

Managing Patient Online Reviews Can Make a Difference

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Online reviews of your practice from patients can hold a lot of weight. Practices must have a strategy to deal with negative and positive feedback.

Source: Physicians Practice

Today, online reviews matter much more than you can imagine. Regardless of whether you manage them or not, patients count on them to make their health decisions as they consider them evidence coming directly from those who have already experienced your care.

More and more healthcare consumers are making their decisions going by what others are writing on the Internet. Online reviews can make or break the digital image of your practice. They don't just significantly influence consumers purchasing decisions but also affect your rankings in local search engines.

Online reviews provide a platform for patients to express their opinions. While there can be negative/biased or false reviews about your practice, handling this correctly can be used to your advantage. This is why monitoring online reviews about your practice and responding to them in a strategic way is very important.

Most of the time, people take to the online review websites to post negative reviews because they wish to be heard and expect a response from your end. Addressing their complaints, issues or grievances and giving them the assurance that you'll work for the best possible solution builds credibility. These conversations are monitored by many others who can be your future patients.

Though there is no single strategy to bullet-proof your online reputation from negative reviews, some simple steps can help you manage them:

Continuously monitor your online presence

Know what patients are writing about you and your practice. If you don't have any idea of what is being said and written about your practice, you won't be in a position to uplift your reputation from any critiques. Claim your profiles on major online review websites, monitor them regularly and keep them up-to-date.

Learn to deal with reviews, both positive and negative

A negative or a bad review may carry a lot of weight, but it's not the end of the world. As a practitioner, you have no control over what patients write about you, but you can definitely control your responses to their reviews. Just remember the golden rule: Be "*proactive*" rather than "*reactive*."

Monitor all the reviews and respond appropriately. Try to personally respond to negative posts. Be humble and apologize wherever you feel there was some lack in service delivery to the patient.

Address all concerns of the reviewer and make sure to stay in compliance with HIPAA.

You can extend an invitation to the concerned patient and take the conversation on an alternate platform such as phone or email. This is a better way to resolve the issues as there is a direct interaction with the patient, and the communication is not visible publically. Always remember to set objectives for each review response and make sure the response is personalized.

Whatever might have been the reason to post a negative comment, many times people just want to be heard. By responding appropriately to reviews, feedback or complaints, you can gain the confidence of patients and potential patients who are reading the reviews.

Dealing with the positive reviews

While responding to the positive reviews, always accept them in a natural way with gratitude. Just remember to be brief and pleasant.

Want to build positive reviews? Just ask your patients to write one

Yes, it's that simple. There will definitely be a bunch of happy and satisfied patients who visit your practice regularly. Based on your rapport with them, you can humbly ask them to rate your practice and write a short review on the most preferred local physician-rating website.

Leverage online reviews in the right direction to strengthen your practice's digital reputation.

Engaging often and early can prevent a major reputation malfunction. Being proactive in managing

patient reviews will keep your finger on the pulse of customer satisfaction, putting you in a position to rectify problems and provide better patient experiences at your practice.

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