighting where and how to focus link building efforts to ensure maximum impact and long-term success.
- Page targeting: identifying the internal pages that we want to build links to, either because these are high-priority pages or because they're currently lacking backlinks.
- Discovery and validation and outreach: uncovering key link building opportunities through meticulous research, validating them to the highest standards to ensure relevance and link quality.
- Targeted outreach and pitching: reaching out to relevant individuals through value-exchange-driven outreach campaigns, building mutually-beneficial relationships with prospects.
- Content integration: creating shareable, valuable content that will naturally attracts links from authoritative, niche-relevant sources.
- Continuous monitoring and adaptation: pivoting as needed based on shifting needs or algorithm changes, always prioritising links for the pages that matter the most.

Healthcare link building best practices



Focus on producing well-researched, informative content such as detailed guides, research summaries, or expert insights.



Aim for links on sites that are credible, secure, and relevant to your niche, such as health-related blogs or medical advice hubs.



Avoid targeting low-quality or irrelevant sites simply to boost link quantity. This will harm your credibility and your link profile.



Offer unique insights or expert commentary on recent healthcare events, making your content a valuable resource for citations.



Be prepared to refine and restructure your link building strategy where necessary, particularly in light of major Google algorithm updates.

Content marketing

Injecting life into your content strategy

At one point or another, we've all turned to search engines to check our symptoms or get instant medical advice. By producing content that addresses these informational searches, you're placing your business at the heart of your audience's search intent. And besides this, you're also establishing credibility and fostering a sense of trust.

Only 28% of healthcare marketers have a documented content marketing strategy.

New York Times

Every minute of every day, there are over 70,000 health-related searches made on Google. In our post-pandemic, always-online world, patients have grown accustomed to using the web as their first port of call when health concerns arise, and by harnessing the power of content marketing, you can ensure you're there to deliver the information, products, and services they require.

In an industry where informed decisions are critical, content marketing can act as a spotlight, highlighting your business as a healthcare brand audiences can rely to provide the advice and treatments they need.

What is content marketing?

In the context of SEO, content marketing is a strategic approach to creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and engage your audience. It goes beyond traditional advertising, focusing on building trust and disseminating valuable information whilst also increasing brand exposure. The primary aim is to provide content that directly answers audience questions, solves complex problems, or offers unique insights, thereby establishing the brand as a credible and authoritative source of information.

But what constitutes 'content' in the digital sphere? Well, it can encompass a number of things, including:

- Blog posts and articles
- Guides and checklists
- Press releases
- Infographics
- Video content
- eBooks and whitepapers
- Case studies
- Social media posts
- Email newsletters
- Podcasts
- Interactive content, such as quizzes or surveys

Why do healthcare brands need a content strategy?

By creating content that addresses the needs and concerns of your audience, you're positioning your brand as an authoritative source — marketing gold dust when it comes to the healthcare sector. This approach is particularly important in healthcare because of the unique nature of its audience — patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and policy makers — who are often seeking reliable and informative content to aid in decision-making.



Establishing authority through value

In healthcare, there's an ongoing demand for accurate, trustworthy information. We're increasingly turning to online sources for health-related advice, and by providing high-quality, evidence-based content, healthcare brands can establish themselves as authoritative and trusted information sources.



Spreading information, not misinformation

Content marketing in healthcare also plays a vital role in educating the public. It can be used to disseminate information about treatments, medical research, health tips, and wellness strategies. This not only helps in raising awareness about various health issues but also in combating misinformation, which is rampant in the healthcare field.



Enhancing visibility in a crowded sphere

In healthcare, your content strategy has a direct and significant impact on brand awareness and visibility. Relevant, medically-verified content that conveys expertise and first-hand experience is crucial not only for building trust in the general public but also search engines, dramatically improving brand visibility.

