

# "RIPPLE EFFECT" MARKETING

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4 QUICK WAYS TO BUILD  
YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION

You want to use the web to build your reputation and attract new patients, so why haven't you? Online marketing can seem daunting—you might not know where to begin or whether you need to hire professional help to manage it for you. Or, you might avoid online marketing because it seems like a black hole of your time and attention, both of which are limited resources.

**Those perceptions simply aren't valid! Read on for four quick and easy ways to build your online reputation and grow your business—ideas that require minimal effort on your part and offer lasting results.**

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# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

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## How Online Marketing Maximizes Your Efforts

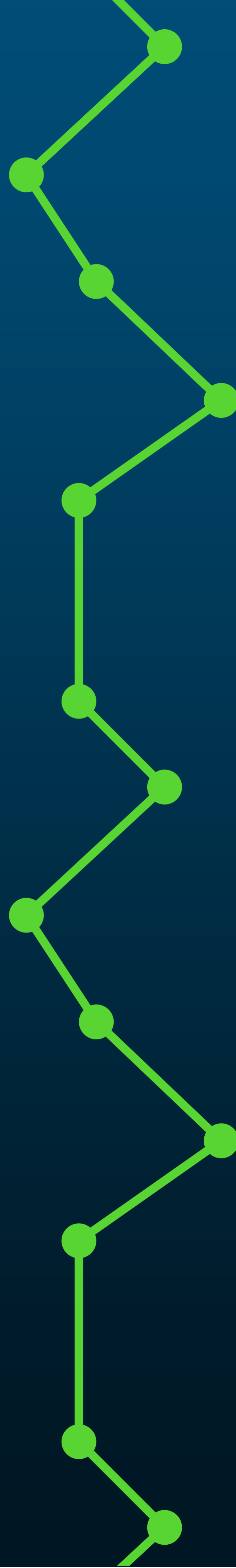
Making your mark is easier and faster on the web than through any other medium. Why? Every tweet, blog, image, etc., that is uploaded is indexed and distributed across networks of followers, searches, and social platforms.

What does this mean for your marketing? That every marketing move you make has the opportunity to at best, “go viral” and spread like wildfire across the web, and at least, live on as “evergreen” content that people can find and reference online for years to come. Unlike a printed mailer, your few minutes of effort in online reputation building can influence a potential patient months or even years from now. Now that’s some positive ROI!

So where to begin? Let’s start with 4 focus areas that require minimal effort on your end and have the potential to yield great results:

- **Reputation Management**
- **Q&A Services**
- **Content Marketing**
- **Social Media**

