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CASE STUDY · NASHVILLE, TN

DENTAL & SPECIALTY CARE

# The practice the directories buried.

Three Nashville locations, 1,100 reviews, and a name the sites AI trusts had never properly heard. Eight weeks and a $5,000 engagement to become a practice the machine names.

**6.8 → 33.6%**
AI visibility

**9 → 27**
of 40 questions

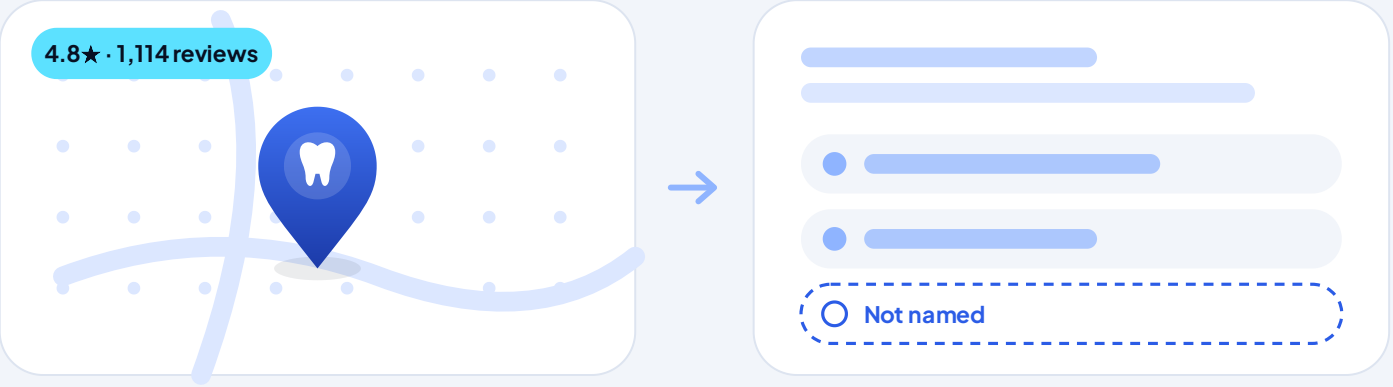
**20**
new patients

**9×**
return

THE STORY

# Three practices wearing one name. The AI saw none of them.

Rivergate Dental Partners has three Nashville clinics, seven dentists and $9.4 million a year in collections. It was built by buying three practices between 2019 and 2023. Patients loved it. But the group had never quite become one practice anywhere a machine could tell, and to an AI it looked like three small, unrelated clinics, none big enough to mention.




ON THE MAP

### Full schedules and 4.8 stars

Across the three sites: 1,114 reviews, a 4.8 average, top-three on 36% of the local map grid, and seven in ten new patients still there eighteen months later. Every internal number said the group was doing well.

IN THE ANSWER

### Named in 9 of 40 questions

Split across three old names, no single Rivergate entity had more than 372 reviews. We asked five assistants forty real patient questions. The group came up in nine, usually fifth or sixth, on two assistants out of five. Its AI visibility score was 6.8%.

**One of the dentists, at kickoff: “We bought three practices. We never actually became one, at least not anywhere a machine could see.”**

**≈ 1,570**

### patient decisions a month, made without them in the room

Health questions moved into AI assistants faster than almost any other category. Around 5,700 people a month in Nashville now ask an assistant which dentist to see. Rivergate was in roughly 390 of those conversations. The 26-clinic chain leading the market was in about 1,960.

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WHICH GATES WERE FAILING THE DETAILED PART

# Barely present, badly understood.

Nine websites supply seven out of every ten sources the assistants cite when answering a Nashville dental question. Rivergate was properly present on two of them, and the seven it was missing weren't empty. They were occupied by stale records the group didn't control.