Content marketing challenges in healthcare

Healthcare brands face several unique challenges when creating digital content, primarily due to the sensitive nature of the industry and the strict regulations governing it. For example:

- Regulations govern the privacy and security of patient information, restricting how data can be used and shared in digital content.
- Content must be accurate and evidence-based. Misinformation can have serious consequences, so healthcare brands need to ensure their content is vetted by medical professionals.
- Brands need to strike a balance between being informative and accessible. Explaining complex medical concepts to general audiences can be challenging.
- Healthcare topics can be highly sensitive. Brands need to create content that is empathetic and respectful, avoiding anything that might be perceived as insensitive or intrusive.
- Building and maintaining trust is crucial in healthcare. Any content 'missteps' can significantly impact a brand's reputation, and there's a high level of scrutiny on everything they publish.
- Medical research and guidelines can change rapidly, so keeping digital content relevant and up-to-date is a constant challenge.

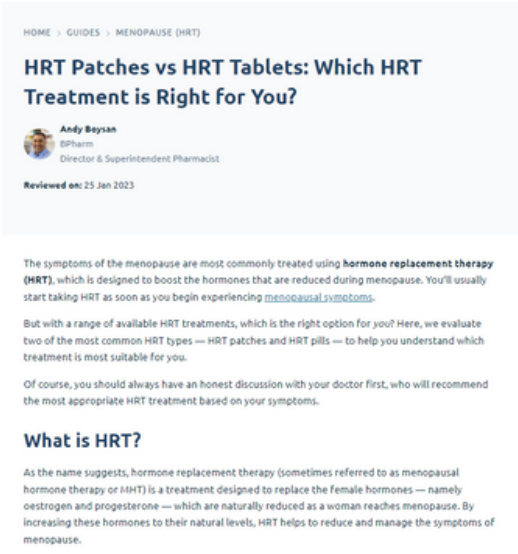
Effective content types for healthcare brands

A diverse content strategy is key in any sector, but it's particularly crucial in healthcare, where users and patients often have a number of different objectives and interact with medical brands in myriad ways. The key is to meet users where they are - whether they look to access information through search engines or social media, for example - and produce a range of content types that match different desired outcomes.

Health guides and articles

For a healthcare brand, a 'blog' typically takes the form of an information hub or resource, offering a series of medically-accurate guides and articles that provide expert-led advice on a range of health-related topics - from help recognising the symptoms of a specific condition to recommending the most effective treatment and prevention methods. This might include:

- Condition-specific guides (e.g. signs and symptoms)
- Treatment advice or comparisons
- Diet and nutrition information
- Fitness and exercise tips
- General or seasonal health advice



eBooks and whitepapers

While they may not appeal to the everyday healthcare consumer, eBooks and whitepapers are a very effective means of establishing sector-wide authority through thought leadership, conveying knowledge and expertise while disseminating valuable information. You may create a comprehensive guide to managing a particular health issue, for example, or present the findings of a study you've conducted.

Webinars and online workshops

Healthcare brands don't have to limit themselves to written content. Online events such as training webinars or workshops can be a great way of building a community while creating a different kind of engagement with peers and the general public. Hosting regular webinars - led by industry professionals with vast experience and expertise - helps to mark a brand out as a leading voice and authority within in a competitive industry rife with misinformation and mistrust.

Patient stories and testimonials

While paying due care to privacy and consent, stories from real people are often impactful in the healthcare sector. An authoritative brand voice is important, of course, but patients and consumers often resonate with personal accounts from others like them. Leveraging stories and testimonials from past patients or customers can help humanise your brand while providing valuable information to potential patrons through powerful 'social proof'.

Social media

Giving your brand a social media pulse

For healthcare brands, social media marketing campaigns used to be considered an optional extra; but with the number of active user accounts on platforms like Facebook, Instagram and TikTok reaching over 4.8 billion in 2023, this is no longer the case.

The average person now spends almost 2 and a half hours on social media every day. And with more and more health consumers now seeking and accessing information through these platforms, neglecting your brand's presence on social media means throwing away precious opportunities for brand building and user engagement.

What is a social media strategy?

While social media is inherently easy to pick up from a user's perspective, the same can't be said for businesses aiming to master the marketing nuances of each platform. There's a lot to learn, and very little is straightforward.

Infrequent, haphazard posting, poor brand consistency, and even simple grammatical errors can quickly sour your businesses online reputation. Most social media marketing strategies address this by including important elements such as content creation, community management, paid advertising, influencer marketing, and social media analytics and reporting.

