



# Five Steps to Five Stars

How to Get Great Online Patient Reviews



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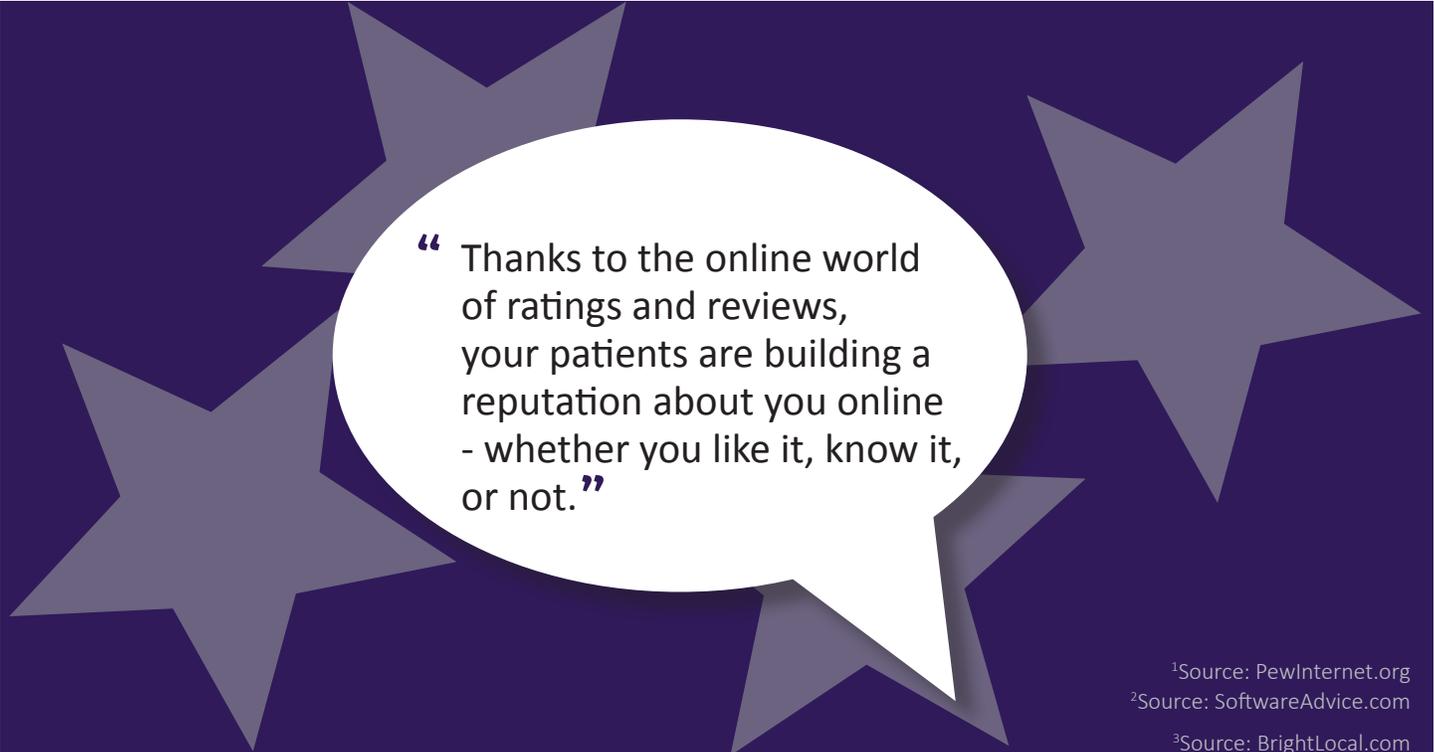
# What do patients say online about you, your practice, and your staff?

## How closely do their reviews reflect the quality of care you provide?

Whether you ask for feedback or not, patients share their experience online. **Those patient reviews play an increasingly critical role in the reputation and financial success of your practice.** Reviews not only impact the visibility of the physician(s) and location listings, they can either convince patients that you offer the right service for them or lead them to call someone else, **with better reviews.** Patients and their families want information that helps them feel confident they're choosing the right doctor and practice. Reviews provide the community proof they're looking for – and are becoming critical to patient value and engagement.

- **80% of online health seekers began their session at a search engine<sup>1</sup>**
- **61% of patients surveyed use online reviews as a first step to find a new doctor<sup>2</sup>**
- **93% of healthcare website visitors stated that physician rating information was “very useful” or somewhat useful” to their decision making<sup>3</sup>**

One of the single most important things you can do for your practice is setup an online review generation and monitoring program.