**4 FOCUS  
AREAS  
OF  
ONLINE  
MARKETING**





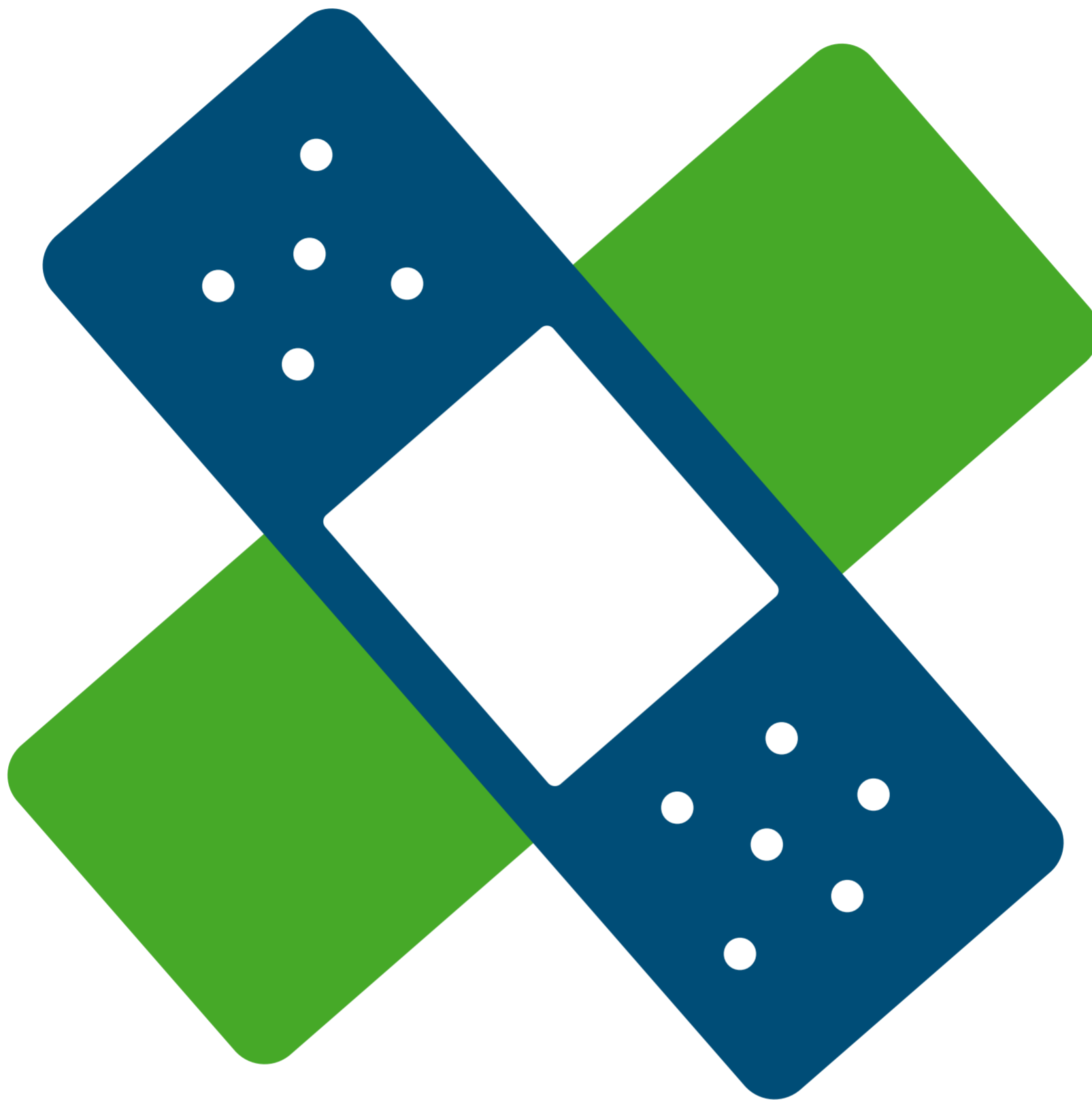
**#1:  
REPUTATION  
MANAGEMENT**

You're a five-star doctor, but do your Yelp reviews reflect that? Online reviews are more powerful than ever before--influencing patients before you even know they're interested. A recent study reported that 77% of patients use online reviews as their first step in finding a new doctor, and 60% of respondents feel it is "very" or "moderately important" for doctors to respond to online reviews. Taking control of your Yelp, Google, HealthGrades, and other review listings can make a significant difference in how your practice is perceived online. While you're not typically able to remove negative reviews, you should address them, and here's how to do it effectively:



- **Thank them!** Even if the review is fairly negative, you can thank the writer for their feedback.
- **Take the high road.** Even if the writer is dead wrong in their assessment, apologize for any negative experiences they describe and resist the urge to argue with them point-by-point--it just makes you seem petty.
- **Affirm your values.** Include something like "client satisfaction is of the highest priority for us, and we try to go above and beyond for our patients!"
- **Extend an olive branch.** Conclude with an invitation to the writer to come back to the practice to resolve their issue.

