

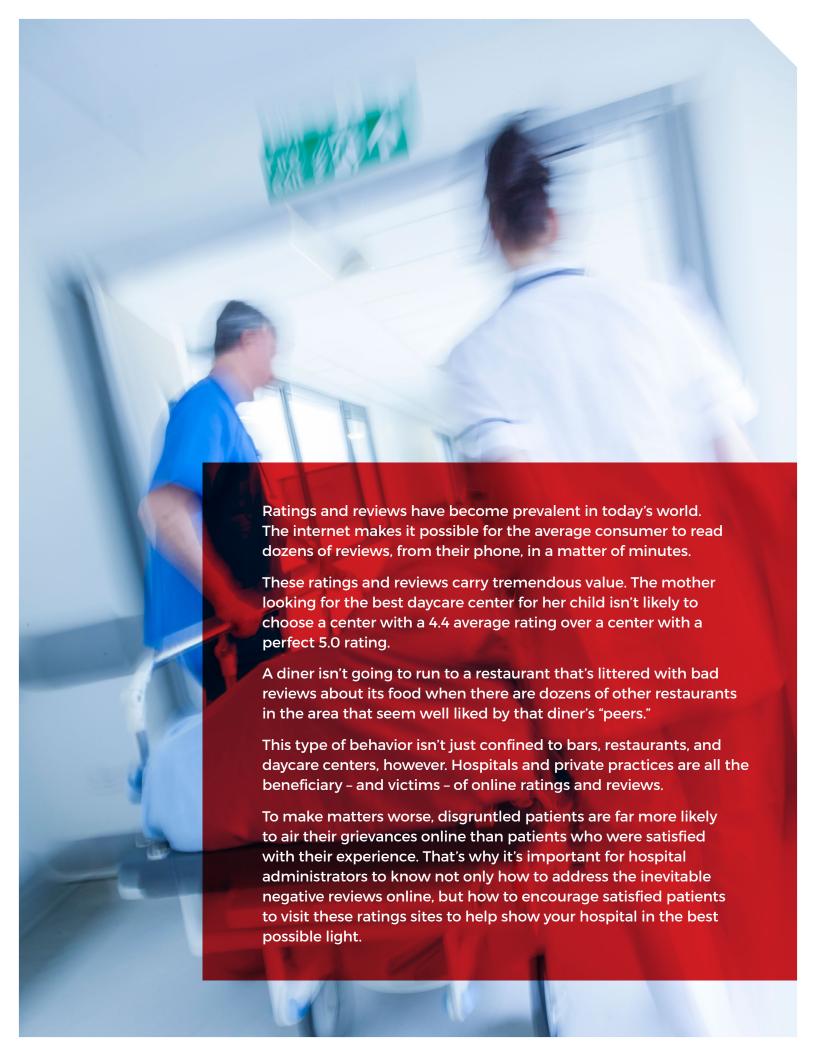


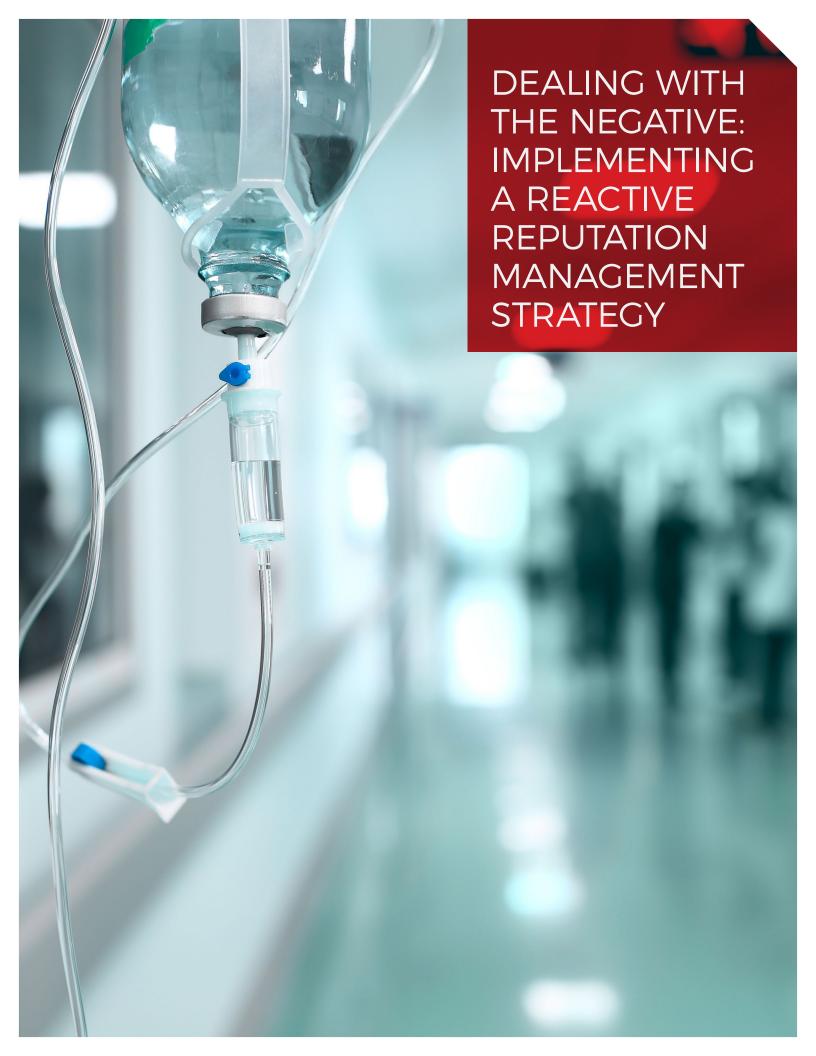
Inc 5000 Agency 2016, 2015 and 2014

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT FOR HOSPITALS









First, let's dispel the notion that your hospital is immune to negative reviews. So long as you're actively treating patients, you can guarantee you'll receive your fair share of negative feedback on popular ratings sites across the web.

How you respond to these negative reviews, however, can make all the difference in the world. By being quick, positive, and HIPAA-compliant with your responses, you can actually find a way to turn a negative review into a positive experience for your organization.

But first thing's first; you need to know where to look for these negative reviews.

There are hundreds of ratings sites out there; monitoring each one is impossible (which is why many hospitals turn to technology to help get the job done). The best way to make the biggest impact on your hospital's online reputation is by focusing on the most popular user-review sites. To date, the most popular sites include:

- Vitals
- Rate MDs
- Patients Like Me
- Rate a Clinic
- Who is Sick?
- Rate Your Hospital Stay

But your hospital's reputation isn't just at stake here on these health-related review sites. General ratings sites like Yelp have an impact on a prospective patient's decision making, as does Google Reviews (which tend to rank high on search engine results pages).

Beyond the web, social media is also where patients turn to in order to praise or vilify a hospital or doctor.

It should be your mission to closely monitor these sites and social networks for any and all references to your hospital or staff. A simple social media tool like Hootsuite could simplify the matter for monitoring Twitter. By highlighting terms you want to track (the name of your hospital and doctors; the Twitter profiles associated with your organization; any hashtags related to your operations), Hootsuite will create streams you can monitor at a glance.