Does every business need a meticulously managed, trendsetting social media presence? No. Does your healthcare brand need to invent a new viral TikTok dance every week to stay relevant? Absolutely not. But it's crucial to go in with a solid plan.

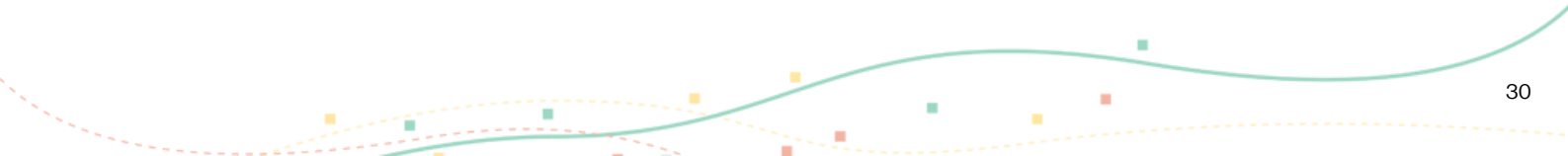
Why is social media important for healthcare brands?

With around 50% of the UK's adult population now able to access digital healthcare, patients have come to expect a strong online presence from their providers. Online pharmacies and healthcare subscription services have skyrocketed in popularity, a growth catalysed by the pandemic and fuelled by a remote working revolution.

But that's not all — misinformation is rife on social media, and with most adults saying they've seen misleading health information at one point or another on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, healthcare brands must take the fight against false information into their own hands.

More than 40% of health care consumers use social media for healthcare information.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)



By creating content designed to combat the spread of health mis— and disinformation, you're not only providing a crucial service to your audience, but you're also cementing their trust in your brand. Credibility is paramount in the healthcare sector, and our specialists are well versed in crafting compliant strategies to humanise your brand, fostering a sense of trust and authority among both potential and existing customers.

Social media challenges for regulated brands

The healthcare industry has something of a unique relationship with social media due to its dual role of providing reliable, accurate health information and engaging with broad communities. While social media offers unparalleled opportunities for healthcare providers to disseminate education, raise awareness of public health concerns, and engage directly with the public, it also presents significant challenges.

Navigating privacy and compliance regulations

Sharing certain types of content or responding to patient inquiries on social media a complex task, primarily due to the strict privacy laws and regulations CQC brands must adhere to. Of course, there's a critical need to protect patient confidentiality and comply with legal standards.

Maintaining accuracy and trust in content

In the healthcare sector, information accuracy is paramount. The challenge lies in ensuring that all information is evidence-based and communicated in a way that is both understandable to the general public and does not misrepresent complex medical information or give rise to misinformation.

Balancing promotional and educational content

Healthcare businesses must balance the need to engage audiences and promote their brands with providing valuable information that upholds ethical standards and public health responsibilities. This balance is crucial in building trust and credibility with audiences and industry peers.

Healthcare social media best practices

- 

Be consistent. 74% of consumers think brands should post 1-2 times a day, so it's important to post regularly to maintain a steady social media presence and keep users engaged.
- 

Posts with images receive significantly more views than purely text-based content, so include visual elements such as infographics or videos.
- 

Engagement is key, so don't be afraid to directly interact with followers, and be sure to respond to messages and queries promptly.
- 

Remain professional. Social media is a great way of creating engagement and building a community, but healthcare brands must maintain a commitment to professionalism.

Performance tracking

Performing regular health check-ups

Just as regularly monitoring your physical health can help identify areas of concern and enable you to address these before they become serious issues, periodic SEO health checks are essential for ensuring your strategy remains on track - particularly in a sector which evolves as quickly and is subject to as much external scrutiny as healthcare.

Before diving into tracking and analysis, however, it's important to establish what success looks like. For healthcare brands, relevant KPIs might include organic traffic, search rankings for key health-related terms, click-through rates (CTR), patient engagement metrics (like time on site or pages per session), and conversion rates for appointments or information requests.

Organic traffic

Organic traffic refers to visitors who arrive at your website through unpaid search engine results. For healthcare brands, it's crucial because it indicates reach and relevance in health-related searches. Tracking can be done using tools like Google Analytics, which helps understand visitor behaviour and improve SEO strategies.