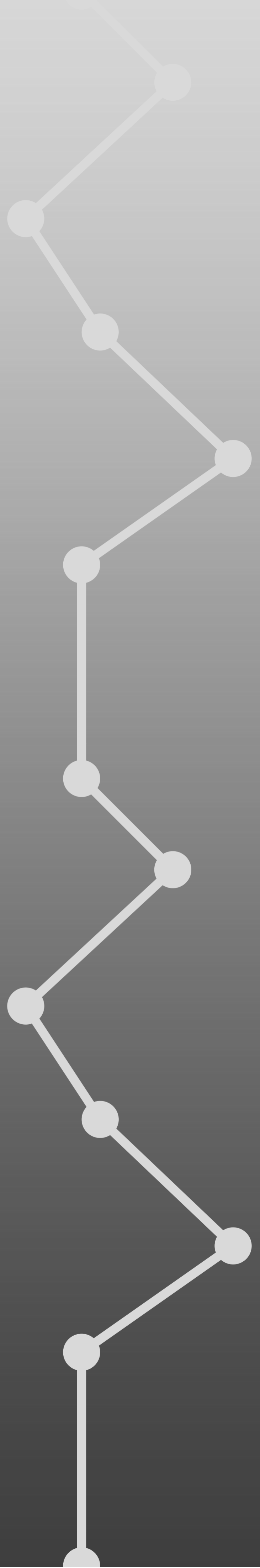
While reaching out to the individual who left the review is valuable, in some sense your reply is even more impactful to other potential patients silently reading the interaction. Even if you're annoyed with the original post, use your response to the complaint as an opportunity to showcase your exemplary customer service, putting you in a favorable light to those observing.



*Efficiency Tips:* The process of responding to reviews can be simplified using services designed to make it easy to claim and manage all of your listings. Reputation management services offer a centralized interface from which you can update your listing information and monitor any new reviews, significantly streamlining the process.



**# 2:**  
**Q & A**  
**SERVICES**



The internet is a great place to get instant, anonymous feedback on your health concerns - and a Pew study found that almost three quarters of web users do just that.

72% of internet users said they looked online for health information within the past year.

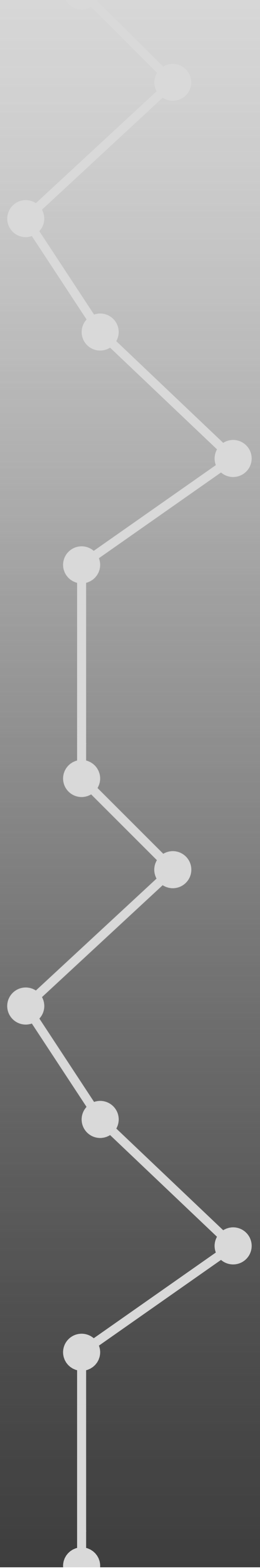


Enter: Doctor Q&A services. Patients can submit non-emergency medical questions to real doctors, who provide high-level answers and support--all online. Patients get answers they can trust from medical professionals, and physicians receive exposure through the short interaction with a potential patient, which is also posted on the web for future patients to read. In a few short sentences, doctors can demonstrate their expertise, bedside manner, and promote their practice.

