The Internet has changed, but have you changed with it?

USA Today and the Wall Street Journal report that the Internet is now America’s No. 1 vertical marketing channel. Dentistry is a vertical market. Internet marketing is more effective and less costly than any form of print, media or broadcast advertising.

Patients expect their dentist to have a Web site. Today’s dentist needs to pay attention to the Internet. It can produce big results.

If you have a Web page presence on the Internet, you need to ask yourself, “Is it the right Web page?” A successful Web page requires four ingredients: 1) immediate appeal, 2) ease of use, 3) entertaining content, and 4) it has to be found.

Just like in baking, leave out a necessary ingredient and your cake will taste funny. Well, if your Web page isn’t competitive with immediate appeal or it’s difficult to navigate or the content is boring, it will not matter if your Web site can be found because people will leave the site and go on to the next site. On the other hand, if you have all of the ingredients for a great Web site, but no one can find it, your Web site will not produce the desired results.

How is a Web site found? Every Web page has thousands, if not tens of thousands, of constantly changing algorithm values connected to it. For the sake of simplicity, think of an algorithm value like a credit score. Everything connected with your Web page has an algorithm value. It is the aggregation of these algorithm values that ranks a Web site when searched.

Keywords, meta-tags and matching content are important and contribute to the site algorithm value. For example, if someone types in a search for “Chicago dentist,” every dental Web site in Chicago with those same common keywords is recognized; however, each site is ranked based on its overall algorithm value.

Assuming that every Web site is created correctly, which they are not, how does a site climb over the Web sites listed above it to eventually be listed on page one?

There is no scientific answer. The Internet changes so often in an effort to create a level playing field that it is impossible to pinpoint a constant solution.

You need a Web page design and SEO (search engine optimization) company that understands how to do everything possible within the framework of the actual Web page design as well as how to work outside of the box to create additional site value.

Who can help? InfoStar, a 16-year-old company located in Fair Oaks, Calif., administers more than 500 dental Web sites. The company provides SEO for the Web sites that it administers, ensuring security, no third-party involvement and immediate service.

InfoStar applies high-value algorithm factors such as time-on-site, reciprocal link networking, social Web site links and bookmarks, and some magic of its own, with results being Web pages steadily climbing to page one.

InfoStar sets up a Google Analytics account for each of its SEO accounts. Google Analytics is the Internet report card — and it’s free. It reports the keywords that were searched to access a Web page, number of site hits, which pages were reviewed, how long someone was on a specific page, etc. It’s necessary information to properly manage a Web site’s performance.

InfoStar provides each client direct access to the same information it uses to manage the Web page. InfoStar thinks SEO should be a service center rather than a profit center and its monthly SEO fees reflect that philosophy.

There is no guarantee on how