



Minding Your Own Business - Effectively - Ref219

with Nicola McLennan

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TRANSCRIPT

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Steven Bruce

Good afternoon. Welcome to the Academy of physical medicine for some more lunchtime learning. Slight change today. Normally we do medical broadcasts. But today we're going to do something about helping you grow your business. But obviously, we will be addressing that in the ethical way that we are required to do. And largely because that of course means we can tick off the boxes on the chiropractic code and the osteopathic practice standards, but also because we want to do these things properly. I'm joined by Nicola McLennan, who has been on the show a couple of times before with some fantastic advice about how to use various internet accessories to help promote your business. Today we're going to be talking I think about Google My Business. Nicola, great to have you back again.

Nicola McLennan

Well, thank you so much for having me, Steven.

Steven Bruce

I'm amazed you took that with you. That's fantastic.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. It moved a very long way. But now I like my tapestry.

Steven Bruce

What I should point out is formerly an osteopath, I mean, she's still an osteopath, although no longer registered, and now devotes herself to helping practices like mine, like yours, to develop themselves, her business is called Boost Your Practice. And I'm sure we'll hear more about that later on. But none of our shows are ever a sales pitch for anything in particular. And what she has to say today is stuff that you can do easily yourself for no cost at all. And hopefully Nicola exploits the power of Google.

Nicola McLennan

Well, absolutely, that's what we want to do, is harness the power of Google and get it working for you and your practice, because there's all sorts of free stuff that Google makes available for us, but just got to go and use it and know which bits are relevant for us as practice owners.

Steven Bruce

But also, it's tempting, isn't it, to think, you know, I set up Google My Business for my clinic and for the Academy years ago. It's tempting to think once you've done it, you've done it. But of course, Google changes.

Nicola McLennan

Oh, well, absolutely. And one of the most important things about Google My Business is keeping it really, really up to date. They want to see you logging in and updating content on a regular basis. And that gets you lots of brownie points with Google, and helps you be found over on Google Maps, which is what will get you that elusive piece of real estate that you're looking for, which is when somebody pops in chiropractor near me, osteopath near me, that's what you're looking to get is that top spot on the map.

Steven Bruce

I know this is going back to basics, but do you just want to give us a quick overview of what Google My Business is. Because who knows, there could be people watching who have not actually even set up Google My Business, which is a big, big mistake in my view, and probably yours as well.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely, it's really, really easy and quick to set up. So if you literally just pop into Google, you know, Google My Business listing, yours will be there if you haven't claimed it, they'll normally want to verify that it's you. So they'll send you a postcard or do an automated phone message to verify that it's you. And then you're good to go. You can sign in, log in and start updating the details.

Steven Bruce

So for the complete technophobes out there we open a Google browser, and we type in Google My Business or just type in our business name?

Nicola McLennan

You could type in either. You could type in your business name, your listing will come up and it'll say, is this your business? If it isn't claimed, then just click there and off you go. And you'll have different options of how to get verified, as I said, they can send you something in the post with a code. If you've already got your telephone number registered with your Gmail account, they might just be able to send you a text code, but most of us haven't. So a few days' time that you'll get a nice little envelope in the post with a code. And you'll go back to that page and type in that four-digit code. And then you've proved that it's you. And then they're happy to let you edit the listing.

Steven Bruce

Brilliant. And there are lots and lots of basics on that list. You don't need any clever technical ability to enter the basic data, do you? What are the recent changes or improvements in Google My Business that you want to bring to the forum?

Nicola McLennan

So the biggest thing to really talk to you guys about today is what they are really, really pushing at the moment, which is direct messaging. And a lot of people don't even kind of realise that you can have direct messaging on your listing because it's only recently been rolled out.

Steven Bruce

Hands up who didn't realise. I didn't realise.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So it's often, you know, you sign in, if you haven't signed in for a few weeks, a few months. And you'll see there's lots of new kind of features, but this is one of the most important ones because it allows people to be able to reach out to you with a question rather than just immediately booking in. And these questions are of far better quality than the kind of questions you would normally get on kind of chat functions over on social media. So when I talk to people about direct messaging on Google, I do get some eyerolls and they go, oh, well, we've turned that off on our Facebook business page, because it

was a total waste of time. And it was really time consuming. So generally, we find the quality of inquiries and questions over on Google is just much higher, because they were looking for you in the first place.