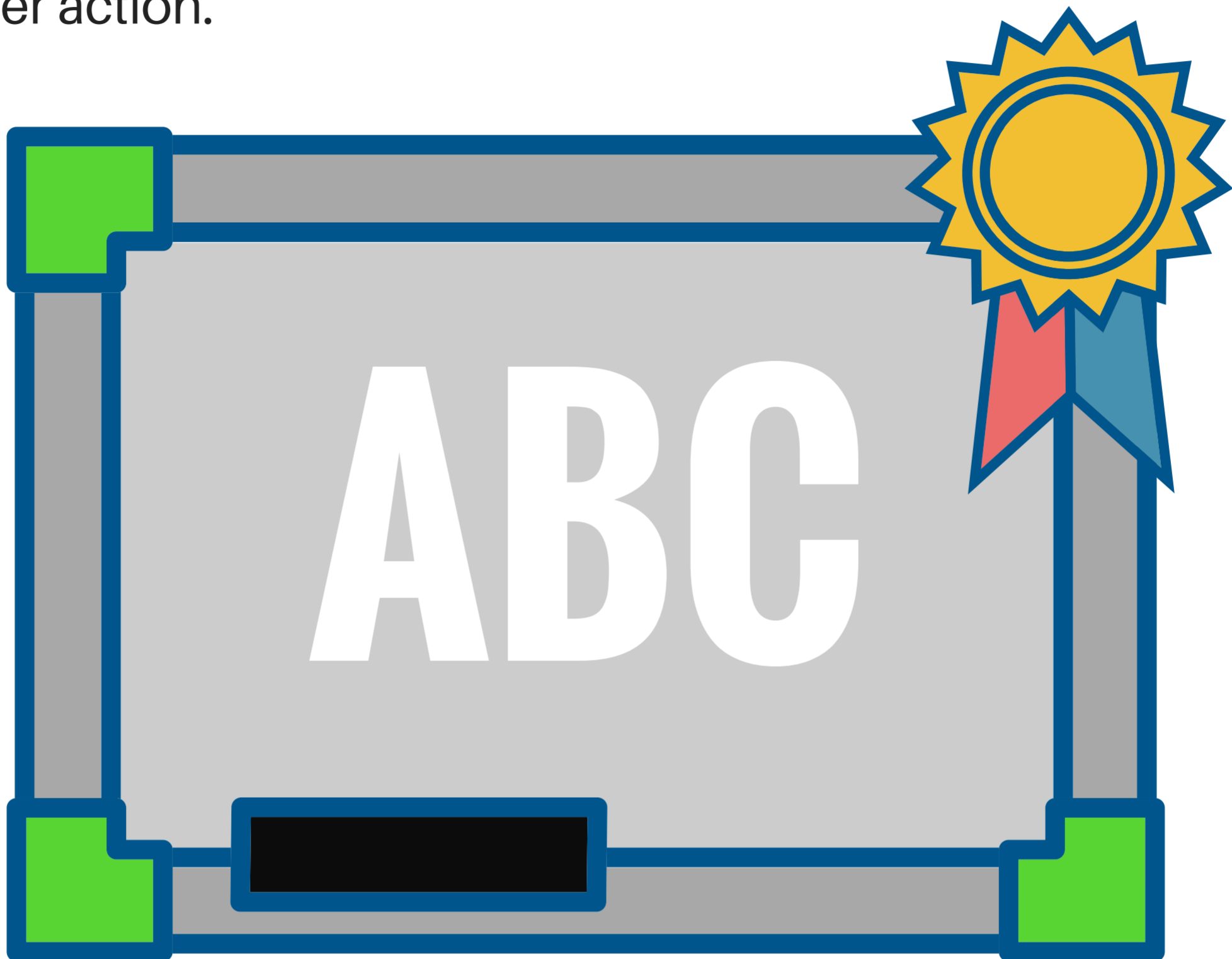
*Efficiency Tips:* Many Q&A services like [VeinDirectory.org](http://VeinDirectory.org) and [SkinCareGuide.com](http://SkinCareGuide.com)'s "Ask-A-Doctor" offer email notification options, allowing doctors to receive and reply to patient questions in seconds, directly from their email inbox.



