



Online Reviews and Ratings 101:

A 5-Step Guide to Improve Your Healthcare Organization's Online Reputation

Introduction

When it Comes to Brand Perception, You're No Longer in Control

The balance of power has shifted from healthcare organizations defining their brand to healthcare consumers creating it. What patients say about you online can either derail your business or accelerate its success.

As consumers face higher premiums and deductibles and gain access to more information online, they are more involved than ever in making decisions about their healthcare.

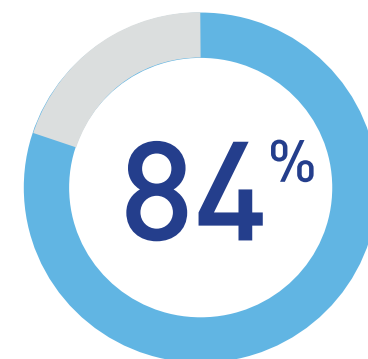
This guide will help you understand the role of online reviews in overall brand health, and the tactics to maximize your online reputation.



Online Reviews Have a Direct Impact on Business Performance

Reviews and ratings have a dramatic impact on your providers' ability to be found and selected by prospective patients. Here's why:

- **People Use Online Reviews to Find Doctors.** According to Software Advice, 84 percent of consumers use online patient reviews to evaluate doctors. And 94 percent say they're more likely to choose one provider over another based on online reviews
- **Google Uses Online Reviews to Rate Your Providers.** Google uses the arithmetic average to calculate the average rating of a doctor. The more positive reviews your providers have, the higher their average rating will be. If they only have a few reviews, one negative review can have a significant impact on their overall score.
- **Ratings Determine Search Rankings.** According to SEO consulting company Moz, review signals – which include review quantity and recency – are important page ranking factors. Google and other search engines determine where to rank a location or doctor in local search results based on those signals.
- **Recent Reviews Build Consumer Trust.** Search Engine Land reports that 69 percent of consumers think reviews older than three months are no longer relevant. And, if your providers and facilities don't have recent reviews, they'll rank lower in "near me" search — and they may not even show up on the map.



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Technology Enables Online Review Management at Scale

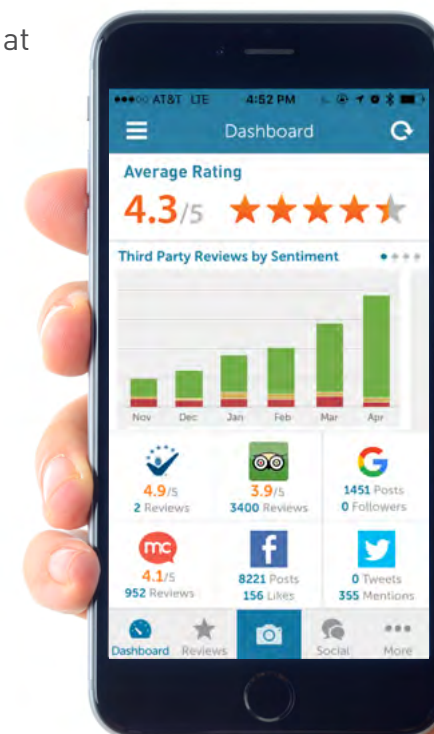
Large healthcare organizations must monitor and respond to reviews for all doctors and all locations. Doing this manually in a timely manner across many review sites and social networks is simply not scalable.

Technology is necessary to manage online reputation at scale, coupled with a structured process.

What's In This Guide?

You'll learn about a proven approach to successful Online Reputation Management (ORM) that includes the following steps:

- 1) Systematically monitor and respond to reviews
- 2) Increase review volume to limit the impact of negative reviews
- 3) Elevate star ratings and rankings to attract patients to your doctors and locations
- 4) Showcase good reviews and ratings on your website and in marketing materials
- 5) Use insights gleaned from reviews to optimize the patient experience



1. Systematically Monitor and Respond to Reviews

Monitoring

Online reviews provide a wealth of patient experience data and can help you quickly uncover issues that have a negative impact on your brand – provided you have a systematic method in place to track and listen to that feedback. Monitoring what patients say about your providers, clinics and other facilities is the mission-critical first step to creating a virtuous cycle that delivers more positive reviews, higher overall ratings and rankings and, ultimately, more business.

Responding

Responding to patient reviews — especially the negative ones — is an essential step in building trust in your brand. By responding promptly and using the reviews to resolve problems, you can mitigate the impact of negative reviews and encourage positive ones. PeopleClaim found 95 percent of unhappy people will return to a business if an issue is resolved quickly and efficiently.