Steven Bruce

And that's a thing that some people don't realise, isn't it? There's a big difference between the nature of your contact through Facebook let's say and through Google. On Facebook, if you put out information you're firing it at everybody who happens to be seeing your chat. On Google, they're only seeing it if they actually are interested in it, because they've searched for you. So it is completely different quality of contact, isn't it? How do these direct messages arrive? I mean, are they coming into my email box? Or are they coming through Google somehow?

Nicola McLennan

Generally, what they'll do is they'll first things first. They're only visible. So if anybody's like googling themselves right now and going, is my chat turned on, and they're going to have a look, it only shows as an option on your phone. So on a mobile search, it doesn't come up as an option on desktop, first things first. But then let's say somebody clicks that chat button, and they send you a question. It will go through generally to your Google Maps app on your phone, or your Google My Business app on your phone, whichever you have, if you've got both it'll go through to Google Maps. And it'll just come up with the person's name and the exact question that they've asked.

Steven Bruce

Okay. So that therefore means that someone's going to be looking at that app to get these messages and to answer them. And I presume that answering them in a timely manner is quite important.

Nicola McLennan

Well, yes and no. So there are some ways that we really kind of go wrong with chat as practitioners, particularly if you're like a one-man band, one-woman army, it can be really tempting to, you know, end up talking to somebody and replying at like, 10 o'clock at night, but that's not okay. And, as much as you can be well meaning, it probably doesn't come across particularly professional either. So do it within office hours, and perhaps have it as something that you check on a daily basis. But absolutely, they'll prompt you as well, Google will say, you know, you've had an unanswered message. They've been waiting however many hours. So you'll know kind of how recent the message was, but certainly, I would advise if they've sent a message in the morning, try and get back to them by lunchtime. If they've sent it in the afternoon, try and return it by end of day as a best practice.

Steven Bruce

And is there any science to actually setting this up? Or is there a sort of settings for what the contact form looks like? Or is it really, really straightforward from both parties' point of view?

Nicola McLennan

It's really, really straightforward, we do have a screenshot on the slide deck of exactly where the messaging tab is now in the new dashboard. So if it's been a while, since you've logged into yours, got a layer of dust on your Google My Business listing, and you can dust it off, and sign in and go, oh, everything looks different. And it's all in a different place with a screenshot on the slides that shows you

exactly where messaging is. And all you need to do is click into messaging. And it literally is as simple as toggling a button from off to on. And that's it, done.

Steven Bruce

Question for you here, which is not specifically about direct messaging, but it is about Google My Business. And it's more about Google getting in touch with us. Pip has just sent in a message saying that she gets a bit annoyed with Google business services because she gets emails just often enough to be slightly irritating, saying that they're suggesting different business working hours. And why are they doing that? Is there any way to stop it happening?

Nicola McLennan

So definitely don't turn it off, Pip, because the one time that this is really important is when, you know, in the UK, we're lucky enough to have quite a lot of bank holidays littered throughout the year. Christmas, Easter, times when your clinic is closed. Again, it's an opportunity to go in and update, isn't it, to actually select and say right we're closed from Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and any other days that you're closed, and these are all kind of give you that brownie point savings account with your Google My Business listing and that they see that you're concerned you don't want to waste your customers' time. If somebody's searching, you know, emergency osteopath on Christmas Eve. And your listing shows that you're open and you're not, they're going to be disappointed, and all Google really want is for people to have a really good experience when using their search engine and for people to find useful up to date relevant information. So yes, they can be a little bit annoying, but I would say that generally they only send them, a, if there's a bank holiday coming up or a time when normally within working hours, we would be open, or if you haven't updated them for a while. So if they're consistently saying you haven't updated for a while, Pip just take 30 seconds, sign in, change your opening hours from closing at five o'clock to six o'clock, change it back again, press save, and they'll leave you alone till the next bank holiday.

