
SEO vs. Google Ads: What Should You Be Doing to Grow Your Practice?

You didn't slog through med school, late-night calls, and back-to-back consults just to watch your appointment calendar collect cobwebs.

But here you are, trying to figure out why your practice isn't popping up when someone types "best ENT near me" into Google.

That's where the SEO vs. Google Ads showdown begins—and let's just say, it's one worth paying attention to.

Because no matter how brilliant you are with a scalpel or sonar probe, if patients can't find you online, they're not booking with you.

Let's make sure that changes.

First, What Are We Even Talking About?

SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) is all about helping your website show up organically in Google searches. You don't pay for every click—you earn your way to the top through relevance and credibility.

Google Ads, on the other hand, is like skipping the queue and paying for VIP access. You bid on keywords. Your ad shows up at the top. When someone clicks, you pay.

Simple enough. But here's the twist: one is slow but steady. The other is fast but fleeting. And as a healthcare professional, you need both.

Why SEO Is the Long Game Your Future Self Will Thank You For

Think of SEO like compounding interest for your practice. It's invisible at first, then suddenly unstoppable.

With SEO:

- A patient Googles "dermatologist for acne in Sandton."
- Your name pops up naturally—without the "Ad" label.
- They trust you more because you didn't buy your way into their browser.
- You get the booking.

But—and this is a big one—it takes time. Building trust with Google is like building trust with your patients. It doesn't happen in one visit. It happens with consistency.

That means:

- Regular blog posts that answer patient questions.
- Pages that clearly explain your services.
- Fast-loading, mobile-friendly site design.
- Reviews, backlinks, and clean technical structure behind the scenes.

You're not just playing for page one—you're building a digital reputation.

Why Google Ads Is the Fix You Need Now

Need more patients this week? Launching a new service? Filling empty slots in your calendar? Google Ads is your “inject now, not later” solution.

Here's how it works:

- You choose specific keywords (like “paediatrician Fourways”).
- Set a budget.
- Your ad goes live—right at the top of the page.

Within hours, your phone can start ringing.

But there's a catch: Google Ads can burn through your budget if not handled carefully. Every click costs money, even if the person clicking isn't the right fit.

That's why strategy matters. You need to:

- Use location targeting to avoid wasting clicks.
- Write compelling ad copy that attracts your ideal patients.
- Set negative keywords to exclude time-wasters (e.g., “free clinic”).
- Monitor performance and tweak constantly.

With proper setup, Google Ads is like a faucet you can turn on when you need to fill your schedule—and off when you don't.

Why It's Not a Choice. It's a Combo.

Here's the truth: SEO and Google Ads are not rivals. They're allies.

While SEO builds your long-term authority and trust, Google Ads gives you control and quick results. One feeds your future, the other fuels your present.

Want a smart move?

- Use Google Ads to test keywords. See what patients respond to.
- Then use that data to refine your SEO. Target the terms that convert.
- And let your SEO boost trust when people see your ad—then scroll down and see you again organically.

It's the digital version of a double handshake.

So, What Should You Do Right Now?

If you're reading this, chances are you know your online presence isn't quite where it should be. But don't panic. You're not supposed to be a marketing expert. That's what SAHBA is here for. Here's your next step:

1. Get your website audited. If Google can't understand your site, patients won't find it either.
2. Start running Google Ads—strategically. Not with guesswork. With precision.
3. Stop thinking either/or. The most successful practices use both tools together.

We work with doctors across South Africa who want to focus on patients, not pixels. We get it—your time is better spent healing people than learning how Google's algorithm works. So let's make that digital presence work for you, not against you.