



HOW TO MARKET AN
**ADDICTION
TREATMENT
CENTER**

You have an addiction treatment facility. *Now what?*

Perhaps you're just opening up a new facility and looking to establish your brand identity. Or maybe you have an established rehab center and are looking for a comprehensive way to promote your facility. This guide is meant to be your marketing sherpa for both traditional marketing offline and digital marketing online.

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DEVELOPING THE MARKETING PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE:

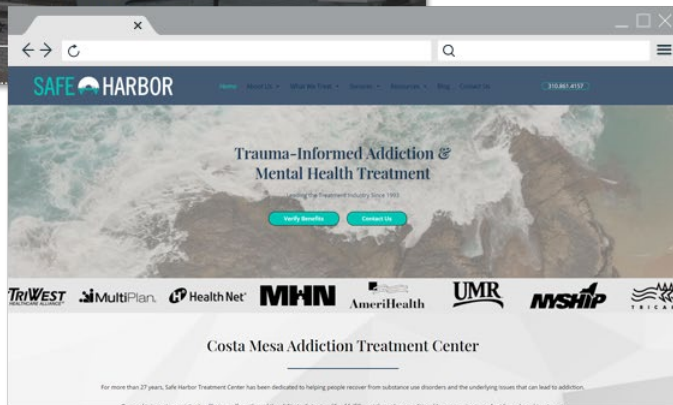
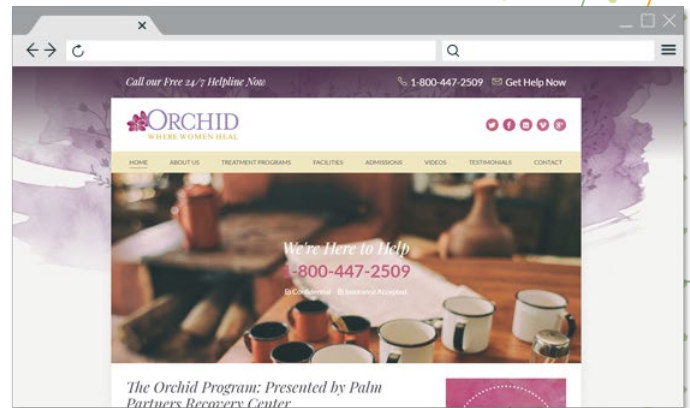
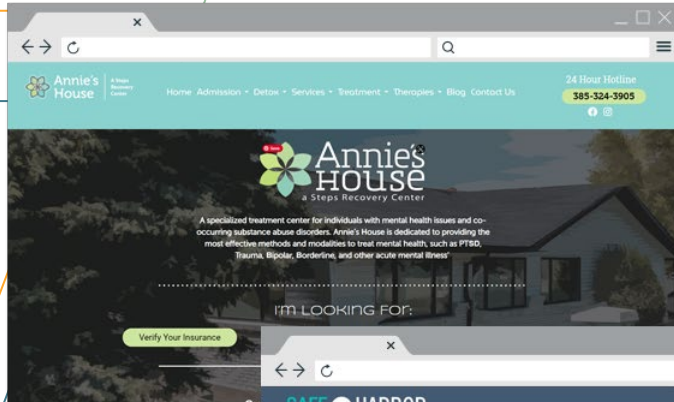
ESTABLISHING A BRAND IDENTITY

Brand/Logo Development

Common logos in the addiction treatment space are often soft in their color palette using earthy colors such as greens, yellows, light blues and whites. It's also not uncommon for treatment centers to use elements such as water and sunshine and earthy objects such as birds and trees as a part of their logo brand identifiers.

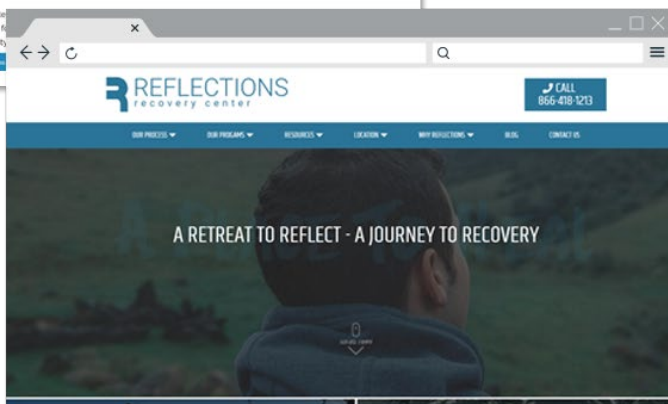
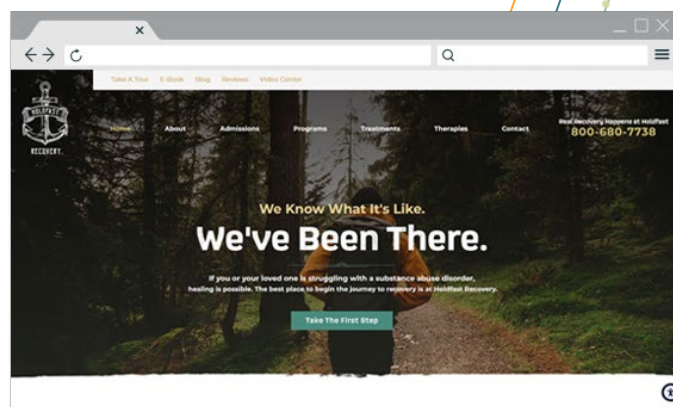
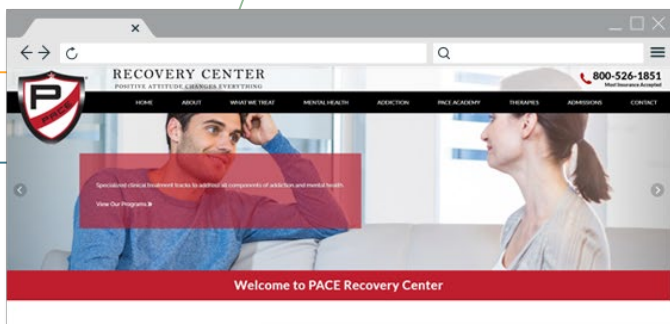


Your treatment center may target unique patient types such as “women only” and “men only” centers as examples. Of the hundreds of sites we’ve evaluated over the years, women-focused treatment sites typically have lighter colors in pinks and reds with other softer color palette utilization used beyond that. This is not to say these are the ONLY colors we’ve seen since they do vary greatly in certain cases, but this type of color palette appears to be the most common.





For men-focused treatment sites, we've seen this segment run the gambit from hard-hitting dark green and black for an almost militaristic/boot camp style to darker colors utilizing purples, blues, and greys to standard colors often found with sites not purely focused on one patient type.



You have one shot at a first impression, so don't run the risk by putting a rush-job on developing a logo.

It's very important that your addiction treatment center's logo conveys trust and gives people a sense of hope in their time of need.