“ Thanks to the online world of ratings and reviews, your patients are building a reputation about you online - whether you like it, know it, or not. ”

<sup>1</sup>Source: PewInternet.org

<sup>2</sup>Source: SoftwareAdvice.com

<sup>3</sup>Source: BrightLocal.com

## The following pages outline 5 steps you can follow to develop a systematic approach with the power to:

- Improve awareness on Google and major rating and review sites
- Enhance patient experience and satisfaction
- Grow a new patient base and increase revenue
- Generate more reviews for greater exposure



## STEP 1.

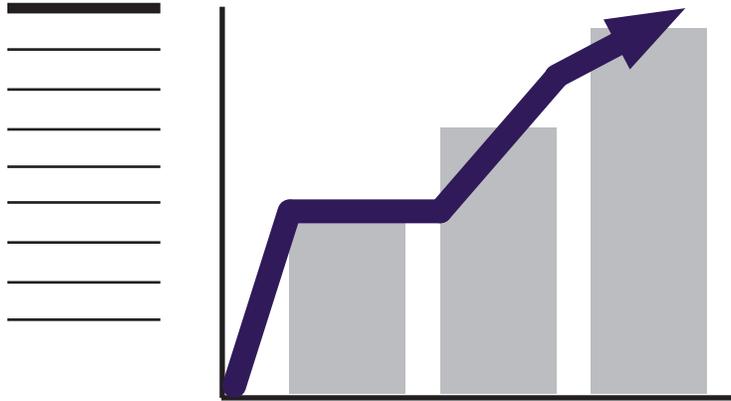
### Develop a system for generating reviews from satisfied patients

An abundance of good reviews gives patients a positive perception of your practice and helps ensure you get a fair shake online. You and your staff may be uncomfortable or don't have the processes in place for asking patients for their feedback. Don't leave reviews to chance. **It's important to generate patient reviews on a scalable and scheduled basis** – not all at once. The power of reviews is cumulative. **Both patients and search engines want to see that you've earned accolades for your service over a period of time.**

#### Bonus Tip:

When you ask your patients to review you, they overwhelmingly write positive reviews. However, **how** you ask will make a big difference. You want to generate several reviews per week consistently by sending requests in a steady trickle, not all at once. Prospective patients will look more favorably at positive reviews posted over time. Request reviews from patients who frequent your practice and are in a position to say something meaningful about their experience. Honor your patients' trust by asking for their honest feedback as a way to improve the service and care you provide. Authentic, longer reviews are considered the most trustworthy.

“ An increase of one-star rating can lead to an average of **7% increase** in revenue.” - *Harvard Business Review*



## STEP 2.

### Manage business listings on third-party review sites

There are several online review sites but it's important to distinguish between sites that are valuable for reviews and sites that are valuable for both reviews and directory listings.

As Google continues to dominate online search and provides the main source of entry for how customers find you, you must ensure that your listings are correct on this site. This will give you maximum exposure and top search rankings.

#### Bonus Tip:

Many sites let you customize your listing pages with a brief business profile, photos, office hours, lists of services, categories and other extras. The more complete your profile is, the more likely it is to appear in search results. This is especially important for sites that feature glowing reviews you want to highlight. There are also companies out there who provide this service, if you prefer.

#### Key Fact:

Recent research on the correlation between number of reviews and SEO visibility showed the first 10 reviews that a location gets can boost that location from a second page or bottom of the first page ranking to the top half of the first page. Additionally, it demonstrated that having 50 reviews can increase the expected click through rate (CTR) by 266% compared to a baseline location<sup>1</sup>.

## STEP 3.

### Monitor review sites and look for ways to improve patient experience

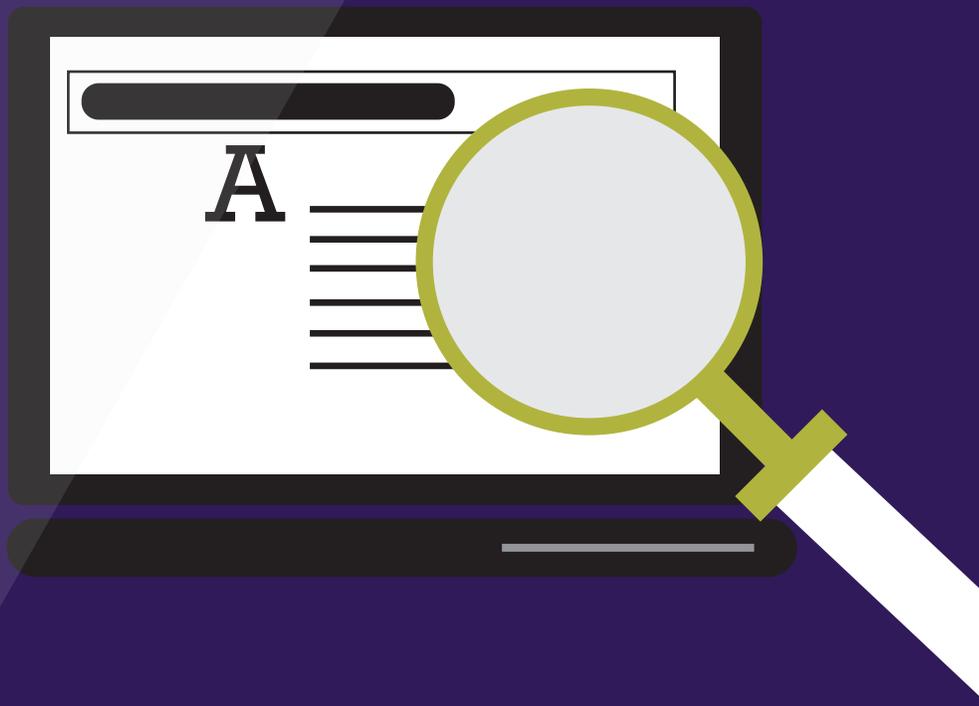
Online review sites are one of the best ways to listen to your patients. Systematically monitoring gives you important data about the quality of your care and common concerns from patients. Conversely, without continual and thorough monitoring, you're left with a serious blind spot. **Reviews contain a wealth of patient experience data, which properly mined, can lead you to uncover and address recurring quality of care**, personnel, waiting room, and other issues. To use this asset most effectively, you'll need to schedule time every day to review all listings across all locations.

#### Bonus Tip:

Consider all feedback constructive. It's often valuable advice. Sometimes negative comments are warranted and you can use the information to correct issues that may be genuine shortcomings in the way you deliver patient care. While getting great reviews is a primary objective for marketing, the operational goal is improving patient experience and outcomes.

#### Example:

For one Fortune 500 healthcare provider, online feedback from negative patient reviews showed big offline impact on its hundreds of care centers across the United States, with an average loss of \$3,000- \$50,000 in lifetime revenue per patient. Actively promoting and monitoring their review program over two years resulted in 50% more reviews per month, 477% more positive reviews and an average increase in star rating of 1.4 across all locations.



## STEP 4.

### Respond quickly and appropriately to reviews

**You don't need to respond to all positive reviews, but you should have a system for acknowledging them periodically.** It helps maintain good relationships with your satisfied patients. **When you see negative reviews, make sure you address concerns promptly.** People post complaints because they want a quick response and because they want other people to see how you handle the situation. Potential new patients will also take note of negative reviews as they weigh the decision of whether or not to schedule an appointment at your practice.

#### Bonus Tip:

When someone complains – whether because of a long wait, a rude receptionist, or a misunderstanding – you owe it to them and your business to investigate fully. From time to time, someone in your organization may make a mistake – and you can generally fix it by owning up. At other times, it may be necessary to take the discussion offline to resolve the problem or keep an argument from escalating. Your responses should comply with your organization's policies and HIPAA laws. And remember that the best response to a negative review is the presence of a lot of positive ones.

#### Example:

When a physician in a practice noticed a negative, 1-star comment from a patient, they turned it over to a practice manager who immediately called the patient and resolved the problem. The patient not only removed the comment but gave the facility a 5-star rating.

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## STEP 5.

### Leverage positive reviews to encourage increased participation

Many people like to see what others have written before writing their own reviews. Plus, loyal patients who see positive reviews are inspired to add their own. **Consider promoting the reviews on your website** or social media pages (if applicable). Most review sites allow you to quote reviews, as long as you reference them. You'll need to check on specific usage rules for each site. When you quote reviews online, link back to the originals. This not only drives prospective patients to the review sites to view more positive reviews but it also adds more authenticity to the reviews.

#### Bonus Tip:

When you ask for feedback in your waiting rooms, consider investing in computer tablets that you use to collect reviews and automatically publish them to your website. Patients can also be directed to post on specific review sites of your choosing.

# CONCLUSION:

Following these five steps is the beginning of an effective strategy and system to help you take control of your patient reviews. Your efforts will pay off. In the past several years, private practices, hospitals, and other care facilities with active programs have not only enjoyed increases in their star ratings and search ranking, but have used the feedback to improve patient experience, employee morale, pricing power and revenue.



## Attention USPI Network Physicians:

Physician Strategy Group offers a full reputation management platform for **75% off** the retail price. For only **\$304 per physician/per year**, Reputation.com allows you to:

- **Monitor** your online presence across all rating and review sites
- **Manage** and **respond** to your internet reviews
- **Request reviews** from your patients
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