Organic traffic value

This metric estimates the value of organic traffic acquired through paid search. It's vital for healthcare brands to assess their SEO ROI and make informed marketing investments. Tools such as SEMrush or Ahrefs can track this metric, providing insights into the financial value of organic search presence.

Keyword rankings

These represent the position of your website in search engine results for specific keywords. For healthcare brands, high rankings in relevant search terms can drive targeted traffic, enhancing visibility and credibility. Tools like Ahrefs or Google Search Console can be used to monitor keyword rankings, identify keyword gaps, and spot new ranking opportunities.

Backlinks and referring domains

Backlinks are links from other websites to your site, while referring domains are the websites these links come from. For healthcare brands, quality backlinks enhance credibility and search ranking. Tools like Ahrefs or Majestic can track backlinks and referring domains, helping to build a robust backlink profile.

Domain authority

Domain Authority (DA) or Domain Rating (DR) is a score predicting a website's ability to rank in search engines based on its backlink profile. High domain authority for healthcare brands convey vital trust and experience signals. Tools like Moz's Link Explorer can track DA, while Ahrefs tracks DR.

Core Web Vitals

Core Web Vitals are a set of Google metrics that evaluate a webpage's overall user experience, based on factors such as loading speed and page stability. Adhering to these standards is vital for user trust as well as search visibility. Google Search Console provides reports on Core Web Vitals, identifying key areas for improvement.

Click-through rate (CTR)

CTR is the percentage of users who click on a link to your website in search results, and indicates the effectiveness of factors such as title tags and meta descriptions. Google Search Console can be used to track CTR, offering insights to refine on-page tactics.

Dwell time and bounce rate

Dwell time is a measure of how long a visitor spends on your site, while bounce rate is the percentage of visitors who leave after viewing only one page. For healthcare brands, longer dwell time and lower bounce rate suggest engaging, relevant content, while the opposite suggests a lack of engagement.

Conversion rate

Conversion rate is the percentage of visitors who take a desired action - which may include purchasing a treatment or scheduling an appointment. Trackable via Google Analytics, this metric allows healthcare brands to gauge the effectiveness of their website in converting visitors into patients or clients.

Indexed pages

The number of your website's pages that search engines have indexed is an indicator of your site's overall scope and visibility. Google Search Console can be used to monitor the number of indexed pages, ensuring that important content is recognised by search engines.

Crawl errors

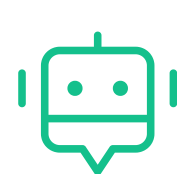
Crawl errors occur when a search engine is unable to reach a page on your website. For healthcare brands, minimising these errors is essential for maintaining search visibility. Google Search Console provides detailed reports on crawl errors, allowing site owners to identify and fix issues promptly.


The future of online healthcare and SEO


Just as the healthcare industry is in an ever-evolving state, SEO is always moving. Particularly in recent years, the rise of innovations such as voice search and AI have created ongoing ripples across the digital marketing sphere, forcing brands and agencies to adapt - and quickly.


The SEO landscape for healthcare brands might look very different in 5 years time than it does currently, and continued success in the digital realm will depend on an ability not just to pivot to changes but to anticipate and future-proof for emerging developments.


At Seeker, we're continually monitoring trends across the industry and adapting our tactics and processes accordingly, and here's what we think the future holds for healthcare brands.

- 

The continued influence of AI
AI is having a transformative impact in both the healthcare and SEO worlds, with the potential to improve diagnostics and automate many aspects of the SEO process. Embracing this technology will be key, but in an industry where trust and authenticity are highly valued, leveraging it strategically will be the most important factor.
- 

The rise of voice search
With almost a third of patients having already used voice search to find a healthcare provider, this means searching for information will become increasingly influential. For healthcare brands, this means optimising content specifically to target voice searches, with a focus on concise, accurate, and up-to-date information.
- 

The demand for video content
It's suggested that up to 80% of internet users will watch an online video from start to finish, while only 20% will read a piece of written content in its entirety. With our busy lives making us increasingly time- and attention-poor, healthcare brands will become more and more reliant on short-form video content to build and maintain engagement.
- 

The focus on user experience (UX)
Search engines continue to evolve, always with the express aim of delivering the best possible search experience for the end user - take the recent Helpful Content Update, for example. User-centric content and experiences will be fundamental to healthcare, with search engines increasingly penalising content which lacks value or relevance.
- 

The increasing shift to telehealth
The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a sharp rise in patients seeking remote health services, and this trend will not slow down as the healthcare sector becomes increasingly digitalised. This clearly stresses the importance of the digital experience for patients, and SEO will play a vital role in connecting them with these services.