Steven Bruce

Thank you. I suspect there'll be some sceptics watching this who will say Google aren't interested in providing a good service. They're only interested in getting our money out of it through Google ads and things like that. Which is, of course, absolutely true, because they are a business. But they only succeed in doing that by delivering a quality service to both the person with the adverts and the person who wants to buy the product, don't they?

Nicola McLennan

On 100%, out of date business information is what per every search engine that went before Google out of business. So they're obsessed with, is the business still open? Are the opening hours still correct? Is everything up to date, because frustration with using them is going to be their downfall. But I would 100% agree that the Google Ads side, you know, don't believe a word Google said they're absolutely ruthless. Something rather that I won't mention on this broadcast in case Justin has to beat me. But yeah, when it comes to Google ads reps, they are unscrupulous salespeople, when it comes to the Google My Business, the help and support is slow. But geez, you know, there's no other company in the world that can get you in front of local people that are looking for what you do in your area. So you do have to play the game a little bit with Google My Business.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Somebody called PV says, is there any way to get this, presumably the direct messaging on a laptop? Or is it purely phones? I imagine you can get it on tablets, can't you?

Nicola McLennan

You can get it on tablets. But generally no, it only comes up on the tablet and the mobile option. Google knows exactly what device that we're searching the internet on. It knows where we are, it knows an awful lot about our habits. And generally, it notices that we tend to initiate chats when we're on mobile, because perhaps we're in a circumstance where we can't talk or initiate a conversation. So no, you can't get it switched on desktop today. Ask me again in three months and it might be a different answer. But right now, you can't get it on desktop.

Steven Bruce

You said there were some big changes happening with Google in the near future, what's that?

Nicola McLennan

So Google My Business looks to be having a name change, which will be, I think its fourth name change, its most recent one before that was Google Places. And you know, I can't remember what it was before that, but it's having a new name change. And it's going to be migrating over to the Google Maps app. Because by far, if you have a look at your data inside your Google My Business listing, you'll often see one of the most common interactions people have will be they're asking for directions via Google Maps. So perhaps they're going from their auntie's house instead of work. And they're like, what's the quickest way to get to, you know, my local awesome osteopath? Is there a quicker way?

Nicola McLennan

Or equally some chiropractor, of course.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So yeah, that's what's happening. And we will just wait and see what other changes and functionality are rolled out as it migrates over.

Steven Bruce

I'm not answering phone calls while you're talking here. But I thought I'd get my mobile phone out. Because there is a map thing on the home screen, I call it. It's an app, of course. But I have no idea if it's the Google app, or if it's an Apple app, or is it something else? I got to specifically search for Google Maps on the app store to get this on here? Because I had no idea that that is necessary.

Nicola McLennan

Yeah, it's a different animal, Google Maps. And, yeah, it's a completely separate app to the standard mapping navigation app that comes on your phone?

Steven Bruce

Well, I don't know about anyone watching, but that's interesting, useful information for me, because I shall get that app and put it on my phone. And then we shall have the direct messaging turned on and at

midnight, whenever, people can be direct messaging me about how they join the Academy. So that's great.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely.

Steven Bruce

I am guilty of that. I really am. Because, you know, Claire, and I spend a lot of time apart. So I spend a lot of time thinking about the business and therefore I'm probably working on things late at night. And if a message comes in, I'll answer it straight away. And I know that makes me look horribly unprofessional. But on the other hand, I want this business to be thoroughly helpful to people so.

Nicola McLennan

Well, absolutely. I mean, it doesn't necessarily, maybe unprofessional is the wrong word.

Steven Bruce

You wouldn't be the first person to call me unprofessional.