But there are even more robust tools out there (like Connectivity) that will help you manage your entire online persona, regardless of the platform, network, or search engine where your hospital is referenced.

If you're looking to keep your reputation management in-house, you could set alerts on Google, Bing, and Yahoo!. While not a complete solution, these alerts will keep you on top of most references to your name.

If you are looking for a bigger solution, you might consider the following:

socialmention*

This free online service is a lot like Google Alerts, but also adds information about sentiment (the ratio of positive to negative remarks) and more.



Starting at \$19.95 per month for one doctor, Review Concierge monitors more than 75 major websites where patients turn to for physician reviews. This is a highly targeted service that can notify you in an instant when your doctors have been mentioned on any one of these sites.



Much like Review Concierge, Reputation Health monitors social media sites and health-related review sites (think Vitals, HealthGrades, UcompareHealthcare). It collects online mentions and reviews, and sends notifications directly to you. Aside from the \$99 set-up fee, pricing starts at \$29.95 per month.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU COME ACROSS NEGATIVE REVIEWS

The natural instinct for most people - when they encounter a negative review - is to either:

- Reply to the review with a defensive statement, or
- Ignore the review completely

Neither of these tactics will do your hospital much good. The reality about ratings and reviews is that they live on the web forever. Ignoring them won't make them disappear. And replying to them defensively will only make these reviews and ratings stand out even more.

Prospective patients don't just look at the ratings and reviews of their peers; they look to see how your hospital responded to these negative comments.

The best approach to addressing a negative review is to post a friendly, rather generic statement. This type of statement keeps you HIPAA-compliant and avoids further angering the reviewer.

