

THE 3 THINGS

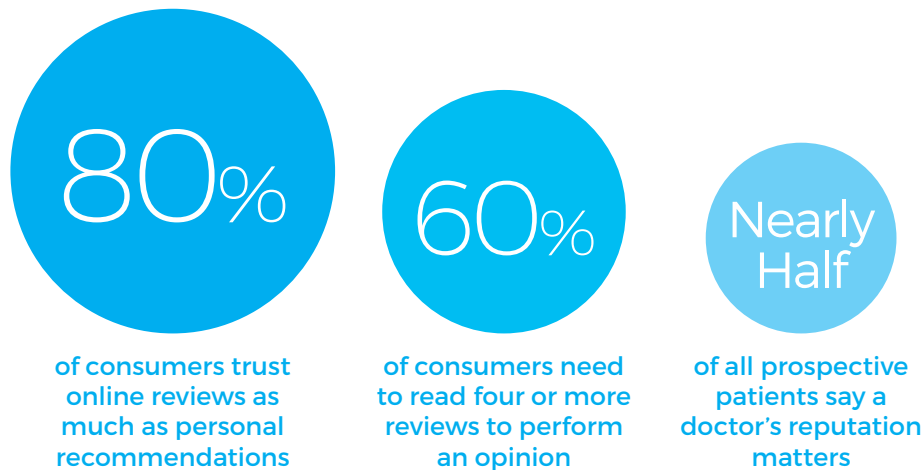
EVERY PLASTIC SURGEON SHOULD DO
TO PROTECT THEIR ONLINE REPUTATION



Regardless of the industry, niche, product or service, today's consumer has become programmed to scour online reviews before they make any type of decision.

And, as more consumers turn to ratings to help them choose their doctors, any type of negative content posted online can have long-lasting negative repercussions for your practice.

That being said, good online reviews are among the most influential factors patients consider when choosing a doctor. In fact, statistics from BrightLocal show that:



Negative reviews are an inevitability, no matter how tight a practice you run. In fact, historically speaking, unhappy patients are far more likely to be the most vocal online reviewers.

This isn't anything new. Doctors have always been the beneficiary (or victim) of ratings; they just haven't always been online and in your face. The internet has raised the stakes.

It's a bit of a catch-22. Plastic surgeons need to market themselves online in order to grow their practice. But this leads them to be more vulnerable to attacks.

It's impossible to have 100% happy patients, no matter what you do. Ratings sites and social media networks have become ground zero for patients and customers to vent their grievances.

So, what can you do to make sure your prospects see the good reviews of your practice, rather than solely the negative?

LOOK
AT THE
BIGGER
PICTURE

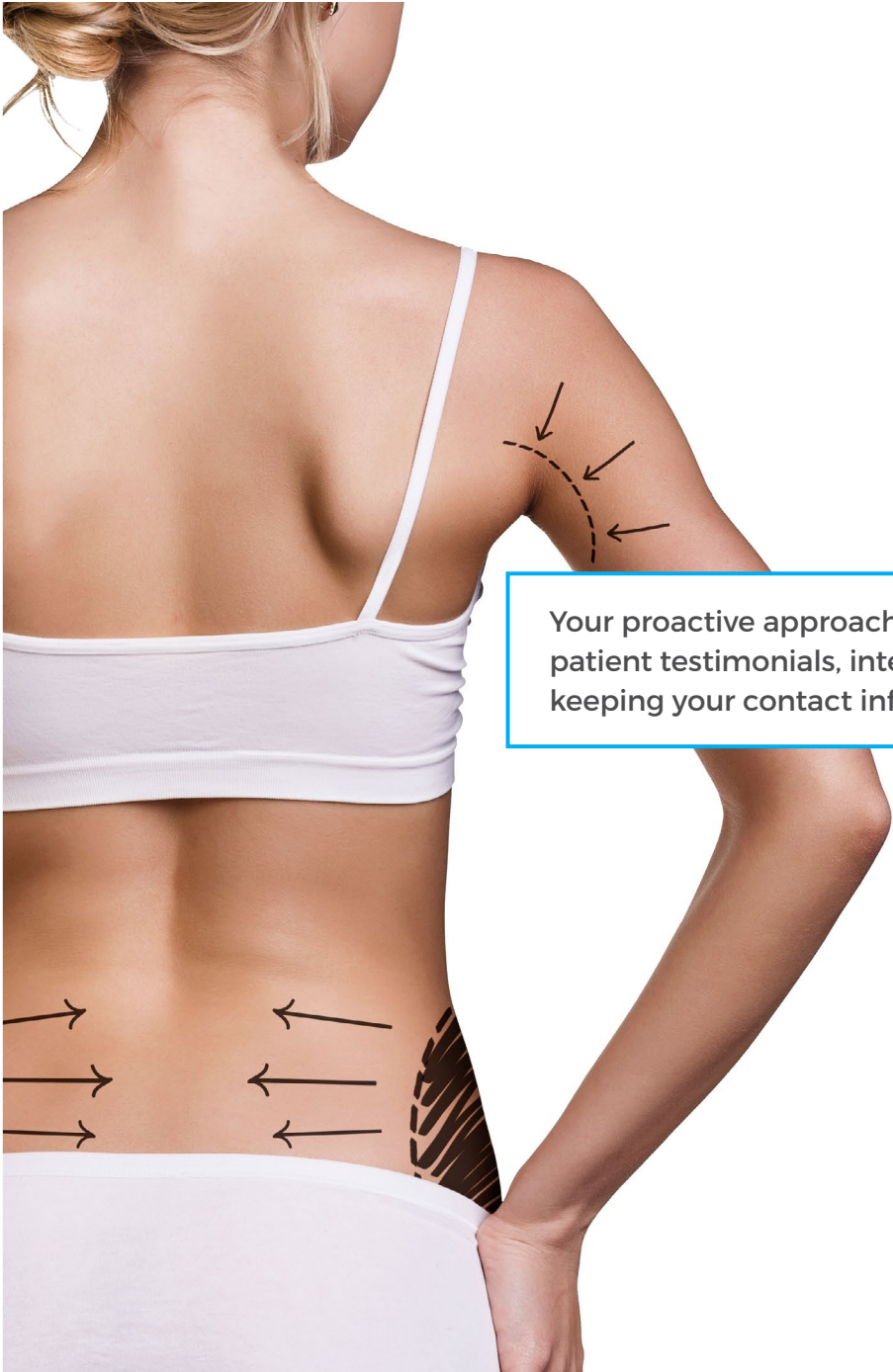


When it comes to reputation management, there are two global strategies you need to tackle:

- Proactive reputation management
- Reactive reputation management

PROACTIVE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

As online reviews are clearly influencing your prospects' decision making, it's key that you maintain a solid presence on the review sites where they search. A proactive approach helps you put out fires before they spread by ensuring there's plenty of good content on the web.

A photograph of a woman's back, seen from behind. She is wearing a white sports bra. On her right shoulder, there is a dashed line with three arrows pointing towards it. On her lower back, there are several solid arrows pointing inwards towards the spine. A blue-bordered box containing text is positioned over the lower back area.

Your proactive approach should include posting positive patient testimonials, interacting with existing reviewers, and keeping your contact information up-to-date across the web.

There are countless online review sites where prospects might venture to. Sophisticated tools can help you build a presence on each of these sites, and we recommend that be an eventual goal for you.

However, if you're just beginning your proactive reputation management strategy, hone in on the review sites you know to be popular among your patients and geographic location.

REACTIVE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

As we mentioned earlier, negative reviews are inevitable. A reactive reputation management strategy will help you counteract these negative reviews.

By addressing negative reviews, while adhering to HIPAA regulations, you can lessen the impact these reviews have on your prospective patients.

You can also use reactive reputation management to know which review sites require more attention. If one review site in particular seems to rank high on Google and consists of a negative review, you might want to encourage your patients to submit reviews to that site.

But how, exactly, can you find these negative reviews about your practice? A few tips to implement include:

- Set alerts on Google, Yahoo! and Bing
- Assign a staff member to monitor the postings of all relevant sites
- Use social media monitoring tools (like Hootsuite) to keep tabs on any and all references of your practice or staff
- Consider using an external monitoring service

When you come across negative reviews, more often than not it's to your benefit to offer some type of public reply (so long as you adhere to HIPAA regulations). Replies help you connect with the reviewer and show the rest of the world that you welcome and respond to feedback of all types.

However, the words you choose within your response can really get you in trouble. Your safest approach is to reply with something extremely innocuous, such as: **"Thank you for expressing your concerns. If you could be so kind as to contact our offices directly so we can discuss this matter with you further. Patient satisfaction is our number one goal."**

This generic response shows that you actually read and care about reviews, without adding any fuel to the fire.

A close-up photograph of a medical syringe with a green plunger and a long, thin needle. The needle is inserted into the rubber stopper of a clear glass vial. The vial contains a clear, colorless liquid. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

“ Thank you for expressing your concerns. If you could be so kind as to contact our offices directly so we can discuss this matter with you further. Patient satisfaction is our number one goal.



ADDRESSING THE MOST COMMON COMPLAINTS FOR PLASTIC SURGEONS

The most common complaints plastic surgeons experience on ratings sites often center on long waiting lines and lack of time spent by the doctor with the patient.

These two complaints are actually rooted in the same foundation: lack of time. You could try to publicly address this complaint by highlighting why the reviewer might have had that experience: **“We are among just a few plastic surgery practices in the area, and we pride ourselves on providing quality care to all of our patients.”**

This statement doesn't belittle the reviewer's complaint, nor does it come across as too defensive. In fact, it comes across as a positive (as best as possible) in that your practice is in high demand, and you do your best to meet the needs of all of your patients. ❖

“ We are among just a few plastic surgery practices in the area, and we pride ourselves on providing quality care to all of our patients.

OUTPERFORM YOUR NEGATIVE REVIEWS WITH POSITIVE ONES



When you do receive negative reviews, it's imperative that you counter these ratings to ensure they're buried under a slew of positive ratings from real, satisfied patients.

How do you go about piling on the positivity?

Sometimes it's as easy as simply asking (it's always easier for a staff member to solicit a review, than the doctor).

When a patient compliments the results, the office, or staff, it's perfectly okay to say, **"You know, you'd really make our day if you provided a positive review online."**

But it's also helpful to start early in relationship. Be proactive. Right from the initial consultation, use patient-satisfaction surveys to demonstrate your interest in their opinion, and to get them accustomed to participating in this type of process.

Then, when it's time to ask for a review following a procedure, these patients will be far more likely and prepared to be your advocate.

Your ongoing mission is to create a large body of positive content to outweigh the inevitable negative posts that may arise. You can't do that without the help of your patients. ❖



“ You know, you'd really make our day if you provided a positive review online.

MAKE IMPROVEMENTS BASED ON YOUR NEGATIVE REVIEWS





We've talked at length here about how to combat negative reviews, but it's about time to acknowledge the elephant in the room: what if your negative reviews ring true?

Every plastic surgeon will experience a bad review. No one enjoys this, but when it happens, rather than take it personal, it's more productive if you ask yourself: is there some truth in that?

If you can answer yes, then that negative review has actually helped you pinpoint an area of your practice you can improve upon.

For example, if you happen to get consistent reviews or poor ratings focused on rushed patient visits, make it a point to apologize to any patient who's been kept waiting and explain to them why there was a delay. This transparency could very well be all that's needed to stop a negative review from ever being made public. ❖

THE TUG-OF-WAR BATTLE THAT IS REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Understanding that negative reviews are a natural part of your plastic surgery practice will help you to better develop both your proactive and reactive approach to reputation management.

Of course, being able to monitor all references to your practice isn't a reality for many surgeons, which is why many doctors rely on tools or 3rd-party agencies. But even without these added tools and services, you and your staff can implement tried-and-true strategies to ensure that when folks find you online, they like what they see.

If you need further elaboration on anything discussed please reach out: www.CardinalWebSolutions.com