Nicola McLennan

But to have it not be a total pain in the butt to do. You know, I don't want practitioners who have just sat down to dinner and feeling, oh, I ought to reply to that straightaway, because, you know, user 57312 has asked me if, you know, they'll pay our fees or whatever. So some of the other common things that can make it a drag and can make people say, oh, you know, we had that bad experience with Facebook and Instagram, can be things such as, people will ask questions over chat, patients will innocently ask us stuff that we can't answer over chat, we need them in front of us, we need to do an examination. So that apart from answering outside of hours will be answering the question, because sometimes the question really can't be answered over chat. And then I've had practitioners who will even get kind of dragged into almost doing like a consultation for free over chat, because it went back and forth. And it was, you know, when people go, I'm not doing chat, it's really time consuming. So it's important to remember that when a patient reaches out to you, I would always encourage you to think of two things. Number one, start noting down the kind of questions you get asked, because they've Googled, you know, chiropractor or osteopath near them, or in their town, they're at your business. And that question was the hurdle between them picking up the phone or going ahead and clicking through the website and booking. So it can be really interesting to be like, what type questions are you getting asked? Because it puts you in the mind of somebody that is searching to think, what is it important for them to know. It can help you improve your website. But number two is to think about the purpose of the conversation from your point of view, is to just qualify them, are they suitable, you're not trying to convince them on the effectiveness of your treatment program in the future. That's the purpose of your initial consultation. So your purpose is to qualify them. If they are suitable, reassure them, they're in the right place. And then get them booked in for a consultation to see if you can help. It isn't to diagnose them, it isn't to do a consultation for free at half past 11 at night. And when we look at it with that kind of three step process, then suddenly, you might be thinking, I kind of see where I might have gone a little bit wrong and given too much time or answered stuff that I couldn't possibly answer over chat. So if you had a not so great experience in the past, that might be why.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, you did make a very good point there a few seconds ago in that, this is overcoming the first hurdle, which is making contact. And it just strikes me that when somebody searches for their nearby osteopath, chiropractor, they search for the person who can fix their frozen shoulder, they're going to get presented with a whole load of options. And if yours is the easiest one by which they can make contact, by pressing direct message or something like that, then you've made them take an action, and it's been easy for them to do it. And therefore, that whole business of turning on the messaging is probably just another helpful technique in achieving that.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely, it's what I like to call a baby step. So we all want everyone to just visit our website and just be bowled over by our amazingness. And just book online. That would be great. If everybody would do that, our lives would be so much easier. But they're human beings in pain and they've often got questions. So having that kind of baby step so that they can ask that, whatever seems that pertinent question to them. For them to then go ahead and book in is really important information, it can be really interesting to see the kind of questions that you get asked.

Steven Bruce

Okay, let's move on from the direct messaging, the questions and so on. What else is going on that we need to know about?

Nicola McLennan

So we mentioned at the beginning about, we really need to keep the Google My Business listing really up to date. And other than, as we had suggested with Pip earlier, going in and changing the opening hours, changing them back and hitting save, what else can we do to easily keep it up to date and keep different information going through. And it's by far the most underutilised section over on Google My Business by practice owners and that's by posting. So, regularly posting on your listing for a couple of different things. The first thing will be, we're thinking about, what do we want the listing to be shown for, so simply having a repetitive post that goes through that will be about you know, chiropractic services in Coventry or you know, are you looking for an osteopath in Newcastle, whatever the relevant profession and geographic keyword is for you and to be posting that on a regular basis. And then to be posting about any services and any things that you offer in your practice that you'd like to see more of, that you would like to get your Google My Business listing in front of people for. So you gave an example there, Steven a frozen shoulder. So if that's something that people would like to see more often they can be posting about, you know, frozen shoulder treatment in and whatever the town name is. So you know, whatever the, doesn't have to be unique selling points, but it can be whatever the services are in relation to particular conditions or particular types of patients. And then those can be worth posting about as well.

Steven Bruce

When you say posting, because I immediately think of Facebook when you're talking about posting, what's the nature of a post on your Google My Business site? Is it exactly the same, a picture and a certain amount of text? Or is there a recommended style for posting that gets the best traction?

Nicola McLennan

So it is a picture and a certain amount of text. But the real kind of golden rule is do not, whatever you do, don't repurpose your social posts over on Google, they just don't belong there. They're two completely different platforms. So you know, in the past couple of weeks, some of the people watching might well have posted for a random act of kindness day. Yeah. You're never going to post over on Google about that, because you don't want your business to be found. If people are searching...

Steven Bruce

Oh, gotcha. So okay. It's not that Google is going to penalise you for reusing content. It's just that that sort of post isn't relevant when it's your business that you want people to know about.

Nicola McLennan

100% correct.

Steven Bruce

Okay. So you said there is a standard format. Is there a recommended amount of text you should put on there? Or does Google not care?