The first thing your center should do is figure out who your target audience is and once that's been established, go through the ideation

phase of determining a color palette and theme-type (ocean, sunshine, trees, flowers, etc. or no theme at all).

The second item on your list should be to find an individual, an agency, or a crowdsourcing platform to get your logo developed.

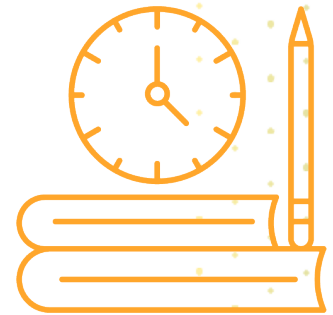
Hiring an agency or an individual to develop a new logo should not be your first consideration.

Why? Because there are crowdsourcing platforms that offer you the opportunity to have people from all over the world help you develop your logo and brand. After all, getting 50+ logo submissions from a few dozen talented graphic designers sounds a lot better than getting only a handful of comps from an agency or individual, doesn't it?

If you're inclined to hire an individual or agency, do yourself a favor and ask for their portfolio or previous logo work to gauge their design capabilities and its breadth of uniqueness. Also, be sure to interview them to really get to know how they think and their processes in general.

If you go the route of crowdsourcing, we highly recommend LogoTournament.com since they're one of the longest-running platforms out there and have never disappointed any clients we've sent their way (which has been quite a few).

Once your logo has been developed, you can begin to leverage it in your marketing plan.



TRADITIONAL COLLATERAL DEVELOPMENT



Brochures are critical and business cards are a lifeline for getting your brand out there for the masses to become familiar with your treatment facility and its offerings.

Business Cards

Business cards may seem a bit old school in today's world of digital dominance, but in the addiction treatment space, that's not the case.

Branded business cards are great for key personnel to share with potential clients and potential partners including other treatment centers for referral considerations. For personnel on your team that aren't as front-facing (and to help you keep your design and printing costs down), it may make sense to create a branded card that is generic, i.e., the card is the same except their name is not on it.

As for how to design and develop a business card, do yourself a favor and don't think "traditional" in terms of standard white and sharp-edged rectangular structure which is still a common practice among many facilities.

We have found that business cards with the usage of brand colors and unique features such as thicker card stock and rounded edges can portray a stronger brand takes great care of their image and pays special attention to details. Also, don't be afraid to be creative by using both sides of the card whereas the back can have additional information ranging from social profile references and images (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.), a full-sized image of the facility or a list of treatment services and treatment types, etc.

Brochures

Brochures in a traditional sense are great for providing an overview of your offerings to potential clients and individuals seeking treatment options for their loved ones. They can also be used at conferences or with potential referral partners. Whether someone is reading your brochures in a

waiting room, sent by mail, or at a conference, it's here where your treatment center can (and should) convey all pertinent information about your facility.

Here are some suggestions for what content to include in your treatment center's brochure:



- ❑ **Information about your center and your team**
- ❑ **Treatment options (Detox, OP, IOP, PHP, Residential)**
- ❑ **Treatment types (alcohol, drugs, dual diagnosis, MAT, co-occurring disorders, etc.)**
- ❑ **Accommodations at the facility (kitchen, dining area, gym, pool, common areas, sleeping arrangements, etc.)**
- ❑ **Faith-based options (Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, etc.)**
- ❑ **Certifications and accreditations (The Joint Commission, NAATP, CARF, SAMHSA, etc.)**
- ❑ **Testimonials and/or endorsements**
- ❑ **Hours of operation**
- ❑ **Contact information including address, phone, website and email address**

Keep in mind when designing and developing a brochure, there are several different styles and types. The most common brochures are bi-fold and tri-fold, but that shouldn't stop you from looking at all options and choosing one that works best for your brand and your target markets.

Personnel Infrastructure/Boots on the Ground

Relationships are everything in the addiction treatment space and your outreach personnel are critical in amplifying your brand to a broad audience including other treatment centers.

Often referred to as “outreach” personnel and commonly referred to as “boots on the ground” within the industry, these individuals are the people who proactively reach out to treatment centers to establish referral partnerships as well as identify and foster relationships with private practices, hospital systems, and so much more.

Referral partnerships between treatment centers come in many forms and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ✓ **In the event a treatment center reaches its maximum capacity, personnel will need to refer any inbound admit inquiries to another facility they’re confident will provide similar care.**
- ✓ **For treatment centers receiving inquiries for services they may not offer at their own center such as detox, dual diagnosis treatment, etc., they always want to have relationships with facilities that can accommodate admits needing these services.**

Please note there are laws intended to prevent treatment centers from doing what’s called “patient brokering”. If you’re not familiar with the phrase, it essentially means referring potential patients to treatment centers and receiving compensation for each referral. This behavior ravaged the industry for many years.

In late 2018, Congress passed a sweeping new law called the “Eliminating Kickbacks in Recovery Act” which was signed into law by President Trump in October 2018. Because of this law and preceding law statutes that already existed in the states of Florida and California in particular, don’t expect any form of compensation from referring patients to partner treatment centers and vice versa. Rather, these types of relationships should be built on a foundation of reciprocal referrals between treatment centers.



DIGITAL MARKETING VENUES

Website Design & Development

Websites are the first impression for anyone seeking addiction treatment options online, so make sure your website stands out from the competition.

When designing a new site or redesigning an existing one, it's important to first have a Content Management System (CMS) that will offer a responsive framework (mobile friendly,) scalability, ease-of-use, and search engine friendliness.

Having evaluated over a dozen different CMS platforms, the one that stands out as best for rehab centers is WordPress. Wordpress offers everything a treatment center could want in a CMS and is now one of the most commonly used platforms by treatment centers in the United States and around the world.

Once the CMS has been selected, it's time to build the site, but make sure you have a content plan in place before proceeding with the buildout. When developing your content mapping/plan, be sure to look at all the different treatment options your center offers and consider each one of them as a unique page option for your website.

Let's say, for example, you have an addiction treatment center that offers OP/IOP, PHP, and residential rehab services as well as detox and sober living options. A potential content map could look like this:

- **HOMEPAGE**
- **SERVICES**
 - Detox
 - OP/IOP
 - PHP
 - Inpatient/Residential



- Sober Living*

> ABOUT US

- Our Story
- Meet the Team
- Reviews and Testimonials
- Accreditations

> FACILITY/ACCOMMODATIONS

- Rooms
- Activities (swimming pool, game room, gym, outings such as horseback riding, jet skiing, etc.)
- Resident Cook/Chef

> THERAPY

- EMDR
- DBT
- MAT
- Art
- Equine

** It's not uncommon for treatment centers to have a completely separate site for this.*

As shown above, there are a lot of pages included in the buildout of a site to cover all aspects of this hypothetical rehab center example. **From a digital marketing standpoint, they are all needed** if you have any chance of gaining visibility in search and credibility in the eyes of people seeking treatment options for themselves or loved ones.