Strategy

- **Keep a close watch:** As a baseline, monitor reviews on Google, Facebook and key industry review sites such as Healthgrades. All of them can significantly impact your business – so stay vigilant.
- **Follow up:** Respond quickly and professionally in a HIPAA-compliant manner when reviews post anywhere on the web. Reputation.com's suggests responding to negative reviews in four hours.
- **Don't miss a beat:** Respond to 100 percent of all negative reviews and at least 20 percent of all positive reviews.
- **Take it offline:** When responding to negative reviews, respond briefly online, then take the discussion offline to resolve the problem or keep an argument from escalating. This also helps ensure patient privacy.
- **Technology is your friend:** Even with the best of intentions, managing online reviews is unwieldy if handled manually; your results will be sporadic, inconsistent and hard to measure. Invest in tools that consolidate and automate as much of this process as possible – from monitoring, to responding, to measuring effectiveness.



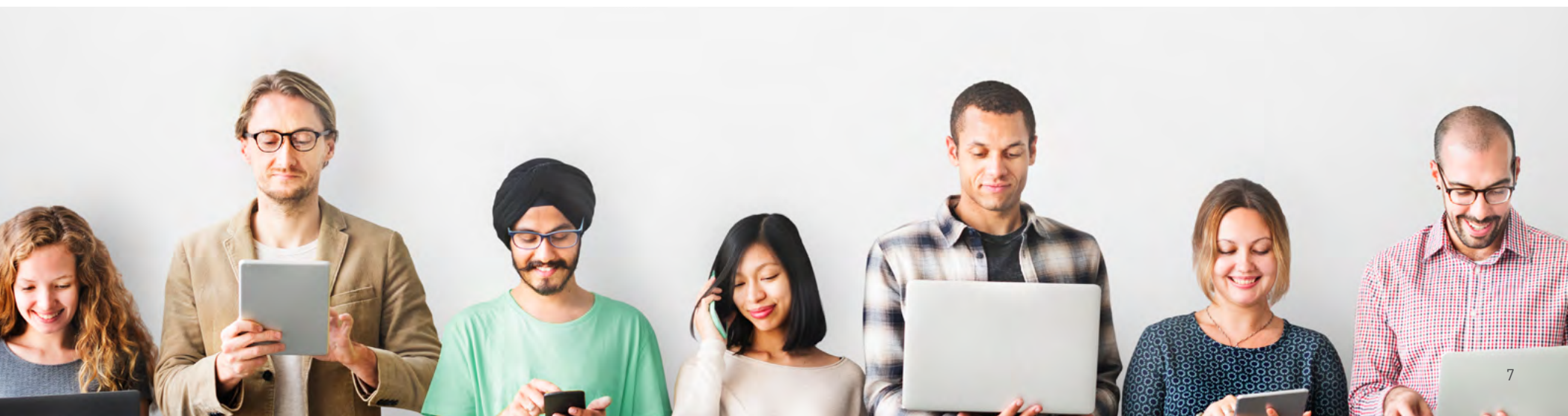
REMEMBER:

The best response to a negative review is an abundance of positive ones. Ask all patients for reviews to get an accurate, representative picture.

2. Increase Review Volume to Limit Impact of Negative Reviews

There's Power in Numbers

Having lots of reviews improves trust in your brand. And if a few reviews are negative, don't despair! People are more likely to trust your reviews if you include both the good and the bad. It shows you're willing to be transparent about customer service issues, and gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to patient experience by openly addressing and working to resolve those issues.



Strategy

- **Ask away:** Make it a practice to request reviews from all your patients, immediately following a visit or in-patient stay. You'll get higher response rates and more detailed, actionable information.
- **Offer multiple formats:** Provide multiple ways for patients to provide feedback, such as text, email or in-office tablets. Be sure to select a method that's appropriate for the interaction and the audience.
- **Start with Google:** [Recent research](#) by Reputation.com revealed healthcare consumers are far more likely to use Google and health insurance websites than any other resource to look for doctors online — even more than healthcare-specific sites such as Healthgrades.



3. Increase Star Ratings and Rankings to Drive Patient Acquisition and Revenue

You Can't Attract Patients if They Can't Find You Online

Eighty percent of searches happen on map apps and search engines, and Google is the most popular in both categories. If you're not in Google's local 3-pack — the top three results and the only ones displayed on the map — patients could pass you by.