Key takeaways

Seeker's expert tips for healthcare-related SEO

1. Trust is king

In healthcare, trust is like currency - if you don't have it, you're unlikely to succeed. But while building user trust is paramount, it's equally important that search engines place trust in your content. Being considered a credible source of information by Google is akin to a framed certificate confirming your credentials.



2. Your expertise is your biggest asset

Both users and search engines want to know they're getting valuable, high-quality content. As a healthcare brand, leveraging your expertise is imperative for scaling the SERPs and building brand visibility. Ensure your own content is expert-led, and leverage opportunities to add commentary to key industry discussions.

3. Quality trumps quantity

This can apply to a number of factors, but most importantly to your content and link building strategies. While having a glut of content and ample backlinks is great, your reputation and your ranking potential depend on high-quality content and valuable backlinks. Prioritise quality over sheer quantity every time.

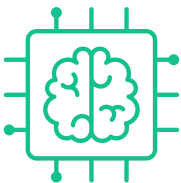


4. Organic marketing unlocks long-term success

Paid ads are great for generating spikes in traffic and revenue, but those numbers are almost impossible to maintain without burning through your budget. An SEO strategy is about self-sustainability: while it will require investment and time, it can deliver consistent growth that will prove more cost-effective over time.

5. AI can be an ally if used strategically

AI will define the future of both the healthcare and SEO industries, but success will be reserved for those who leverage the technology effectively. While automation will remove bottlenecks and improve efficiency, combining these capabilities with human judgement and expertise will be vital, particularly in a sector where first-hand experience is so valuable.





How we helped make The Independent Pharmacy a household name in healthcare.

+334%

yearly organic revenue

384k to 3.8m

yearly organic visits

1,177%

return on organic investment

Full-range SEO treatment

Growing a new contender in online healthcare.

Run by a team of highly-qualified pharmacists and doctors, The Independent Pharmacy (TIP) is a new leader in the online healthcare world. The mission? To make it easy for people throughout the UK to get expert medical advice and secure the medication they need to live healthy lives.

Our work with TIP yielded fast results. They upped their budget by 220% after 3 months, and saw a huge boost to ecommerce revenue before 6 months were up. And we did so much after that. Nailing key link placements, technical analysis, digital PR outreach, content support, and more — we kept our strategy moving.

"Seeker's scientific approach and evidence-based strategies give us great confidence in an uncertain industry, and the results speak for themselves."

Scott McDougall
Director, registered manager and co-founder at The Independent Pharmacy



Broad campaign management

Turning survey results into nationwide coverage.

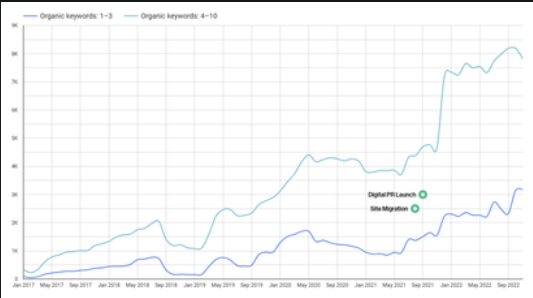
In a 2022 survey, TIP asked 2021 UK adults about their views on a male contraceptive pill. The findings were interesting, but they needed coverage — so we took charge of an extensive national campaign, handing the presentation and distribution.

Our core tasks included data analysis, infographic creation, copywriting, industry research, and hyper-relevant outreach. The result? Placements on sites including The Guardian, Yahoo and Metro positioned TIP as notable experts on a topic that’s sure to grow in significance in the coming years.



