

From Outside Google's Top 100 to #1 in a Crowded City Market

How a from-scratch general dental practice built its brand, website, and local search visibility against well-established competitors.



"So grateful for Grace and her all-star team. I have been working with them since I started my general dental practice from scratch approximately 2.5 years ago. They helped me with my branding, website development/maintenance, SEO, Facebook/IG ads, and most of all my sanity! Starting up is never easy, but I always knew they had my back from the very beginning."

PRACTICE OWNER & GENERAL DENTIST | 5-STAR GOOGLE REVIEW

PRACTICE TYPE

General dentistry,
built from scratch

MARKET

Dense urban city,
Northeast US

COMPETITION

20 direct competitors
for its main searches

SCOPE

SEO, Google Ads, social
media, website
management

THE CHALLENGE

A Brand-New Practice Against Entrenched Competitors

The doctor started this general dental practice from scratch and partnered with Identity from the beginning in July 2019. Identity built the brand and the website, then set out to earn visibility in a city crowded with dental offices. Identity's analysis identified 20 general practices competing directly for the practice's main search terms. Nine of those competitors carry the city name in their business name, a built-in relevance advantage for the area's most searched dental terms.

When the practice started, it did not rank in the top 100 Google results for any of its main search terms. By May 2021 it held 54 Google reviews, while the three most-reviewed competitors held 378, 305, and 293. Identity rated overall competition as High.

20

general practices competing
for the main search terms

9

competitors with the city
name in their business name

>100

starting Google rank for the
main search terms (July 2019)

378

reviews held by the top
competitor (May 2021)

THE STRATEGY

Win the Searches That Fill a New Schedule

Identity built a 15-term keyword map around the most searched local terms and the general dentistry focus the doctor outlined in onboarding, grouped by the patient intent behind each search. The website and Google Business Profile were then optimized around those terms.

KEYWORD CLUSTER	TERMS	WHY IT MATTERS
City intent	6	The most searched dental terms in the market, led by "dentist + city"
ZIP code intent	3	Patients searching by neighborhood ZIP code
Near-me intent	2	Mobile, ready-to-book searches driven by proximity and reviews
Branded intent	4	Doctor and practice name searches, protecting the brand as it grows

Scope of services. At launch in 2019, on a \$1,000 monthly budget, Identity handled the practice's branding and setup, website build, SEO, paid search and Facebook advertising, and in-office photography and video. Today Identity manages the practice's SEO, Google Ads, social media, and website.

THE RESULTS

Measurable Progress at Every Stage

The practice started outside Google's top 100 results. Within its first year it was climbing for its main search term, within 16 months it reached page one for key services, and by year two it ranked in the top 20 for all five main search terms. Today it ranks #1 on both Google Maps and Google search for its primary search.

#1 on Google Maps and Google search, main term (Oct 2026)	+864% monthly website users July 2019 vs. Aug 2026	+124% patient actions from the Google profile, 2021 vs. 2026	392 Google reviews, 4.9 stars
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Google Search Rank for "Dentist + City, State" Over Time

>100 July 2019 Launch	→	#40 July 2020 1 year	→	#31 Nov 2020 16 months	→	#18 June 2021 2 years	→	#1 Oct 2026 Today
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Milestones From Launch to Today

MILESTONE	PROGRESS
Launch July 2019	Not in Google's top 100 for any main search term. 218 website users in the first month.
1 year July 2020	Climbed from outside the top 100 to #40 for "dentist + city, state." Reached page one (#5) for "Invisalign dentist + city." 21 Google reviews.
16 months Oct to Nov 2020	Page one for "cosmetic dentist + city" (#4) and "emergency dentist + city" (#6). 1,867 monthly website users, up 756% from the first month. 31 Google reviews.
2 years June 2021	Ranked #12 to #19 for all five main search terms. 77 Google reviews. The Google Business Profile drove 218 patient actions in one month: 48 calls, 81 direction requests, and 89 website visits.
Today 2026	#1 on Google Maps and Google search for "dentist + city, state" (Oct 2026). 2,102 monthly website users and 488 patient actions from the Google Business Profile (Aug 2026). 392 Google reviews at 4.9 stars.

Main Search Terms: Launch vs. Today

SEARCH TERM	GOOGLE SEARCH, JULY 2019	GOOGLE SEARCH, OCT 2026	GOOGLE MAPS, OCT 2026
Dentist + city, state	Not in top 100	#1	#1
City, state + dentist	Not in top 100	#10	#1
Dentist in + city, state	Not in top 100	#1	#2

Google Business Profile (Google Maps Listing), Monthly

ACTION	JUNE 2021	AUGUST 2026	CHANGE
Phone calls	48	87	+81%
Direction requests	81	204	+152%
Website visits from the profile	89	197	+121%
Total patient actions	218	488	+124%

The profile was also viewed 3,322 times in August 2026. June 2021 is the earliest month of profile data on record.

Google Ads, Launched November 2024

Google Ads launched in November 2024 to complement SEO, so November 2024 is the first month on record. By August 2026, on \$1,207 in ad spend, the ads were seen 67% more often than in that first month, and the campaign produced 51 conversions at \$23.67 each.

METRIC	FIRST MONTH (NOV 2024)	AUGUST 2026	CHANGE
Impressions	7,029	11,707	+67%
Leads tracked in Google Ads	6 phone calls	51 conversions	See note

Note: in the first month, Google Ads tracked phone calls only; in 2026 it reports total conversions (all tracked actions), so the two lead figures are shown side by side rather than as a percentage change. First-month ad spend is not on record.

New Patient Leads, August 2026

87 phone calls from the Google Business Profile	204 direction requests from the Google Business Profile	51 conversions from Google Ads	\$23.67 cost per Google Ads conversion
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Lead counts come from separate systems and are shown separately, not added together.

Opening or growing a practice?

See what this approach looks like in your market. Book a strategy call at identitydental.com/grace

About this case study: Client identity is withheld for privacy; the testimonial is quoted verbatim from the client's Google review. Website users include all channels (2019 and 2020 from Universal Analytics, 2026 from Google Analytics 4). 2019 to 2021 data is from Identity's client reports; 2026 rankings were checked by Identity; profile and ad data are from the practice's Google accounts. Results vary and are not guaranteed.