

Building a Healthier Online Reputation:

Quick Best Practices and
Tips to Help Promote
and Protect Your Practice



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Have You Ever Googled Yourself? You Should.

If you have read things people are saying about you and your practice online, odds are you probably saw something you did not love. It is also highly probable that you were not sure what you could do about it.

Online reviews are not only becoming easier for consumers to write, rating and review sites are rapidly becoming one of the first places people go to guide their purchasing decisions whether it is renting a hotel room, choosing a small appliance or yes, even selecting a physician.

Word-of-mouth recommendations are generally thought of as the most influential when it comes to choosing a doctor, but [this](#) research shows that 80 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.

But unlike many businesses that have become very savvy at managing and utilizing online ratings and reviews, the medical community is one that has largely been skeptical of online reviews and have not made themselves part of the conversation.

But healthcare consumerism is going to affect your business. Statistics show some medical practices reported 80% of patients use online reviews to evaluate physicians.

In this brief e-book, we will illustrate how healthcare consumerism needs to be changing how you think about your business. We will highlight some of the biggest missed opportunities for your practice when it comes to generating and managing positive reviews. We will show you how to keep your eyes focused on online reputation management and ultimately use the internet to drive business to your facility.

We will share examples and even some inspiration from providers just like you who are winning at the online reputation management game.

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Online reputation management is becoming increasingly important in the medical community at a time when everyone from solo practices to large practice groups may or may not have the extra manpower to focus on it. But in today's competitive marketplace, your online reputation has to be good or it will cost you business. Consumers are even going [out of network](#) if a doctor has favorable reviews.

"Physician practices are now looking for an effective way to manage and improve their online reputation." At [Binary Fountain](#), that is what we do. "You have worked hard to build your practice and reputation. Our platform can help you protect it."





It Is Time to Embrace Online Reviews and Stop Being Scared of Them

According to *Forbes Magazine*, 90% of all consumers read an online review before visiting a business. Healthcare is no different. A recent study showed that 82% of patients who responded to a survey use online reviews to evaluate physicians and 72% use online reviews as their first step in finding a physician.

The building blocks for growing your patient base have changed. Ten years ago, if a patient was dissatisfied in some way, they might tell somebody. Nowadays, patients take to the internet with those opinions and tell *everybody*. The bottom line is that your reputation is now online for the world to see.

The Power of Online Reviews

from *Forbes Magazine*

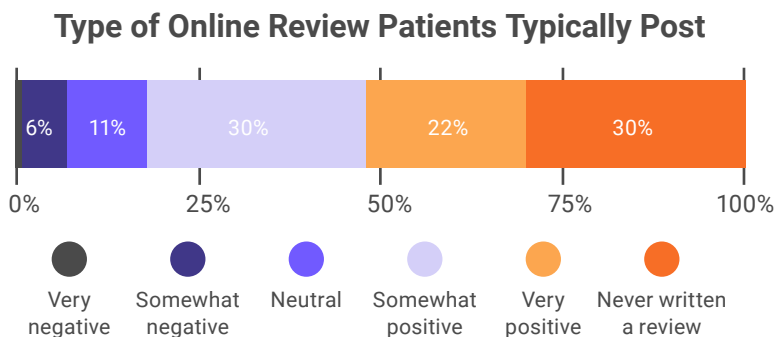
90% of consumers read online reviews before visiting a business. (2016)

Online reviews have been shown to impact **67.7% of purchasing decisions**. (2015)

84% of people trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation. (2016)

74% of consumers say that positive reviews make them trust a local business more. (2016)

Every one star increase in a Yelp rating means a **5 to 9% increase in revenue**. (2016)



Source

But do not let these statistics scare you. Use them as motivation. By pro-actively managing your practice's online reputation, you can make a positive difference to your practice's bottom line.

For example, Carolinas Medical Group, part of the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System in South Carolina, has said that managing online ratings and reviews have helped them "improve the care we provide while preserving and promoting the online reputation of our physicians."

Organizations like Carolinas Medical Group invest time to educate their physicians on the importance of managing their online reputation and what they can do to help improve it.

For example, statistics show that most online reviewers leave positive reviews. More than 50% report leaving "very positive" or "somewhat positive" feedback with 11 percent writing "neutral" reviews. Only 7% of respondents reported writing negative reviews.

But the benefits of online reviews go way beyond just a star rating for all the world to see. Understanding why your patients are leaving less-than-stellar reviews can help you make improvements to your staff, processes and procedures.

You can, and should, play a vital role in your online reputation management. These skills and tactics will be discussed in coming chapters. Not getting involved is, quite frankly, not an option anymore. Because if your practice does not get online and tell its story, someone else will.

Is Your Online Presence Getting Noticed? If Not, You Need to Build It.

The first step in increasing your online footprint is to take an audit of your online reputation. A quick Google search of your name is the best place to start. The next step is to begin to make that footprint a little larger.

More than 60% of consumers will read four or more online physician reviews before they form an opinion. The problem here is that the average physician has less than 2.4 reviews per site.

So how do you build up your reviews? All you have to do is ask. And with today's technology, that part is getting easier.