**# 3 :**  
**CONTENT**  
**MARKETING**



The Content Marketing Institute (CMI) defines content marketing as “a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”

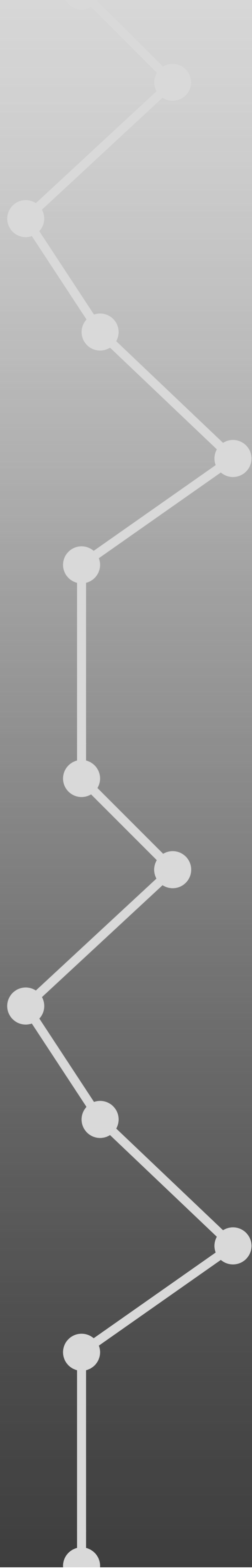


The operative word in this definition is valuable. This means the content that you create and distribute in the form of videos, blog posts and articles should focus on the readers’ needs, meaning what they want to learn, versus what you want to tell them about your practice. Though it may seem counter-intuitive at first, this approach to marketing is recognized for its ability to help medical practices build awareness, loyalty, trust and a positive online reputation.

*Efficiency Tips:* Creating quality content does require some research to understand the patient’s needs.

Try this: think about the kinds of questions you hear most often from the patients you see every day. Keep in mind that content doesn’t have to be extremely long to be effective--videos shouldn’t be more than two minutes, and blog posts or articles can be split into a series or condensed to stay on topic.

**# 4 :**  
**S O C I A L**  
**M E D I A**



Social media posting may seem like a “blip on the screen” --short lived posts with little return. While that can be true sometimes, social media also provides the best medium for content to go “viral,” and to reach large audiences in a small amount of time. On top of that, social media is highly influential when it comes to medical decisions: 41% of people polled in a healthcare web study say social media would affect their choice of a specific doctor, hospital, or medical facility.



Think of social media platforms as a loudspeaker to share about all the other things on this list when you do them. Post your stellar Q&A answer on Twitter. Invite your Facebook audience to add reviews to your (recently responded to and updated) Yelp listing. Share blog posts, articles, and videos across all your networks. And finally, don't be afraid to let loose just a little bit--posting a silly selfie on your practice's Instagram account humanizes you, and who knows, might become a trending meme!

*Efficiency Tips:* Social media posting can be done from any device, and only takes a few seconds. Services like HootSuite can help you link social accounts so that a post made on one platform can be distributed to other sites (although use caution with this as posts are most effective when tailored to each individual platform). These services also allow you to schedule social media posts so that your content is distributed in regular intervals throughout the week. This keeps you top-of-mind with patients and “active” throughout the week, even if you’re actually just spending a few minutes on Sunday night scheduling your posts.



Building a positive online reputation doesn't happen overnight, but by focusing your efforts on easy “wins” with the ideas above, you can quickly build momentum that will continue for years to come.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- <http://www.softwareadvice.com/resources/how-patients-use-online-reviews/>
- <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/health-fact-sheet/>
- <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/>
- <https://getreferralmd.com/2013/09/healthcare-social-media-statistics/>





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