GATE 3 · PRESENCE: THE NINE GATEKEEPERS

### Two proper listings out of nine, and four listings the group didn't know existed

Google, Healthgrades, Zocdoc, Yelp, Vitals, WebMD, the ADA's finder, RateMDs and 1-800-DENTIST carry 71% of what AI cites for Nashville dentists. Rivergate was complete on two. Four more were auto-generated listings nobody had claimed: one still naming a dentist who left in 2021, two pointing at a phone number disconnected since a 2022 move.

```
Claimed & current: 2 / 9 · Unclaimed listings live: 4 · Wrong phone numbers: 2 · Departed dentists still listed: 3
```

GATE 2 · UNDERSTANDING: ONE PRACTICE, FOUR NAMES

### The old names were still alive everywhere the assistants look

Madison Family Dental, Hendersonville Smile Center and Green Hills Dental Arts were all still listed as separate businesses, alongside the Rivergate brand on the website. Nothing on the open web connected them. To a model, 1,114 reviews read as four unremarkable practices rather than one substantial one.

```
Names in the wild: 4 · Largest single entity: 372 reviews · Consistent description: 33% · Duplicate or stale listings: 11
```

GATE 2 · UNDERSTANDING: NOBODY TO VOUCH FOR

### Seven dentists, none of them identifiable to a machine

For health questions, assistants attach a recommendation to a person, not a logo. Rivergate had no dentist pages, no credentials published anywhere it controlled, and no named author on any of its 38 clinical articles. Two dentists held faculty appointments. Neither fact existed anywhere a machine could reach.

```
Dentist pages: 0 / 7 · Articles with a named author: 0 / 38 · Questions where a Rivergate dentist was named: 0 / 40
```

WHAT THE MACHINE WAS SAYING AT THE TIME

ChatGPT · web search on · **3 March 2026** Question 12 / 40

**"Best dentist in Nashville for a same-week crown who's taking new patients?"**

A few Nashville practices that generally offer same-week crown work:

1. **Music Row Dental Group**, large downtown practice with same-week emergency slots
2. **Volunteer Dental Partners**, 26 Middle Tennessee locations with online booking
3. **Harpeth Family Dentistry**, frequently mentioned for restorative work

Rivergate Dental Partners: not named. "Madison Family Dental" appeared once, in seventh place, described as a separate single-site practice.

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WHAT WE DID

# Become one practice, claim the gatekeepers, put the dentists on the record.

Almost none of this was technical. The website was fine and the AI programs could read it. One Foundation engagement, eight weeks: identity, coverage and credentials, in that order, because a listing is worth little until it points at one clear practice.

### 1 Become one practice

One name, everywhere, with the old names kept as “formerly” lines so nothing already written about the group was lost. Four unclaimed listings claimed and merged, three departed dentists removed, two dead phone numbers retired, two duplicate Google profiles merged into one. Two weeks.

### 2 Claim the gatekeepers

Complete listings on seven of the nine sites the assistants read: insurance, procedures, hours, photos. Live appointment availability connected to Zocdoc, which made the group answerable to “taking new patients?” for the first time. A review request to every patient: 11 a month became 38.

### 3 Put the dentists on the record

A page for each of the seven dentists: school, year qualified, procedures, faculty appointments. Every clinical article signed and reviewed. And published prices for nine common procedures, including the $1,290 all-in same-day crown that became the fact the AI repeats most.

GATE 4 · MEASUREMENT: WHEN EACH THING MOVED

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| W1 | Duplicate profiles merged; four listings claimed | 7.4% |
| W3 | **One name across the web.** Consistency 33% → 88% | 10.8% |
| W4 | Zocdoc live; 5 of 9 gatekeepers complete | 15.6% |
| W5 | **Dentist pages live.** First named-dentist mention | 21.9% |
| W7 | Reviews 11 → 34 a month; 7 of 9 gatekeepers | 27.4% |
| W8 | **27 of 40 questions.** Usually #2 or #3 | 33.6% |

Unlike a technical fix, this moved in week two. Claiming a stale listing is same-day work with an effect you can see within the month.

WHAT WE DELIBERATELY LEFT ALONE

No filtering reviews to the happy patients: that's against Google's rules and it's the only kind of review request that can get a listing pulled. No “best dentist in Nashville” claims on the group's own site, which dental advertising rules treat as unsubstantiated. Every credential we published was checked against the licensing board first. No purchased directory awards.