Providers are increasingly using text messaging and emails to request patients to share their experiences online. Sending requests by text messaging is a quick way to generate online reviews, while email can potentially get you more detailed comments.

Let Today's Technology Do the Work for You

Here are some best practices we recommend to ensure the most feedback possible:

- Get your patients' permission to send them communications. This can increase the odds that they will participate.
- Send your patient a request for a review shortly after their visit to ensure it is still fresh in their mind.
- Keep the request neutral in tone, such as "share your patient experiences online," rather than only asking for positive feedback.

Providers should not overlook taking a grassroots approach to requesting that patients leave online reviews. Provide a handout card encouraging patients to share their experience online. Include directions on how to post a third-party review. Train the front desk staff to hand out these cards and request feedback from patients.





Responding to Online Reviews Is No Longer Optional

The next step is turning online feedback from a one-way comment to a two-way conversation by responding to reviews. We hear from practices we work with that they are noticing an increase in online reviews once they started responding. Showing that you are listening and that you care and are taking action gets you noticed by prospective and current clients as well as those ever-important search engines.



Your Online Communication Has to Be Backed by Strategy

Binary Fountain's customer success team has seen that reviews continue to increase in number when the practice regularly engages. "When prospective patients see that the practice is listening to feedback and responding, it encourages further customer engagement. Sixty percent of patients surveyed say it is moderately or very important that physician practices respond to online reviews.

But as with any successful communication plan, actively staying engaged in online conversations requires some planning. Here are a few ways we suggest keeping the conversation going in a productive manner:

1. Assign ownership to who responds to a review and establish a process on how an issue is resolved.
2. Respond to both positive and negative reviews within two to three business days.
3. If the review is negative, reach out to the patient and provide them a way to contact someone at your practice rather than resolving the issue publicly online.
4. Engage in a platform, such as Binary Health Analytics, that has templated responses for different types of reviews. You do not want to be seen always writing the same responses to every customer, but you also want to keep them relatively generic.
5. Acknowledge all reviews. You should even engage with patients who leave glowing, positive reviews and thank them for choosing your practice.



Response Time Is Crucial in Showing Patients You Value Their Opinion

Communication online means thanking patients who leave positive reviews and showing compassion to those who leave negative ones. As mentioned earlier, this shows other readers you have addressed their issues, but have taken the details offline. A [*Chicago Medicine*](#) article from 2017 says the best thing to do with negative reviewers is to invite them to contact you and share their stories.

It is important to think of an online review as a customer service call. Your patient has an issue or compliment. Not responding is like not answering or not returning their call. This is your opportunity to send the message you care about their experience.

The [*Florida Orthopaedic Institute*](#) (FOI) operates 10 locations in the Tampa region. Using [*Binary Fountain alerts*](#), the practices are able to respond to negative online reviews within 24 hours. In some cases, physicians reach out by phone to further explain a treatment plan or diagnosis.

“We have seen patients completely remove reviews or leave a comment on the review, saying, ‘Oh, they got to me right away and handled the issue,’ or change their star rating.”

—Kim Mott, Marketing and Customer Service Manager of Florida Orthopaedic Institute



Good Online Reputations Start in the Office

Positive online feedback about you and your practice is a great for attracting patients. But the real effort comes before the patient starts searching for a provider. Positive reviews are only attainable if the physician and ancillary staff provide great service. It is of utmost importance that providers take good care of their patients and provide them with a memorable, positive experience before you ask them to go online and tell everyone about it.

Ultimately, creating a better patient experience can lead to a better online reputation.



Negative Online Feedback Can Provide Insight into Things You Need to Change

Think of negative reviews as fuel to seek out what might be a problem within your practice, such as excessive wait times or scheduling issues. If multiple people are complaining about it online, that is your cue, loud and clear, to fix it. Online comments can unveil issues with your practice that you might not have otherwise seen.

It is important that more than just the person checking and responding to online reviews sees them. It is important to share the comments and discuss the insights during team meetings. This can fuel constructive teaching moments as well as highlight successes, which can improve morale.

It Is Important to Read Between the Lines

For example, if a patient at a plastic surgery practice awards that practice a four-star rating on Google, but mentions after a string of positive attributes that the front-desk person was rude, the practice could monitor the good and bad to determine if these are isolated incidents or trends. Analyzing the feedback can help practices better understand what they are doing well and what might need attention.

Your ultimate focus should not be solely on online reputation and online presence. While that is vital to your practice, the underlying denominator here is the patient experience and figuring out how to improve it.



Manage Your Online Reputation with Binary Fountain

In short, managing your practice's online footprint and reputation is mandatory for business growth. The numbers show that today, the majority of patients are looking to online review sites to help them find the best provider for their care.

Binary Fountain offers the complete platform for managing reputation, improving patient experience, increasing patient acquisition and positively impacting operations.

Our solutions are helping over 4,000 healthcare facilities turn patient feedback into an advantage for their business. Let us help you leverage your patient feedback to make a dramatic impact on your revenue and operations.

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“Binary Fountain is helping us empower consumers to see what other patients are saying and find the best physician.”

—Orest Holubec, SVP of Communications,
Providence Health & Services



We're Here to Help

For more information or to request
a demo, contact us here:

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