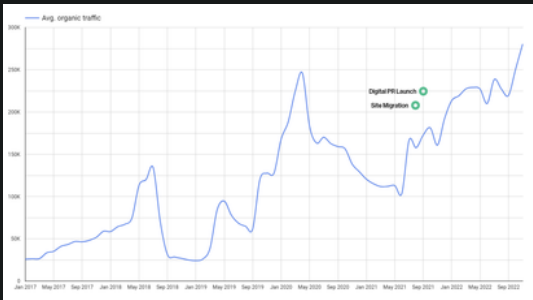
Key content optimisation.

Healthcare SERPs are highly actionable, so we prioritised them from the outset. Pairing steady refinement of existing content with research-driven production, we drove a huge boost in core rankings.



Sustained traffic growth.

Our great success in the SERPs (plus the addition of links from high-value referring domains) yielded valuable results. Years into our partnership (and despite heated competition), organic traffic kept rising.



632

backlinks secured

300+

health guides written

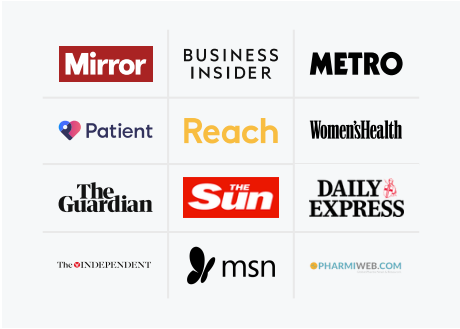
#16 to #3

ranking for 'online pharmacy'

Always-on reactive PR

Securing key mentions in relevant publications.

Client expertise is a powerful asset if deployed correctly. Staying on the hunt for PR commentary opportunities allowed us to land impactful coverage using expert commentary, and we repurposed existing assets to build the TIP brand and pick up high-value backlinks along the way.



"TIP was lacking high-authority links and struggling to break into new vertices. Two years of our digital PR increased their referring domain count by 35% and built over 80% of their high-DA backlinks. We're now well-versed in the health sector, with a contact list of journalists who trust our expert content and eye-catching stories."

Laura Mallinson
Digital PR Manager at Seeker Digital

Strong under pressure

When a Google algorithm update hit, we hit back.

A major Google update in late 2020 sank The Independent Pharmacy 's core "online pharmacy" ranking from position 8 to page 3. Disaster — but Seeker was there to find a way back.

To earn vital authority, we provided technical SEO tweaks, then used rich tactics including newsjacking and targeted editorial outreach to deliver 4+ DR 75+ links each month.

In just 4 months, we took that core ranking from 35 all the way to position 4.

+515%

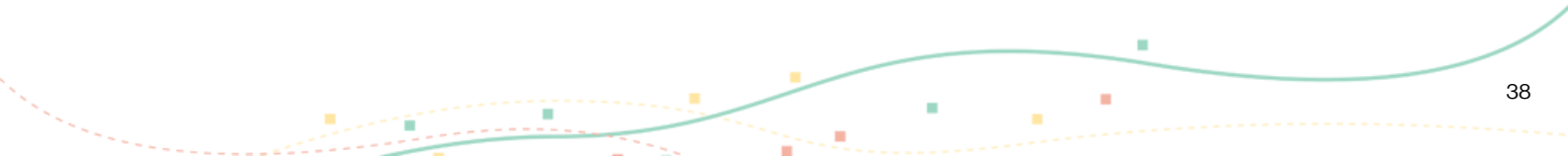
clicks

+213%

impressions

+97%

CTR



Content, coverage, and links

An ambitious SEO strategy for an ambitious pharmacy.

When we began working with TIP, all the brand ingredients were there: a compelling mission, a team of dedicated experts, and a robust business model with room for expansion. All that was missing was an SEO strategy.

Enter Seeker. Instead of opting for safe and easy minor increases, we deployed our top tactics to bolster TIP's online presence across the board. And the results were spectacular.

Find out what we can do for you.

seeker.digital

hi@seeker.digital

or book a call:

<https://calendly.com/daryl-seeker>



0117 422 8686



408 457 9552



437 886 0679



283 108 456