

The Top 5 Blunders of Reputation Management



Part of the eDoctors Educational Series



About eDoctors:

eDoctors.com is a medical-practice marketing service that helps physicians Find, Convert and Retain their patient base. They operate a portfolio of health-specific websites that generate over 20 million unique visitors each month as well as a suite of technical and training resources focused on improving the value of medical practices through better communications with their patients. To find out more about eDoctors visit www.eDoctors.com.



The Top 5 Blunders of Reputation Management

If you are trying to grow your practice and you haven't already included online reputation management (ORM), as an integral part of your business-marketing plan, you should. Why? Because, you can't afford not to know what people are saying about you.

We live in the digital age, and people are easily influenced by whatever they learn about you online. One negative review on the Internet can appear in multiple searches and cast a very long shadow, driving away new business. Yet, for online reputation management to be effective – both in tracking how your reputation is changing and ensuring that it continues to be positive – it is crucial to do it right. Unfortunately, it is easy to get tripped up by the many stumbling blocks that appear on the road to a well-managed reputation. Are you making critical mistakes when it comes to managing your online reputation? Make sure you are not committing these top five blunders and taking the reputation of your practice down with you.

One: Neglecting your online presence

Reviews and comments aren't limited to just one website. Patients are able to talk about your practice all over the Internet. From local listings and review sites to blogs, social media pages and forums, it's imperative to monitor your entire Web presence – a review that appears on one site may appear on other sites via linking.

How to avoid this blunder and keep your online reputation on track:

DO make sure to monitor your online presence by utilizing online reputation management software. Many reputation management platforms can provide your practice with alerts to ensure you're not missing any conversations about you or your practice. These platforms make it easy to do everything you need to do to maintain a positive online presence.



Two: Ignoring online comments and reviews

When patients take the time to post feedback about your practice, whether positive or negative, you need to respond in a timely fashion. If you don't communicate with your patients in the online space, it will appear that you don't value the patient experience and they'll lose trust in you and your practice.

By not acknowledging a positive review or post you're missing out on the opportunity to share a positive experience with your entire online audience. By not acknowledging a negative review, you're giving the impression that you don't care, and one bad impression is all it takes to mar your reputation and hurt business.

How to avoid this blunder and keep your online reputation on track:

DO make sure to respond to each and every comment or review. By engaging with your online audience, you're able to leave a lasting positive impression. Anytime you receive a positive piece of feedback on the Web, make sure to feature the reviewer or commenter on your website, blog or social media page. This will allow your greatest advocates, your patients, to speak on your behalf and transfer trust.

Three: Responding to negative reviews with anger

Do not overreact to a bad review! We understand it may be incredibly difficult to keep your emotions in check when your practice is under attack, but it's an absolute must. Even if you feel angry, remember that you can choose your reaction. Upon finding a negative review, DO NOT write a defensive response. Your anger may go away the next day, but your hostile reply to the reviewer will live on the Internet forever, to be viewed by thousands.

Replying to a negative post with negativity will do more harm than good for your online reputation. The reviewer/poster now has additional ammunition they can use to paint you and your practice in a bad light, and may create additional negative posts that portray you as the villain. Once you've published your reply, it may be impossible to go back and repair the damage you have done.

How to avoid this blunder and keep your online reputation on track:

DO make sure to monitor your online reputation and respond to each and every reviewer in a positive way. If you receive a negative review, here are some steps you can take to fix your reputation:

Get to the Root of the Problem

The thing about negative feedback is that if you accept it in a constructive way, you may be able to identify a problem that truly exists. Engage with the reviewer by asking them questions. Asking questions does two things: it allows you to gather more information that may help you address potential issues within your practice, and it makes the reviewer feel as if they were heard and that you care.

Offer an Apology and Offer to Make it Right

Offer an apology regardless of whether or not you feel you're right or wrong. Posting a response apologizing for the bad service or oversight can have a very powerful effect on both the reviewer and potential patients who read the posts. In your apology, make it clear that you recognize the issues and would like to rectify the situation. Now instead of a negative and hostile response living on the Internet forever, you have created a professional and compassionate response for the entire world to see.

Manage Negative “Reviews” from Competitors

This can happen from time to time, but fraudulent reviews are usually glaringly obvious. If a fake review pops up in your account, follow these two steps: first, don't overreact to the review and, second, flag the review! Most review sites have the capability to flag posts for review. Only use this flagging feature for reviews you feel are truly fraudulent, as overuse could lead to negative repercussions for your practice.

Four: Posting fake reviews

Avoid posting fake reviews at all costs. Whether it's a positive review of your practice, or a negative review of a competitor's, just don't do it. Some of the reputation management companies out there may promote these practices, but this is widely viewed as unethical and can hurt you in the long run. Instead of wasting your time posting fake reviews, you should focus on building your own positive reputation.

Don't pay someone to write reviews about your practice. This tactic is not only inappropriate, it's illegal. According to the FTC Endorsement Guidelines, if a reviewer has been compensated by your business, then they must disclose it in their review. Don't even try it on community sites like Yelp. In October of 2012, the administrators of Yelp began calling out any business they caught buying reviews.

How to avoid this blunder and keep your online reputation on track:

DO focus your time and budget incentivizing patients to share their positive stories. Think of ways to engage and reward them for posting their honest, positive feedback on review sites and social media. Make it easy for patients to leave a Yelp review or to check in to your practice on Facebook by providing them with a computer or tablet to use in your office.

Five: Getting too personal on your business pages

Unless it touches the healthcare industry, posts about religion, politics and any potentially controversial topics are always off limits. Although you may feel strongly about a certain issue, personal insights should remain personal (and offline) to avoid isolating those who may not feel the same way. Remember that your patients, who are critical to the growth of your business, may not share your views.

How to avoid this blunder and keep your online reputation on track:

DO make sure your online presence appeals to a very broad audience by avoiding controversial topics.

Managing your online reputation is easier than you think!

Online reputation management software is an indispensable tool for every business and healthcare practice. Reputation management will become even more important for business growth as our culture rapidly evolves to an increasingly digitized mindset. So much “conversation” is happening online that keeping your business or healthcare practice at the top of the heap will depend on what is “said” about you in the digital space. Make sure your practice is making the most of reputation management by avoiding the top five blunders of reputation management!



The eDoctors team recognizes that every practice may not have the resources to monitor, manage and build an online reputation. To save you time and make things easier, the eDoctors suite provides members with a robust reputation management platform.

For more information on how eDoctors can help you with online reputation management, please contact us at: [866.922.9711](tel:866.922.9711) or visit www.eDoctors.com.