How do you make it to the top spots? A high volume of recent, high-quality reviews will bump you up. Google's ranking algorithms take these factors into consideration, along with your locations' average star ratings.



Strategy

- **Build review volume.** Research shows that the more reviews your locations have, the higher their overall star ratings will be. Plus, review snippets appear in search results, helping patients choose your providers over competitors.
- **Solicit reviews for all your doctors and locations.** It's great if you have a near 5-star rating for your flag-ship hospital or anchor location. But if you need to make sure all your doctors and all clinical locations show up in search. If not, you're losing opportunities to someone else.
- **Focus on Google.** Make sure a substantial number of your online reviews are submitted on Google, since that's where the majority of local traffic finds you.
- **Don't wait.** Patients will write longer, more detailed reviews if you ask for them right after a visit, when the experience is fresh in their minds. The more detailed the review response, the more heavily it's weighted in Google's algorithms.



4. Showcase Good Reviews and High Ratings on Your Website and in Marketing Materials

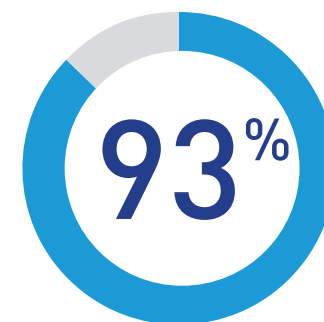
User-generated Content (UGC) is Powerful

According to Adweek, 93 percent of consumers find UGC to be helpful when making a purchasing decision. And online reviews are 100-percent UGC.

UGC on your website is even more valuable. It keeps site visitors engaged for longer and provides a natural transition to product information or promotions, leading to higher conversion rates.

Strategy

- **Use technology:** A good Online Reputation Management (ORM) platform will enable you to stream reviews directly to your website. This, in turn, will give your locations' web pages an SEO bump and further increase their "findability."
- **Keep reviews coming:** Don't let your UGC grow stale; use the methods explained in this ebook to systematically request reviews and elevate your ratings.
- **Solicit reviews instead of case studies or formal quotes:** Content from reviews is in the public domain, so you are free to quote it on your site or in marketing materials. Rather than wait for the perfect patient testimonial, you can quickly build a stable of comments and quotes.



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5. Use Insights Gleaned from Surveys and Reviews to Optimize Patient Experience

Focus on the Patient

The value — and challenge — of freeform reviews is that they can cover a breadth of topics relating to patient experience, from quality of care to wait times to staff friendliness. This information can help you quickly identify recurring issues and standardize best practices across your organization, and down at the location level — leading to a better overall experience for your patients.

Strategy

- **Do surveys the right way:** Build and send out patient satisfaction surveys that are true to brand, customizable and work on browsers, kiosks and mobile devices.
- **Improve operations:** Use sentiment analysis tools and tornado charts to clearly identify strengths and weaknesses in the way your doctors and locations interact with patients.
- **Know where you stand:** Leverage competitive benchmarking tools to understand how your doctors and locations are performing relative to competing providers.
- **Report on findings:** Share insights by compiling and delivering customized reports to key stakeholders at a regular cadence.
- **Technology is your friend (again!):** ORM platforms apply sophisticated machine learning algorithms to free text found in online reviews, yielding insight that's not otherwise easily uncovered. Combined with analytics and reporting tools, such platforms can help you identify, quantify and prioritize patient satisfaction issues that are affecting your reputation and your bottom line.

Conclusion

Your Online Reputation Defines Your Brand

You simply cannot afford to ignore it. These five steps provide a framework for building trust, loyalty and advocacy among your patients, attracting new business and driving revenue growth.

Learn More

Check out our Online Reputation Management Starter Series:

- 1) [**Part 1: Getting Started with Online Reputation Management**](#)
- 2) [**Part 2: Which Online Review Sites Should I Monitor?**](#)
- 3) [**Part 3: Taking Action on Customer Feedback**](#)

Reputation.com can help you apply these steps with our comprehensive ORM platform, beginning with sound strategies for managing online reviews.

About Reputation.com

Reputation.com delivers the category-leading Online Reputation Management (ORM) platform for healthcare organizations with hundreds or thousands of providers.

Our intelligent platform helps healthcare organizations monitor review sites, generate more representative ratings, and drive recurring visits, admissions and revenue.

For more information, visit us at reputation.com or contact us at sales@reputation.com.