Nicola McLennan

It changes a lot. But as soon as you start typing, you'll see the number, the character limit. At the moment, I believe it's about 500 characters, it was a lot more, so they're encouraging you to be concise. And when you're posting on a regular basis, if this is something you're going to try to get that layer dust off your Google My Business listing and keep it up to date. What I would urge you not to worry about is post clicks. So when you're going to post, because last week's posts have expired, they only last for seven days, then you can look and go oh, well, nobody clicked on my post, this isn't working. So your Google My Business listing doesn't work like somebody's clicking through onto a post, if we think of the post as like a waving hand. And the rest of the body is the Google My Business listing. We can't have a disembodied hand, it brings the whole listing in front of people in one time. So what you actually want to look at is the amount of views that your posts had and the amount of impact in increase in views of your listing as a whole. Because what happens when people start posting with some strategy behind their posts, when they start doing it regularly and properly, you start to notice the view count of your entire listing starts going up and up and up. And that can be hundreds more times that your business has got in front of people locally searching for best treatment for frozen shoulder, osteopath near me. And just on, you know, numbers alone, that's a lot more traffic going through to your website for zero spend.

Steven Bruce

And I'm guessing here that unlike pay per click, Google ads or Facebook ads or whatever, where you are being charged, and not being charged at all for this obviously, being charged for the number of times people click the advert. Actually, Google itself, correct me if I'm wrong, might well be refining your position in the search hierarchy, because you're posting stuff about frozen shoulder or sciatica or things like that, because it will recognise the terms you're using, won't it?

Nicola McLennan

Oh, well, 100%. So when you get this right, so let's say you are really interested, you love treating frozen shoulders, you've got a frozen shoulder page on your site. And you start consistently posting about the type of things people search in relation to frozen shoulder, then the beautiful thing that can happen, when you get it right, and you're consistent, is that that brownie kind of, you know, savings account with Google really starts to kick in because not only do you show really highly on the Google Maps, it's three positions on the Google map that you can show, but Google makes you bigger, because it will say, My Awesome Chiropractic Clinic and it'll say, they have a post about and it will quote back to the person exactly what they typed into Google and it will make number two and number three smaller so not only did you nab the top spot, but it's really showing your post making you bigger. That's just free traffic all day long that you want when you've got some strategy behind it and done it properly and consistently.

Steven Bruce

I got some more questions for you, but just before I move on. It seems to me that more and more of the top space on the front page of a Google search is paid adverts, though. So you're still going to come below those, aren't you?

Nicola McLennan

100%. So as it stands today, the order that it will go is ad space, it will then go, the actual image of the Google Map. And then it will be three positions available as in first, second, third, those you can now get into by paying, unfortunately, that you know, but, if it's not too competitive in your area, then we have the top of the organic listings. So the organic listings really are, if you're in a competitive area, where more than one clinic is paying for ads. And everyone's optimising their Google My Business listing, it poses the question, Steven, if that's somebody googling themselves right now and going well, I'm right down there, you know, is that worth your time to be spending effort for search engine optimisation to be at the top of the bottom third of the page, which on a mobile device is really quite far down. It's, you know, five or six scrolls down. So that's why I jump up and down about Google My Business, because it's such a shortcut for people that don't want to go down the Google Ads route, but they still want to show up and be found for people.

Steven Bruce

I missed this because you said the top three are adverts, you said there's then the map image, and then there's three more paid slots below that.

Nicola McLennan

So they're not paid. So we've got the Google Map, and it will kind of say in relation to that person search it will normally show at least three businesses on the map. And then those three that are shown will be listed as like name, address, telephone number, and the amount of stars they've got for their Google reviews count, will be shown to see everybody else. There's the terrible, the button nobody ever presses, which is the See More button to expand. What's actually, you know, all of us that aren't in those top three spots. So yeah, you really want to be featured in that one, two, and three spots in the map. It's a particularly competitive area.

Steven Bruce

I'll just have a quick look at these questions that have come in. So Carrie says, can she check that she understood correctly that she needs to download the Google Maps app in order to receive notifications and messages? I think you've answered that. But over to you.