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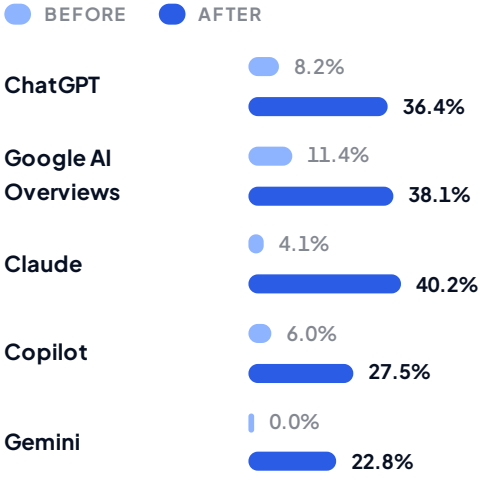
THE NUMBERS THE DETAILED PART

# Identity first, then everything else.

Measured 3 March against 28 April 2026, same forty questions, same five assistants. Notice the shape of it: the row that moved first, one consistent name, has no commercial meaning on its own, and everything else depended on it.

| WHAT WE MEASURED | BEFORE | AFTER | CHANGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **WHAT WE CHANGED** | | | |
| Proper listings on the 9 sites assistants read | 2 / 9 | **7 / 9** | +5 |
| Names the practice traded under online | 4 | **1** | one practice |
| Dentists with a published profile | 0 / 7 | **7 / 7** | +7 |
| New reviews per month, all sites | 11 | **38** | +245% |
| Consistent description across the web | 33% | **92%** | +59 pp |
| **WHAT IT MOVED** | | | |
| **AI visibility score** | 6.8% | **33.6%** | +26.8 pp |
| Questions where the practice is named | 9 / 40 | **27 / 40** | +18 |
| Questions naming a specific Rivergate dentist | 0 / 40 | **9 / 40** | +9 |
| Typical position when named | #5–6 | **#2–3** | +3 places |
| Assistants naming it | 2 of 5 | **5 of 5** | +3 |
| Top-three share of the Maps grid | 36% | **50%** | +14 pp |
| **WHAT IT EARNED** | | | |
| Website visits from assistants, per month | 58 | **560** | +866% |
| Tracked calls from assistants, per month | not tracked | **28** | new channel |
| New patients traced to assistants | not tracked | **10 / month** | 20 in total |

## ASSISTANT BY ASSISTANT




Claude moved most because its web search leans hardest on exactly the directories the group had just claimed. Gemini is still the weakest, and it's named as a target, not hidden in an average.

## HOW TO READ THIS PAGE

The first block is what we control. The line to watch in the second block is "naming a specific dentist": for health questions, an AI that recommends a *person* is far more persuasive than one that lists a clinic, and it went from zero to nine. The third block is a floor: about six in ten visitors from an assistant can't be traced back to it.

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WHAT IT WAS WORTH

# What one identity was actually worth.

**$46,800**

First-year value of 20 new patients who could be traced back to an AI assistant, at the group's $2,340 average. Most of them will still be patients in four years.

**9×**

Return on a $5,000 Foundation engagement over eight weeks. The work paid for itself in week five, on the third new patient.

**10**

new patients a month who found the practice through an AI

**$250**

cost per new patient, against $286 on their paid search

**9 / 40**

questions where the AI now names one of the dentists

AND WHAT THE MACHINE SAYS NOW

ChatGPT · web search on · **28 April 2026**

Question 12 / 40, same words

"Best dentist in Nashville for a same-week crown who's taking new patients?"

For a same-week crown in Nashville with current availability:

1. **Volunteer Dental Partners**, 26 Middle Tennessee locations with online booking
2. **Rivergate Dental Partners**, which offers same-day crowns at all three Nashville locations, publishes a $1,290 all-inclusive crown fee, and shows next-available appointments by location. Dr. Alicia Fenn leads restorative work at the Green Hills site
3. **Music Row Dental Group**, large downtown practice with same-week emergency slots

THE HONEST PART

About six in ten people who arrive from an AI assistant can't be traced, so 20 patients is a floor. It is also an eight-week count: the practice keeps the pages, the profiles and the review flow, so the number keeps growing after the engagement ends. And Google tightened AI answers on health topics in January 2026; the surfaces open to a dental practice can narrow without warning.

## Now ask it about your business.

Ten of the questions your buyers ask, across the AI assistants your customers actually use. Where you stand. Who gets named instead of you. The three fixes that move it fastest.

Get your free audit →

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