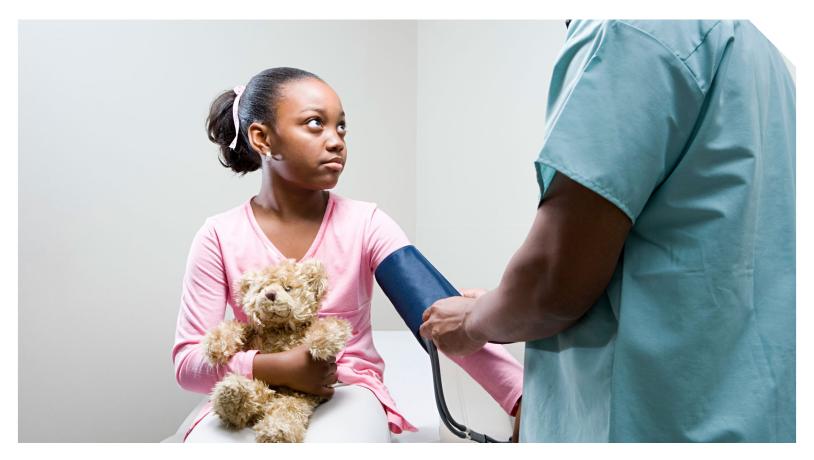
Your reply has kept the conversation civil, aimed to move the talk to a private setting, and shows the rest of the world that you do, in fact, listen and respond to the critiques of your patients.



One such example would be:

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





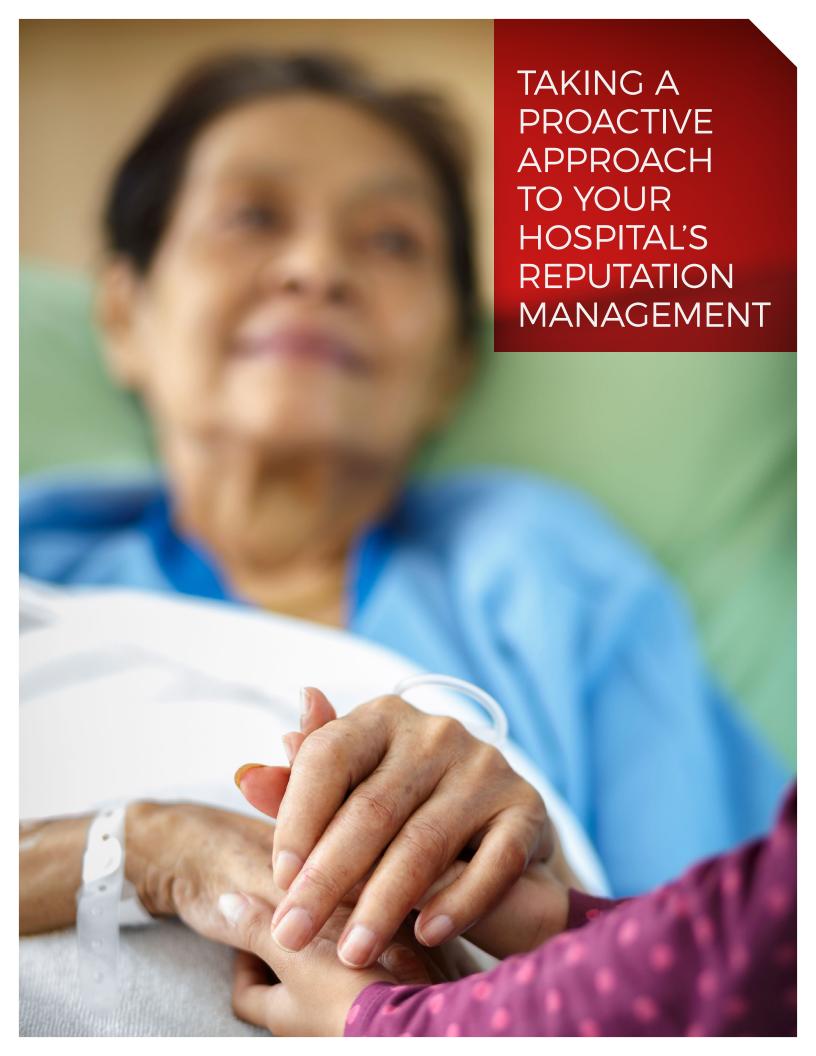
UNDERSTANDING WHEN NEGATIVE REVIEWS SPEAK THE TRUTH

There's no question that your hospital will endure its fair share of unwarranted or over-the-top negative ratings and reviews.

However, there'll be plenty of times when negative reviews hold a kernel of truth within them. This is particularly true if you find a series of negative comments that are all similar in scope.

For example, let's say your hospital's negative reviews tend to focus on long wait times. Isn't it possible, then, that your patients are trying to tell you something - that your wait times are in need of improvement?