When writing content for your new pages, be sure to use no less than 700 words of copy per page. Since addiction treatment marketing is one of the most competitive vertical markets in terms of search engine optimization (which we'll cover later on in our guide), your site needs to have an abundance of unique web copy in order to compete.

Once the CMS and content plan are in place, it's time to choose conversion points and build the site.

Before you grab a hammer and start building, it's important to plan out your conversion points. In other words, what do we want visitors to do on our website? We refer to each conversion point as a call-to-action (CTA). Most treatment center sites have up to four primary CTAs built into their site which are then tracked through website analytics. These CTAs consist of:

- ✓ **Inbound phone inquiries**
- ✓ **Contact form submissions**
- ✓ **Insurance verification form submissions**
- ✓ **LiveChat engagements**

As you build out the site, make sure all of your conversion funnels are built into each and every page, especially a prominently placed phone number, LiveChat, and insurance verification CTA if your center accepts insurance.

One other item your center should consider in a design is to **have search engine optimization built into the site as it's being constructed**. This will ensure your site will be found online by an eager audience proactively searching for your services from sources such as Google and Bing after its launch.

It's not uncommon for rehab centers to hire a website design firm that does great work in design, but lacks the fundamental knowledge of search engine optimization. So, if you're going to outsource design to a third party, make sure they can also address SEO and will put forth a conversion-focused website upon completion. Worst case scenario is you may end up having to either redesign your website or make significant changes to it based on its level of search-engine-friendliness.

Rehab-Specific Directories

If you've done a broad-based Google search for drug or addiction treatment, you've likely seen several directory sites that have earned prominent placement on search engines for keyword phrases such as "drug rehab", "alcohol rehab", etc. Most of these rehab-specific directories offer both free listing submissions and advertising opportunities via "sponsored" placement on their sites.

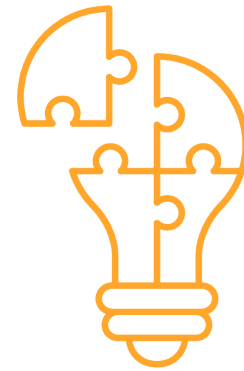
\Fair warning. **Be prepared for sticker shock on some of these directory sites** if you intend on sponsoring your center's position at the top of their results. The cost typically depends on location, categories and the number of competing sponsors within each category.

Here are some addiction treatment directories worth evaluating:

- ❑ Rehabs.com (owned by American Addiction Centers; allows for free and sponsored listings)
- ❑ PsychologyToday.com
- ❑ AddictionResource.com
- ❑ AddictionCenter.com
- ❑ SAMHSA.gov
- ❑ FreeRehabCenters.org (free treatment facilities only)
- ❑ RecovHub.com (a new directory with very little search engine visibility when this guide was written)

In the case of Rehabs.com which dominates search results for drug or alcohol treatment-related keyword phrases, be ready to schedule a meeting with your CFO to request additional ad spend to afford sponsored listings on their site - especially for competitive markets such as Florida and California. Rehabs.com doesn't appear to have rates available online, but from what we've heard from clients that have looked into sponsorships, they vary greatly and can cost upward of several thousand dollars per month. Again, it depends on the locations/markets you're targeting, the categories you select for inclusion, and the number of competitors going after the same. Inventory and associated sponsorship fees can often be a dynamic variable. Do your own research to see what inventory is available and what it will cost your center for sponsorship.

PsychologyToday.com is another option worth evaluating and may be a better option since they appear to have solid placement in search results for targeted keyword phrases and don't charge outrageous amounts of money for inclusion in their directory (**\$49 per month according to their**



site). We've heard nothing but positive feedback from our clients who have opted in for inclusion at Psychology Today and nearly all of them are getting a handful of calls from their listings on the site each month.

There are other directory resource sites out there on the web, but we have decided not to include them in this guide. When researching the ownership of the sites, we discovered they were owned by large treatment centers and included "call now" and form submission CTAs pointed directly at their treatment facility. This is unfortunately common and made it an easy decision for us to not include them in our guide.

So take a look at the rehab directory options and do your homework to see which directories, if any, will be a good fit for your center based on value proposition and associated costs for available sponsorships. Once again, inventory and associated fee structures can often vary.

(Note: Lead to Recovery is not affiliated with nor does it endorse any of the directories included in our guide. Indicated pricing in our guide is based on our own research and what we've heard from clients in the addiction treatment space and may have changed from the time this guide was written.)

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Marketing

PPC is the fastest way for a rehab center to buy their way to the top of search results on search engines such as Google and Bing for relevant keywords and phrases. It's also one of the most expensive forms of digital marketing a treatment center can. Depending on your treatment center's focus in terms of services, local vs. national patient acquisition, and geographical location, you should plan to spend anywhere from \$3k to \$250k+ per month for click fees.

For addiction treatment centers, doing pay-per-click marketing to acquire new patients can be the difference between success and failure, especially for centers with new sites and low organic search visibility. As many say, PPC can



“turn the faucet on” by getting your site into coveted positioning on search engines.

Please note, it’s important for any business operating in the rehab space to first get **LegitScript certified** in order to run PPC ads on Google and Bing -- even Facebook and Instagram -- since all of them require LegitScript certification.

If you’re not familiar with LegitScript, it is a verification and monitoring service for online pharmacies and treatment centers that has a rigorous vetting process to determine the legitimacy of entities looking to run ads on the major search engine and social media platforms.

As it existed at the time of writing this guide, rehab centers will be charged a one-time, non-refundable, application fee of \$995. On top of that, LegitScript also requires an annual fee of \$1,995 per location. If you’re operating multiple rehab center locations, be prepared to pay the LegitScript’s annual fee for each physical address.

Once LegitScript is in place, it’s time to get going on Google and Bing ads to start driving targeted traffic and potential admits to your facility setting up and deploying PPC marketing.

In the case of Google, there are a lot of controls you can put in place to better manage your spend and exposure. Here are just a few of them:

- ✓ **Keyword research and suggestions**
- ✓ **Bids (maximum amount you’re willing to pay per click for words/phrases)**
- ✓ **Quality score (relevancy score based on how relevant your keywords are to your ad and landing page)**
- ✓ **Ad rank (determined by max bid, quality score metrics, etc.)**
- ✓ **Matching options (broad match, modified broad match, exact phrase match and negative match)**
- ✓ **Remarketing & display (visual display ads that appear on other sites within Google’s Ad network)**
- ✓ **Geotargeting (only show ads in geographic areas you want them to appear)**



Fundamentally, you'll want to make sure your center is set up correctly by setting up unique campaigns within the Google Ads platform.

Let's say, for example, you're operating a rehab center in Delray Beach, FL and offer OP/IOP treatment options and EMDR as an option as well, but also provide a Christian-based therapy track. An example of a basic setup could look like this:

CAMPAIGN #1: DRUG REHAB

Ad Group #1: Outpatient/Intensive Outpatient (link to homepage)

Ad Group #2: EMDR Treatment (link to a EMDR page)

CAMPAIGN #2: ALCOHOL REHAB

Ad Group #1: Outpatient/Intensive Outpatient (link to alcohol rehab landing page)

Ad Group #2: EMDR Treatment (link to a EMDR page)

CAMPAIGN #3: CHRISTIAN REHAB

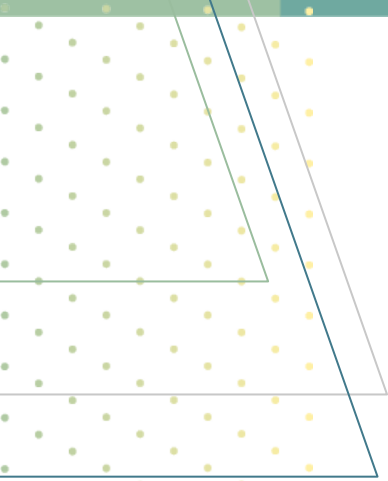
Ad Group #1: Outpatient/Intensive Outpatient (link to Christian landing page)

Ad Group #2: EMDR Treatment (should link to an EMDR page)

Once your campaigns are set up, max bids and matching options are in place, and any other targeting options such as geotargeting are in order, release the campaign and keep an eye on account performance to ensure you're seeing the level of ROI you desire.

PPC may seem like a **"set it and forget it" type marketing strategy, but it's absolutely not.** Log into the account frequently and make necessary adjustments to ad copy, bids, matching options, etc, to better fine tune campaign performance. This is really where you can set your marketing strategy apart from your competition. If you're a PPC pro, great! If not, find someone with rehab center marketing experience and put them in





charge of optimizing your campaigns. Also, make sure you have your analytics goal tracking in place so you can attribute conversions such as inbound calls, form submissions, live chat engagements, etc, retroactively to PPC campaigns.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

By far the most cost-effective form of marketing, SEO should be a top priority for a treatment center to endeavor as a part of your overall marketing strategy. SEO comes in two different forms: Organic SEO based on search engine results that aren't sponsored (PPC) and Local SEO (think Google Maps in search results.)

Based on market share alone, all of your SEO efforts should be geared toward Google with a heavier focus on mobile user experience since Google is highly focused on mobile these days.

Let's take a look at the two different forms of SEO:

1. Organic SEO

With over 90% of all searches originating at Google, it's important to focus on what its algorithm desires when attempting to capture the attention of both Google and an eager audience of proactive searchers seeking your treatment center's services.

Of the many variables making up Google's algorithm, here are several you should be focusing on when optimizing for Google organic:

- ❑ Search engine friendly website design/CMS (such as WordPress)
- ❑ Exhaustive keyword research (the foundation of all SEO)
- ❑ Content
- ❑ Page titles
- ❑ Meta descriptions (no real SEO value, but entices click-through potential)
- ❑ Alt tags
- ❑ Header tagging (H1, H2, etc.)

- ❑ Canonical tagging
- ❑ Anchor text (linking words/phrases from page to page within your site)
- ❑ Backlinks/Inbound linking (linking from third party sites back to yours)
- ❑ Ongoing content creation (blogging/articles)
- ❑ Rich snippets
- ❑ Social media content distribution (putting links on your social profiles back to your content)
- ❑ XML sitemaps
- ❑ Robots.txt exclusions and inclusion of XML sitemap(s)
- ❑ Redirect mapping
- ❑ Headers and footers
- ❑ Navigation scheme
- ❑ Breadcrumbs (if applicable)
- ❑ Site speed
- ❑ Mobile optimization



The above bullet list of items are only a few of many algorithmic factors and are not in order of priority. These are the main factors you should be evaluating and optimizing to garner top tier real estate in organic search results.

Please note organic SEO is **not a one and done scenario**. It takes careful planning and execution to do it properly on an ongoing basis.

Likewise, sit back and make yourself comfortable because it often doesn't produce results overnight. Depending on the age of your domain, competitive landscape and regional focus (local vs. state vs. national), SEO efforts can take anywhere from 3 to 18+ months to precipitate solid results for more competitive keywords and phrases. Typically, treatment centers usually start seeing the fruits of professional SEO efforts in 3 to 6 months from the day SEO starts.

If your center is focused on state and national keywords such as “drug rehab + [state]”, “dual diagnosis treatment”, etc. it may take 6 to 18+ months to see your center’s pages sitting on page one of Google.

Patience and persistence is a requirement when conducting SEO in the addiction treatment vertical. If you don’t have either, you should find an agency that specializes in rehab SEO with a proven track record or at least hire an in-house SEO or a consultant to help shepherd your center through the process. Don’t be afraid to pay for expertise and experience -- it’s pure gold in the competitive landscape of addiction treatment digital marketing.

2. Local SEO

Local search done right is **one of the top patient referral sources available** to treatment centers online. This is especially true for centers with OP/IOP treatment options since they’re heavily reliant on local admissions. We know this because we’ve combed through dozens of rehab center analytics accounts and saw first-hand how it compared to other digital marketing venues such as SEO and PPC.

Of all of the local SEO referral sources out there, **Google My Business or GMB** (which is often referred to as “Google Maps” and “Google Local”) came out on top with over 90% of local site traffic and inbound calls originating from it. Based on this statistic, we’ll focus on GMB as a part of this guide.

Chances are you’ve already gone through the process of claiming your Google My Business real estate on Google in the hope and anticipation of garnering that beloved “top three” sweet spot in search results locally. If not, claim your location right away.

If you already have a Google My Business profile set up, it’s imperative to get it properly optimized to increase ranking potential for your most important keyword phrases. We recommend five important optimization strategies:

- A. Profile Optimization
- B. Local Citations
- C. Blog Content Contribution
- D. Keyword-focused GMB Content
- E. Link Development
- F. Reviews

A) Profile Optimization

Optimizing your Google My Business profile isn't as simple as just throwing up your company name, address and hours of operation. It's far more complex than that.

When it comes to optimizing your profile, of course you need to include your basic company information, but you'll also need to incorporate additional information and strategically place keyword phrases into your profile where appropriate.

Additional information you should include in your profile include:

- ✓ **Service area**
- ✓ **Special hours (closed or open on holidays, etc.)**
- ✓ **Payment types accepted**
- ✓ **Company description (this is VERY important and should include not only relevant business information, but also include relevant keyword phrase mentions such as "OP", "IOP", "Residential", "PHP", "drug rehab", "alcohol rehab", "addiction treatment", etc.)**
- ✓ **Posts (posts from your site blog, social media updates, and unique posts written specifically for GMB)**
- ✓ **Photos (pictures of the facility, accommodations, personnel, etc.)**
- ✓ **Videos (facility tour, patient testimonials, etc.)**

B) Local Citations

If you're not familiar with the term "citations", it is simply defined as an online reference to your company's legal name, phone number, and address from third party websites such as Manta, Yelp, InsiderPages, etc.

What people may not know about citations is the important role they play in getting your GMB listing to show up near the top of local search results. This requires special attention to detail.

When building citations to your GMB profile, it is crucial that all citation sites referencing your business use the EXACT dataset you've put on your GMB listing. In other words, the legal name,

physical address, and phone number reference must be identical to your Google My Business profile in order for Google to establish trust and authority in your local listing. Are the number of exact citations important? Yes indeed.

C) Blog Content Contribution

Most companies endeavoring GMB optimization also have an active and ongoing Organic SEO campaign which includes a content marketing strategy (blog posts/articles). Since this content is already being written and posted to a website's blog, it only makes sense to publish that content (or relevant portions of it) to your Google My Business profile.

What most digital marketers seem to forget is Google My Business allows for businesses to publish content regularly. By repurposing blog content and populating it on your GMB profile, you not only ensure it is easily discoverable by Google, but you create the potential of it being viewed by potential patients or loved ones seeking treatment options for a friend or family member.

D) Keyword-focused GMB Content

Outside of writing, publishing, and optimizing content on your blog and cross-promoting it to your GMB page, it's also a best practice to write **unique content** for just the GMB profile itself.

If you have an OP and IOP arm to your business, local admits are always top of mind for obvious reasons, so we recommend focusing on local patient acquisition and creating fresh GMB-specific content to pull in those potential admits with unique content specifically focused on them.



As an example, let's say you're operating an OP & IOP drug and alcohol rehab in Delray Beach, FL. We suggest writing GMB posts in varying length ranging from micro-posts of 50-100 words in length to lengthier posts of 500+ words. However, a key to success in this strategy is to know your audience, geographic considerations, and the targeted keyword phrases you're going after before you start pumping out content.

Potential GMB posts can include:

- ✔ **Post #1 - "Outpatient Rehab in Jacksonville"**
- ✔ **Post #2 - "Inpatient Addiction Treatment in Los Angeles"**
- ✔ **Post #3 - "Detox center near San Antonio"**
- ✔ **Post #4 - "Alcohol treatment in Cleveland"**
- ✔ **Post #5 - "Inpatient vs. Outpatient rehab"**
- ✔ **Post #6 - "Does Insurance Cover Drug Rehab?"**

E) Link Development

Link popularity is one of the most important factors to a successful SEO strategy when your sights are set on Google's algorithm. What may not be in your crosshairs is how links pointing back to your Google My Business profile can pump up its trust and authority.

Your GMB link building strategy is quite simple and doesn't have to be complex. Simply start by propagating your local map listing on your website as a site-wide footer element or on your Contact Us/About Us page or periodic drops to your GMB listing in blog posts. Follow this up with proactive link requests from relevant sites that offer links to local profiles and that should suffice. Over time, links to your local GMB listing will continue to build momentum indefinitely.



F) Reviews

Reviews don't have a significant impact on increasing your rankings within Google Maps, but the reason we've listed it here is because it does impact your brand's perception in the eyes of potential patients or loved ones seeking options.

When someone conducts a search on Google, they are provided with the top three listings in the local section of search results. After viewing the three company names listed, their natural instinct is to see how many reviews the company has received and their 1-5 scale score. It makes sense that this score should indicate how current and former clients or loved ones felt about their experience getting treatment there.

It's here where people will pick up the phone and call to inquire about treatment options or perhaps click through to the site to consume its content prior to committing to a call, form submission, livechat, etc. In other words, the quantity and quality of your reviews/ratings on your Google My Business profile will greatly dictate whether you get additional admit potentials from your listing.

One other item which isn't an optimization technique, but is important to tracking and quantifying ROI from Google My Business is to include a unique phone number and UTM tag for your website on your GMB profile. By doing so, you'll be able to properly isolate inbound calls, referral traffic to your site, and bottom-line conversions taking place from your GMB efforts.

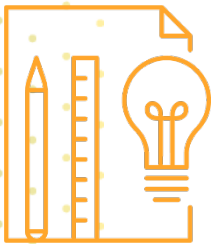
Optimized Press Releases (PR)

Only a few years ago, digital marketing agencies and freelancers discovered (and unfortunately abused) the power of optimizing press releases for search engine optimization purposes. Why? Because press releases were a great way to get many links pointing back to a site from high authority news and niche sites which directly impacted search visibility. That all ended when Google discovered this "silver bullet" approach to increasing a site's link popularity metric. And it didn't take them long to figure out what was happening.

In 2020, it seems most marketing agencies and consultants have forgotten about the importance of online press. This is especially true for how press releases can amplify a brand to hundreds of relevant sites and news outlets via press release distribution channels like PRWeb.com and PRDistribution.com. Since each site has its own unique user base, it provides immense branding opportunities with the potential of people visiting a center's site pages by clicking on hyperlinks in the release and can also create follow up interviews by editors of other publications that come across them.

Optimized PR in its purest form creates opportunities for rehab centers to make all kinds of announcements/PR angles to a large and broad audience of readers who would otherwise not familiarize themselves with your brand.

Several types of news-worthy angles might consist of:



- ✓ **[center's name] Announces a New Location Opening up in [city and/or state]**
- ✓ **[center's name] Announces New Director of Admissions at Their [city and/or state] Location**
- ✓ **[center's name] is Pleased to Announce Its New Addiction Treatment Website**
- ✓ **[center's name] is Now LegitScript Certified**
- ✓ **[center's name] Was Recently Named The #1 Rehab Center in California by [credit source]**
- ✓ **[center's name] Now Accepts Medicaid at Their [city and/or state] Location**

What is unique about optimized PR is that it has a multiplier effect unlike other digital marketing initiatives. You should consider:

- ❑ **Each PR that links back to your site can still increase link popularity**
- ❑ **When done frequently, editors, bloggers, and other influencers may request follow up pieces on your facility, treatment options, etc. and often link back to your site from their respective websites**
- ❑ **PRs create additional traffic to the site from people finding and clicking on your site's link in the PRs**

- ❑ **Optimized PRs typically show up at the top of “News” search results on search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, Bing, and DuckDuckGo**
- ❑ **Press releases often rank organically in natural search results for a wide array of keyword phrases including branded terms which can help with reputation management**

The key ingredients to successful PR's include:

- ✓ **Newsworthy PR angles (very important)**
- ✓ **Immersion of a main keyword phrase target in the headline if applicable (often the default title of the page)**
- ✓ **Compelling content built around the PR angle (new location, new treatment options, new personnel, charitable contribution announcements, etc.)**
- ✓ **Strategic injection of targeted keyword phrases in the PR piece**
- ✓ **Hyperlinking 1-2x's in the PR (we suggest branded linking vs. anchor text)**
- ✓ **Contact information**

Social Media Marketing

Every day, there are billions of bits of information being created and shared through social media ranging from pics of someone's breakfast to the latest news to, guess what....comments and reviews of rehab centers! Many people on their journey to long term sobriety or those who have recently gone through addiction treatment successfully will share their life experiences on social media.

For treatment centers, there are an abundance of social profiles to select for digital marketing and reputation management, but we've distilled it down to the top social platforms that have the most impact in terms of admissions potential and for monitoring your brand's reputation.

Here's a list of social networks we typically advocate rehab centers pursue when conducting social media marketing for their center:

1. Facebook

Facebook has over two billion active accounts and is the #1 social media profile for treatment centers to get their brand amplified to the masses at a reasonable cost.

For Facebook, it's always a best practice to do at least three posts per week at a minimum to keep your profile active and healthy. The types of posts we see that get the most traction in terms of likes, shares, and comments are:

- ❑ Images with impactful inspirational statements empowering viewers to stay strong and not deviate from their path of sobriety
- ❑ Creating thematic days of the week such as "Freedom Friday" or "Winning Wednesday" where every Friday and Wednesday carries the theme with social updates
- ❑ Faculty interview videos
- ❑ Facility walkthrough videos
- ❑ Testimonial videos from people who have gone through addiction treatment successfully (please make sure all testimonials are approved in writing by the client prior to publishing to avoid HIPAA compliance and legal issues in general)
- ❑ Regular contribution of articles relevant to addiction and addiction treatment
- ❑ Recent certifications
- ❑ Relevant news

In addition to standard updates on your Facebook profile for organic views, Facebook offers advertising opportunities to further amplify your message to the masses. Let's look at these paid advertising opportunities on Facebook:

A. Boosted Posts

Boosted posts offer the ability to promote Facebook updates to a large audience by paying on a PPC basis to promote organic posts.



B. Link Ads

Link Ads are seen in both desktop and mobile environments on the right side of someone's Facebook feed on desktop and as a scrolling ad on mobile devices. Options for treatment centers include a link back to their website, a short form, addiction treatment news, a press release announcing a new rehab location opening up, etc.

C. Video Ads

Video ads are placed in people's feeds and can be as long as 120 minutes in length, but we don't suggest having a movie equivalent for any video ads. Due to typical attention spans, we suggest hard-hitting videos that are 15 to 30 seconds in length to get your message across.

D. Page Like Ads

Page Like Ads is a way for treatment centers to get new "likes" for their Facebook profile. These ads are straightforward in terms of their intent to have people "Like" your Facebook page and are a good way to get more followers who can peruse your feed and be engaged with your center.

E. Messenger Ads

Unlike other ads that show up in profile feeds, Messenger Ads will only show up in Messenger Inbox and Messenger Stories. These ads offer a less cluttered way to promote your center in a more intimate setting within the Messenger platform.

F. Retargeting

When people visit your center's site but don't commit to a desired action and just leave the site, it doesn't have to be the last time they see your brand. With retargeting, people that visited the site and then log into their Facebook profile will see an ad from your center.

There are other advertising formats available on Facebook, but we have found the above marketing options to be the most impactful for marketing addiction treatment and are the ones we most often use in our work with our addiction treatment center customers.

2. Instagram

Instagram is second only to Facebook and just happens to be owned by Facebook. Instagram has over one billion active users with many of them frequenting the platform daily and weekly. We have found Instagram to be an effective platform for marketing to millennials and is quickly being adopted by the 40-50+ year old demographic.

Unlike Facebook which is a good blend of text content, images, and videos, Instagram tends to be more of an image- and video-heavy platform, so make sure your center uses images and video collateral more heavily. We recommend doing 2-3 posts per week at a minimum.

In terms of advertising on Instagram, there are several different ways to promote your center.

A. Stories Ads

As the name indicates, Stories ads appear in "Story" feeds between story segments and can come across as a bit disruptive, but in our opinion and experience, disruptive can work well in the case of addiction treatment.

B. Photo Ads

Photo ads are probably the most commonly seen ads since they are ads placed in Instagram feeds labeled as "Sponsored". These ads are great for treatment centers to show facility images with brief content calls-to-action placement.

C. Video Ads

Video ads offer the ability for your treatment center to leverage short 15-30 second video segments to get your message across to your target demographic. A best practice would be a brief "About Us"-style video rich with visuals of your facility's accommodations and key differentiating qualities that set you apart.

D. Carousel Ads

Carousel ads offer the ability to inject multiple images into a single ad unit. We've seen examples of successful carousel ads using a facility image first followed by images of accommodations such as bedrooms, a swimming pool, local beach access, etc.

Other Social platforms to consider:

- Twitter: Since 80% of its users are not in the United States, we feel this social platform is better suited for International rehab centers to repurpose Facebook social media content.
- LinkedIn: Best used for sharing information and establishing relationships with other treatment centers.

Email Marketing

Email marketing may seem like an outdated marketing method for treatment centers, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

Every day, treatment centers are collecting email addresses from form submissions, over-the-phone discussions, LiveChat engagements, etc. Where most centers fail is once the initial correspondence stops, those emails go into the abyss and remain there untouched and forgotten.

When marketing your addiction treatment center, there are three main initiatives that should be put into play to shore up additional interest and potential admits to your facility.

1. Inbound Leads

Chances are your center is frequently acquiring inbound leads from form submissions, insurance verification submissions, and from phone discussions or via LiveChat. The key here is to keep in regular contact with these individuals if they didn't immediately commit to your center for treatment. This is especially important when connecting with these potential individuals has been difficult or impossible by phone.

Successful centers will conduct an initial email confirmation when someone fills out a form on their site inquiring about their services. This is usually an automated response to the submission, but provides an excellent opportunity to include unique messaging and perhaps even a



downloadable brochure via PDF, links to valuable articles, inclusion of testimonials, among other things. This is the first step.

Next, successful centers will get the email into their CRM system and stage email “drips” with each email offering different messaging based on how long they’ve been in the system from initial email acquisition. A basic drip (trigger) model setup could look like this:

- ✔ **Trigger #1: Email is sent 24 hours after initial contact to prompt a CTA**
- ✔ **Trigger #2: Email is sent 48 hours after initial contact to prompt a CTA**
- ✔ **Trigger #3: Email is sent one week later**
- ✔ **Trigger #4: Email is sent out one month later**
- ✔ **Trigger #5: Email is sent out quarterly**

Based on the type of center you’re operating, all of your email drips should play to your strengths, provide additional insights, and have clear CTAs to prompt people to call or perform some other form of desired action.

2. Strategic Outreach

Other than inbound email lead capture, there is an immense opportunity to work with other centers, agencies, and government institutions to get your brand in front of a highly targeted audience with the end goal of patient referral networking.

The main areas of focus we’ve seen work with other centers include:

- ✔ **Other treatment centers**
- ✔ **Hospitals**
- ✔ **Law Firms**
- ✔ **Therapist**
- ✔ **Courts**

By reaching out to the above entities, you'll maximize your exposure to an extent that far surpasses other forms of traditional and digital marketing tactics in terms of reach. However, make sure whatever email list you have is opt-in based and verified before blasting out emails to potential referral partners.

3. Alumni Outreach

Patients that have gone through successful treatment at your center can be your biggest advocates and some of them may be willing to "megaphone" the message about their new found life of sobriety and the treatment center that made it possible. Make it a habit to stay close to these "super fans" and find ways to let their message help you find more people to help.

Unfortunately, not all rehab centers keep in regular contact with alumni via email. You should consider staying connected and keeping them informed with everything that's going on at the facility including upcoming alumni events. Don't forget that alumni are one of the most powerful word-of-mouth referrals a center can have when it comes to patient referrals.

Website Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

Website CRO is the process of making ongoing adjustments to a website to enhance conversion rate potential of its visitors.

CRO consists of two main initiatives in an active campaign:

1. Multivariate Testing

As the name indicates, multivariate testing is when multiple variables of a page are changed and then traffic is equally split between the "champion" (current live page) and the "challenger", the exact same page, but with the new changes to the page in place.

Multivariate testing is very common in the addiction treatment space and is the main testing module for sites that don't have tens of thousands of visitors frequenting their site on a monthly basis.



2. A/B Testing

A/B testing is a more strategic CRO method whereby only one variable is changed on a page and is then tested against the champion version. The only caveat is if the page you're testing has low traffic volume going to it, the resulting dataset may not give you an accurate outcome which can have an adverse effect if you pursue the wrong path once a test has been completed.

At the end of a completed CRO cycle, the page that clearly shows higher conversion rates is the page you should either keep active in the case of the champion or replace the old champion with its challenger that has shown through testing to be the clear winner.

As with other forms of digital marketing, CRO is not a one and done scenario where you've gone through a single round of champion vs. challenger, pick the winner, and then call it a day. CRO should be ongoing and sustained in order to constantly challenge pages in terms of content, CTA placement, short form placement, colors, layout, etc.



TRADITIONAL MARKETING VENUES

Radio

For new centers with no established reputation, radio may be a good way to get the word out to the masses. It can also be cost effective depending on the market and channels you're looking to partner with to advertise your center.

When evaluating radio options, keep in mind where you want your message to be broadcasted geographically and make sure your target demographics are thoroughly intact on the channels you intend to broadcast your message. It's also important to not only look at traditional radio channels such as AM/FM, but to also look at digital streaming service options since a lot of people have severed ties with traditional radio stations and have gone to streaming for listening options.

Once you've gone through the process of radio station selection, it's important to have a succinct, hard-hitting message for your radio spot in 15-30 seconds which for some may be a difficult task due to the brevity of the message. Our advice: don't overthink it.

Sometimes the best way to get your message out can be as simple as: *"Are you or a loved one suffering from drug or alcohol abuse? Here at [your center's name] we know how addiction can be stressful to everyone involved and have recovery options available to help you or a loved one get back on track to a life of sobriety and healthy lifestyle choices. Call [your phone number] or visit [your website] to learn more."*

Tracking performance of radio spots, just like any other form of marketing, should be a top priority and there are three main items your center should be concerned with in terms of ROI analysis.

- ✓ Dedicated phone number (use a unique phone number on a per channel basis for tracking inbound calls from each source)
- ✓ Dedicated URL/landing page (yourcenter.com/rehabnow or radio.yourcenter.com or use a unique domain entirely which can simply be a complete copy of your existing site -- just be sure to block search engines from crawling it to avoid duplicate content issues)
- ✓ Analytics tracking (set up "campaigns" within Google Analytics to track traffic from each source)



TV

TV is also a way to get the word out about your new center, but it comes at a premium and requires a lot more preparation and creative costs than radio.

Due to the nature of TV ads, prepare to spend tens of thousands of dollars on production costs and potentially the same or more on running the ads depending on the network(s), time of day, and days of the week you select to run your ads on them.

Of all of the advertising venues available, TV is the least used platform by treatment centers due to cost and the ability to quantify ROI from this marketing venture. It's also more of a passive platform vs. proactive ones such as search engines, as an example.

If you have a substantial marketing budget, TV may be an option, but our recommendation is if you're going to pursue TV ad spots, do it in small bites at first to track effectiveness before you jump in with both feet and potentially blow through your entire marketing budget.

Billboards

Billboards are another way to get your brand in front of the masses, but they're difficult to track performance outside of using unique website addresses and tracking phone numbers.

Addiction treatment is a timely thing and sometimes people driving may be thinking about their own addiction issues or perhaps a loved one's. If they see the billboard, they can become familiar with your brand and can call or visit your website. They may not even be thinking about addiction issues but when they see the billboard, it may stir up some thoughts that could lead to them reaching out for help.

The biggest challenge we see with advertising a treatment center on billboards is brand recall when someone finally reaches their destination or safely stops somewhere. Channel attribution can be difficult as well since someone may recall the brand, visit the main site, and then call to inquire about services which may not match the unique tracking mechanisms you put on the billboard.

Based on what other treatment centers have told us about their experience using billboards, they feel those dollars are better spent on more direct advertising opportunities such as PPC, SEO, and print/online publications.

Newspapers

Twenty plus years ago, newspapers would have been an excellent source for advertising a treatment center's services, but the reality is newspaper circulation is way down since the advent of the internet and more and more people are looking to the net for sourcing information including news.

From our experience, especially in working with OP/IOP treatment centers who have done local newspaper ads in recent years, it's best to also place your ads on the digital versions to ensure the online audience is also reached.

Just like other advertising venues, be sure to use unique phone numbers and website URLs to track performance in newspapers and don't commit to a long contract right away. Do a shorter engagement to track performance and look to a long-term commitment if the ROI is there.

Traditional Print Trade Publications (including digital print)

Trade publications are an option but don't look at them solely as a way to acquire new patient inquiries directly. Rather, look at them as a combination of direct admissions potential and for getting your brand in front of other treatment centers and their personnel who may be interested in establishing referral partnerships.

We've evaluated well over a dozen different offline and online publications and have narrowed down our list of recommended platforms to the top five we believe may offer the best value to addiction treatment centers.



1. *Psychology Today*

We've already covered Psychology Today (PT) in our directories section above, but since PT also has a print version and offers additional advertising opportunities for both their print and online versions, we wanted to make sure they were included in our traditional marketing venues section. Of all of the trade publications and their online counterparts, we strongly believe PT is clearly the #1 choice for branding and direct patient inquiries.

2. *Recovery Today*

Recovery Today magazine is an online magazine filled with a plethora of addiction treatment and recovery information including the latest treatments and techniques as well as overviews of recovery centers, practitioners, and people in recovery. For this platform, it appears to be more interview/overview based in terms of advertising opportunities and the costs associated with doing advertising isn't readily available.

3. *Renew Magazine*

Renew Magazine, like Recovery Today, is purely focused on addiction treatment and long-term recovery and also has an online version of their publication: RenewEveryday.com. According to our research, they have a monthly audience reach of 85,000 with nearly 80% of their readers having a family member or a close friend struggling with alcohol and/or drug addiction. Their advertising rates for their online publication range from \$350 per month to \$1,400 per month.

4. *American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)*

ASAM is an organization offering some of the most powerful research-driven information on addiction treatment and recently announced a new certification partnership with CARF to evaluate and certify a treatment center's ability to provide treatment and care based on **The ASAM Criteria**. ASAM currently offers advertising opportunities but is very selective on who they allow to advertise on their platform, so do your research and make sure you're either CARF or JCAHO certified if you have any hope of advertising your center's treatment options through their print and online publications.

5. Counselor Magazine

Counselor magazine claims to be one of the longest running publications in the addiction field spanning over 45 years. Their readership reach is over 45,000 subscribers and according to their media kit, 90% of Counselor's readers use the publication as a referral source which could be a great opportunity for treatment center's to advertise their centers. Counselor's advertising rates range anywhere from \$195 per month for an online ad to \$2,500 for a one time full page ad in their print publication.

There are plenty of other publications out there that come in both print and online versions, so if you're looking to expand your reach well beyond our top five list above, do some additional research in the space and align your brand with publications that may best represent your center and its target demographics.

HIPAA Considerations

HIPAA compliance is very important for treatment centers, so here is what you need to do as a treatment center to get HIPAA compliant and stay that way.

Why HIPAA Matters to Your Patients

The reality is patient information must always be protected regardless of whether you're operating a single location addiction treatment center or a large healthcare system like Cleveland Clinic. In other words, HIPAA will look at all healthcare providers the same when it comes to compliance and without prejudice.

What happens if your facility is found not complying with HIPAA?

The Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, is the enforcing body of HIPAA compliance and if you're found not complying with it, your facility can face substantial fines depending on the severity of the non-compliance issues uncovered. Keep in mind that there are four main categories and each represents its own set of fines. Furthermore, each category infraction fines will be in aggregate for the months or years in which your facility didn't comply.



For a brief checklist of HIPAA compliance, we have found the HIPAA Journal offers a great HIPAA compliance checklist that covers the basics.

Now let's cover several topics related to treatment center marketing and how to ensure your rehab facility can protect itself from any HIPAA compliance issues online.



Have HIPAA Compliant Forms For Insurance Verification

Insurance Verification form submissions are very common among rehab centers. If you have an addiction and mental health treatment center, chances are you have a "Verify Insurance Today!" CTA on your website. This also happens to be one of the best CTA examples a rehab center can have for pre qualifying admissions.

Now comes the question, does this CTA protocol comply with HIPAA? First, you need to make sure your site has a SSL or TSL certificate in place as the most basic form of securing the CTA. Second, when someone fills in personal information about themselves such as their name, address, SS number, their insurance information such as provider and group ID #, etc, where does this transactional page actually live and where does it go once they click "Submit"? If you are not sure about how to answer either of these questions, you need to seek help ASAP to ensure your protocols are HIPAA compliant.

Post on Social Media With Caution to Avoid HIPAA Violations

We live in an age of hyper-transparency and portability of information at lightning speed. This is obvious with peer-to-peer platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc., but if you're operating a treatment center, you must tread lightly and carefully. At no point should your center share ANY private information about patients at your rehab center or share private messages with loved ones or relatives of patients through social

platforms. However, this is not to say you can't have testimonial videos of past patients (with written permission, of course) and such, because that's okay.

Managing Data Security in the Age of Mobility

We live in a brave new world of technology mobility. You may have noticed people these days walk around like zombies half the time hunched over their smartphones, checking email, scrolling through social feeds, etc.

There's no doubt you're looking at private information on the move since most of us do, but be smart about it when it comes to sharing information. Make sure whatever device you have is password protected and if you're not using it, please make sure it's shut off so others can't access it. Furthermore, please be sure to NOT exchange private patient information via text messages to other personnel or to others in general, even loved ones of patients, since most mobile devices are not secure for the most part. These infractions alone can be HIPAA violations if they're uncovered.

Separately, but related to data security in general for treatment centers, you will want to fundamentally ensure your facility's on-site network is locked down tighter than Fort Knox's vaults. Additionally, if you are allowing your rehab center's employees the ability to access private patient information from a personal home desktop or laptop computer, you may find yourself in a bit of a pickle regarding HIPAA compliance.

HIPAA Resources to Keep Your Rehab Center in Check

If you're unsure about whether or not your facility is following HIPAA compliance rules, you need to look into not only establishing company-wide policies that all employees must follow, but it also makes sense to keep up with the changes of HIPAA rules and reinforce them with your employees by updating your HIPAA standard protocols within your organization. What better resource than the Health Information Privacy Act resources page from HHS.gov to keep up with the latest news and standards?

Foreign Language Considerations

In the United States, English is the most commonly spoken language, but there's a growing adoption of another language that is commonly overlooked by rehab centers -- Spanish.

The Spanish language is second only to English in the USA and currently represents over 40 million people who use the language in their home on a regular basis. Spanish is also the most studied foreign language in the US. Treatment centers who are located in a Spanish communities should strongly consider having two versions of their website: one in English and one in Spanish.

After reviewing hundreds of treatment center sites over the years, we've noticed there's only a few of them who offer Spanish versions of their content to this commonly overlooked audience of Spanish speakers seeking treatment options in their native tongue.

By creating content and marketing messaging in Spanish, you'll not only get your site engaged by a new audience historically underserved, but you'll also be an early adopter to marketing your treatment center's services in an already crowded market with a lot less competition since most centers only focus on English and have ignored the Spanish speaking demographic.

Please note if you're promoting or intend to promote your center in Spanish, you will need to have literature and personnel infrastructure to support them before, during, and after treatment.





Thank you for downloading and reading our comprehensive guide to marketing an addiction treatment center.

One key takeaway for your center in all things advertising is how to pursue both online and offline marketing in a manner that can directly impact one another. If you're doing print ads and billboards, use unique tracking identifiers if people engage those types of offline marketing venues in an online format. The same principle also applies to how online can be tied directly to offline conversions. In other words, don't just look at offline and online channels as individual silos and have them work together to fully canvas the marketplace and tie them back to their originating source through analytics tracking.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the guideline, suggestions for additions or changes, or need assistance in helping promote your rehab center online, please call 855-876-7238 to speak with a Lead to Recovery representative today.

Call us today at (855) 876-7238!