Nicola McLennan

Yes, absolutely. That's where they're all, you know, as of writing this slide deck for you a few days ago, that was what emphasis to put the direct messaging first is they've migrated it all over to Google Maps.

Steven Bruce

And Nicola just mentioned her slide deck. We're not putting the slides up full screen, because it kind of interrupts the sort of flow of the interview, but I will send the slides out as a handout afterwards. And obviously, where they're relevant, Justin will be bringing them up for you to see as we go along. Back to you again, Nicola. Vlad says, when you say updating Google My Business, including content, what sort of content goes on Google My Business? If we write an article or make a Facebook post, can we simply cross post it onto GMB? Or will Google penalise posting the same content? Well, actually, we, he says something. Do we need canonical tags? I don't know what a canonical tag is, but I think we answered the business. It's not going to penalise you for using the same material. It's just that it needs to be about your business. But what about his stuff? What sort of content, I think you've covered that as well? It's stuff like the frozen shoulder or sciatica or?

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So in terms of posts, we've covered it, in terms of the other facets of your Google My Business listing, I would say to make sure that you've got all the relevant services and products listed. You know, you might have added different things since you last looked at your listing. So is everything there categorised that your clinic offers, and make sure that you're updating and adding, you know, new nice images, at least once a quarter, if you've got something that looks lovely, the flowers are blooming outside, you know, take a picture because they rotate the picture that you see when people find your listing. So it's really nice if it kind of looks something like the business when they get there. So if you've just redecorated, you know, add some new pictures. And yeah, that's the kind of content.

Steven Bruce

Mindy asked when you say regularly, how often should you be posting, she says once every few days or once a week. You said once a quarter there or is that just for updating photographs?

Nicola McLennan

So that's about updating photographs on your actual listing in terms of posting, Mindy, a post will expire after seven days. So I would suggest if you're going to, let's say you're going to rock and roll with frozen shoulder this month. I would post that consistently for four to six weeks and see how many views did it get? You know, are you getting more views overall on your listing and test it. Test that particular keyword for your clinic and see what kind of impact that you get. But you would be posting it there for once a week.

Steven Bruce

The same post?

Nicola McLennan

You could do the same post, but you might want to vary a little bit because one thing might work better than another. So, you know, the most important thing is the first piece of text. So, you know, are you struggling with frozen shoulder, you might test that with, you know, is frozen shoulder stopping you from getting out and about and doing the things you love? And one tip I can give you with regards to picking images is Google, particularly in the last three months, have got very, very strict about their nudity clauses, which we wouldn't think applies to us. But most of the treatment images we use, our patients are in a relative state of undress. So try, if you're going to go with treatment images, trying to go with images where the person is either clothed, or consultation type looking image. What I generally say, from the numbers that we're looking at, is Google prefers really positive images. So let's say you're going to do a frozen shoulder post, you might want to have a picture of a chap lifting his child up onto his shoulders and smiling like, look at the range of movement I've got in my shoulders, you might want a recovery type looking image, as opposed to something where somebody is in pain or undressed, because they just will block it, they won't let the image go through.

Steven Bruce

I remember being astounded when I discovered that with Facebook ads and Facebook images, the software that they use is capable of recognising human faces, human faces with smiles and all that sort of stuff. So they can promote the post according to how cheerful the post is. And I don't know if Google's doing the same thing. But I can see the point of that. Because when you talk about those unclothed patient images, some people might find those off putting, because actually, rather than not positive, they just might find them distinctly off putting because they think, oh gosh, you've got to take the clothes off to go and do this or whatever. Whereas the happy smiling face lifting the child would be perhaps more encouraging.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. I think sometimes we can lose sight as well of how threatening some of our treatment images can be. You know, if somebody has never been to see a manipulative therapist before and you've got a picture of like a lumbar roll as the first thing they see on your website. You know, they could think it's the local wrestling club, you know, if they don't know what it is, it can look quite like oh, I don't think I fancy that. So always be careful with your choice and use of images and think. Somebody doesn't understand what an osteopath does, but their friend at the local mom and baby group have said you've got to try osteopathy. Really think about that person. And look at your content from that point of view.

Steven Bruce

Yes. So you can see inside the slide deck, you'll see there is a slide that takes you to how to actually get into the post section. There isn't a step by step for post there, but you certainly can reach out to me for help. And we've got some walkthrough videos that I can happily send you if you've not posted before. And you don't want to break the internet, no problem.

Steven Bruce

It took me a long time to realise and this is kind of where you're going with that, I think, that we, typically as osteopaths and possibly as chiropractors, we spend a lot of time in our publicity material telling everybody what osteopathy is, and we talked about Andrew Taylor Still, and frankly, most patients

couldn't give us stuff about Andrew Taylor Still, you know, they aren't interested in his philosophy on osteopathy. They're interested in whether we can fix their problem. And you know, the term osteopath will have some vague connotation in the back of their mind, but they just want to know, can you fix their sciatica or their low back pain. And when we talk about manipulation, as you said, again, that can be off putting and we had somebody I forget, this is very bad of me, I forget who it was, was on the show some time back, who was talking about communication and saying when we put skeletons and things, models like that in our treatment room. Some people find those quite intimidating, quite unpleasant. And it's just another aspect of communication that we need to think about. More questions for you, Nicola. JD says, could you give us a visual of how to do these posts so that we can see a step by step way to construct them?

Steven Bruce

You very kindly put your contact email address on the slide handouts that we'll be sending out later. So that's pretty good. Is there, I know with Facebook, there are standard sizes of images that they like you to use, is there a recommended size of image for Google?

Nicola McLennan

There is, but it consistently changes. So if anybody is needing that piece of information, then I would just tell you to do what I do before we go ahead and post on our listings is put, you know, March 2022, google Google post image size because it consistently changes, so I could tell you what it is today and it will be out of date.

Steven Bruce

For a lot of people that are going to take a picture with their mobile phone, can they just fling that at Google and it will do the best it can with it.

Nicola McLennan

It will. But often, you know, our phones are so fancy nowadays, that the image size is often really, really big. So you can go over to a free software like Canva and use their Google My Business template and that will just resize it for you for free and in you know, next to no time, maybe 10 seconds, and then just export it then as a PNG or a JPG file, whatever your computer or device likes. And then it will just show beautifully.

Steven Bruce

And we've talked about this, I think you and I have talked about this before, but certainly I've talked about this on other chat shows about Canva. So that C,A,N,V,A, it's free. And it's a really, really good, very simple to use tool for putting your images in the right size, adding text to them, just making them look attractive for your posts. Having said that, is there a danger that when you put a post on to Google, you can make the post looks to professional?

Nicola McLennan

So I would certainly say that is the case over on social media, in terms of people engaging and such on social, the less polished, the more organic, the more fresh, the less it looks like they've seen hundreds of those pictures before, the more engagement you're going to get. For Google, that just isn't the case.

It's a different platform. They're not seeing the same images again, and again, they're only seeing them in relation to you and your business. So different story on Google, but certainly for social media. Yeah, avoid stock images like the plague.

Steven Bruce

I still think that even with Google, and I haven't any experience, certainly not your experience in this Nicola. If you use those very predictable stock images, it immediately looks like advertising. Now I know that people realise it's advertising, because it's Google. But again, if it looks more human, I think perhaps it would get more traction, particularly, you know, if you're the practitioner, we want to see a photograph of you every so often doing something rather than that happy American family from Getty images or whatever it might be.

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. So if you're going to go down the stock image route, I recommend shutterstock.com. Purely because they have what I would say like the most kind of emotive and human images. So you know, if you're going for a sciatica image rather than, what I call the like, Neurofen looking image where it's like a big red dot in a buttock and a line shooting down and it's all anatomical. You'll have a different variety of different ages, sizes, different dress, different ethnic background of somebody looking like they're about to say something, a really bad swear word because their size just got to them today. You'll get very emotive images. And when you're looking at your website, when you're looking at any of your marketing, and you're selecting those images, you want to think about who your ideal customer is, what kind of patient that you want. And choose accordingly. So that you're really automatically choosing an image that makes them feel heard and understood. So, yeah, when you've got sciatica, it's frustrating. You can feel like you're going to lose your independence, that's it. That's what my back is going to be like. So, always think about what the person's going through before you choose a relevant image.

Steven Bruce

We got five minutes left. So a couple of questions that we want to get through. I have somebody here called Alex Taunton. Alex, I have a feeling this means that you are Alex in Taunton, not your name is Alex Taunton. If it is, then I apologise I don't normally read surnames out. But Alex says, where does a Google My Business posts get displayed?

Nicola McLennan

So it gets displayed on your listing. So if we, let's say, Alex, that somebody was looking for an osteopath in Taunton, and your listing came up, then it's going to show that as part of your listing, it can also show, if you get into one of those spots on Google Maps, it can show a preview of the post there underneath the map.

Steven Bruce

Okay, so really, it's just improving your visibility on a Google search. They don't have to go to any special platform for it. It's just the Google search page. Okay. Jolly Local, funny names that people get given by the system. Jolly Local says, can people give reviews?

Nicola McLennan

Absolutely. You know, keeping your reviews coming in a steady flow is now actually more important than the total number of reviews that you have. So if I'm Steven's local competitor, and he's got 200 positive reviews, but he hasn't had any for three months, and I've had two a week for three months, I might get top spot.

Steven Bruce

So on that subject, if you wouldn't mind leaving a review for the Academy of Physical Medicine, that would be really helpful. Biljana says, this is a silly question, but it's not a silly question. She wants to know how they access the slides. Biljana, I will be emailing those out this afternoon fairly soon after the show, I'm going to get some lunch first, but then I'll come back and I'll send out an email with the slides on it. So you don't need to worry about that. It will have Nicola's contact details on it. And you know, if you want serious help with this sort of stuff, then go to Nicola, but anything simple that you think that the Academy can deal with, of course, we're here to help you out as well. Holly says, do patients have to have a Google Mail account in order to be able to leave a review?

Nicola McLennan

Yes, Holly, and that can be a real source of frustration, when you've got a really happy person that's absolutely dying to leave your review, and they've got a Hotmail account. Or they haven't created a Google account. So yes, unfortunately, they do need to log in. And that's Google trying to protect you. You know, that's Google trying to make sure that these are human beings, real people leaving you reviews. So it's a drag, but yes.

Steven Bruce

Okay. Mindy says, Mindy, who asked a question earlier on. On Facebook and on your business page, should you make changes to the banner on a regular basis? And how often should you do this? Or is Facebook not such a good medium anymore?

Nicola McLennan

I would say yes to the last question. But if you're still using it, and you know, you're active on your Facebook account, then absolutely. I would change your Facebook banner seasonally, if you have something that you offer at particular times of year. You know, even if you're hiring at the moment, and you're spending time on social media groups, sharing your job listing, then those people are going to be flicking through, I'd have a "we are hiring banner" on your Facebook business page, if that's something you're trying to achieve at the moment.

Steven Bruce

And you already talked about changing images on Google on sort of a quarterly basis and so on, which is helpful. Can you manage in 30 seconds to tell me why you said Facebook is no longer a relevant medium?

Nicola McLennan

The amount of people that are seeing your posts on Facebook right now has never been lower, probably less than 3%. So if you've got less than 1000 people following your posts, is it worth your time, if you're

busy? If you don't enjoy it, give yourself permission to take Facebook posts off your to do list. Especially if you can't tell me the last time you got a new patient from Facebook or Instagram.

Steven Bruce

Well, that's a whole subject, isn't it? It's monitoring the return on your investment, even if it's just your time, the return on the investment on your advertising. Yeah, we've got just a minute or so before the end of the show. So Nicola, it's been great as always, and you've promised before we went on air to come back and do this as often as we like. So, you know, there's another opportunity, come on, send in your comments, tell us if you want Nicola back, tell us there are specific things you want to know about promoting your practice. Obviously, she can do the bespoke stuff if you get in touch with her and that is her business. But the great thing is she's also prepared to share an awful lot of key stuff like the stuff you've heard today, free of charge with us which we're delighted about. Thank you, Nicola.

Nicola McLennan

No problem at all.

Steven Bruce

And just so that, you know, we've had 350 People watching today so that's not a bad lunchtime audience. Hopefully that we'll both see some feedback from those viewers.