Negative reviews provide your staff an opportunity to look within themselves and determine how best to provide an enhanced patient experience. While fixing your long wait times might not be possible – at least immediately – your staff could be told to make the extra effort to apologize for long waits and to explain the reasoning behind the holdup. This friendly approach might be enough to keep a disgruntled patient from airing his grievances online. •





One of the best ways to combat negative reviews is to make sure your hospital is getting a ton of positive reviews across the web. It's a simple game of numbers: if you have 10x more positive reviews than negative ones, your prospective patients are far more likely to see these favorable comments.

Your ongoing mission is to create a large body of positive content to outweigh the inevitable negative posts that may arise. You can do this through old-school solicitation, as well as through the benefits of technology.

Your staff should make it part of their day to solicit feedback and reviews from patients who have expressed happiness or satisfaction with their experience. It's as easy as saying: You really could help us out by posting a review online.

Help these patients by letting them know which review sites they should submit to. You'll be surprised just how many of your patients will be more than happy to advocate on your behalf.

"You really could help us out by posting a review online."

You just have to be willing to ask.

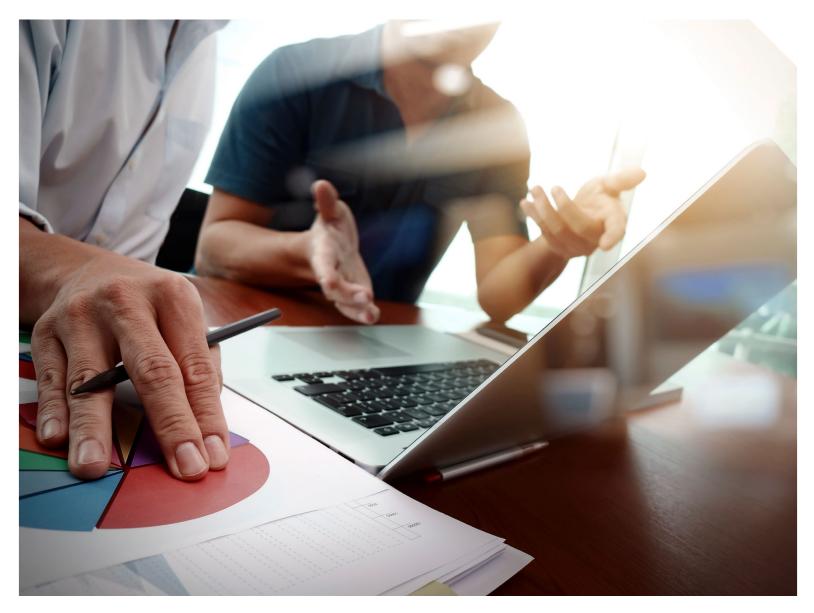
This face-to-face exchange remains the most effective way to solicit feedback; however, a follow-up email can often help you reach a wider audience with less time commitment by your staff.

You can implement an automation tool that fires out an email following a patient visit. Within this email, you can ask your patients to submit reviews and ratings on your behalf. The benefit of the email approach is you can provide links to these specific ratings sites, thus simplifying the process for your patients.

The downside is you miss out on that person-toperson impact.

Want a viable solution? Have your staff hold conversations with patients, where they discuss submitting a review. In that conversation, your staff can mention that the patient should be receiving an email shortly that can help them submit a review to a specific site.





USING TECHNOLOGY TO GUARD AGAINST NEGATIVE REVIEWS

Some of the newest reputation management technologies out there send out surveys to your patients asking for reviews. If the review returns back negative, then that review is directed to your hospital administrator rather than posting directly online.

Your administrator can then try to address the reviewer's concerns personally before that review is made public.



CREATE GOOD CONTENT TO COMBAT REVIEWS

The most effective remedy for one bad review is 10 good ones. However, there are other strategies you can implement to ensure your hospital is seen favorably.

By producing and promoting positive content (such as how-to pieces, case studies, testimonials/patient stories, doctor spotlights and accomplishments) you'll help your organization rank higher on search engines. This higher ranking can help to push down any negative reviews that show up in the fray.

At the same time, producing this content can help humanize your organization. Choosing a hospital, or doctor, is an extremely personal decision. The more content you share online, the easier it is for prospective patients to "get to know you" before they make their final decision.

GET INVOLVED WITH THE MEDIA

Your hospital should have an official spokesperson who is trained to handle the media. All too often these spokespeople only engage with the media when disaster strikes. Why not encourage your media specialist to contact members of the media regularly to promote positive news coming from your hospital? Positive references to your hospital on high-traffic sites will boost your rankings and solidify your standing in the community as a trusted source for health and wellness. �



