



YOUR PRACTICE / BUSINESS

The Top 5 Strategies to Manage Your Reputation Online

Matt Prados | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

You don't need an acupuncture website anymore! Okay, maybe that statement is a little over the top. But it's not that far from the truth. A recent study on Google searches revealed that 34 percent of all searches resulted in no clicks at all. That means the person found what they were looking for on page 1 of Google without even clicking on any of the search results.

Google displays phone numbers, driving directions, reviews and more, right on page 1 of the search results. They've made it super easy for viewers to find what they're looking for, all in one spot.

Now, obviously you've got to be the one displayed on page 1 to benefit from this, but more on that later.

Strategy #1: Build a Fully Optimized "Google My Business" Listing

What makes it fully optimized and how do you go about doing that? First, claim and get control of your listing. Once you have ownership of your listing, work on the details. Make sure everything is accurate: practice name, address, phone number, business hours, etc. This information is what people will see when they're searching, so you want it to be correct.

Add some relevant pictures to your listing. You'll also want to add a link to the page on your website that describes the services offered, as well as a link to an online scheduling page. Finally add the applicable category for your practice: acupuncture.



The bottom line here is that if your business listing shows up on page 1 of the search results, you want it to answer as many questions as possible! Does the office look nice? Does it have a good rating? Where is it located? Is it open right now? Make sure your Google My Business listing is serving its purpose.

Strategy #2: Do Online Scheduling

Without an online scheduling tool, you risk of losing patients who are looking to come see you, but don't have the time to call your office to schedule. Maybe they are working and prefer not to make this call during normal working hours.

Specifically, for millennials, text and online communication is a more preferred method of communicating than traditional phone calls. Additionally, your office might be closed when they do have the time to call, and they would be put off yet again.

A survey recently reported that 85 percent of online scheduling appointments are made when the business is not answering its phones. So, what are your options?

Hire a clunky answering service that obviously doesn't work in the office. But those tend to annoy callers, who typically end up having to call back anyway to talk to a "real" staff member.

Use an online scheduling tool. Make it easy for potential patients to schedule an appointment. (This is definitely the smarter option for this day and age.)

Strategy #3: Get a Solid Patient Feedback Generation System

Some people call this process "reputation management," but it has evolved to much more than that. Unfortunately, most people wait to do reputation management until after they've received a few bad reviews. Too late!

You need to make sure each and every patient is happy right now. One patient who leaves upset and mishandled can cause you endless troubles in the years to come. They will continually tell their friends and family not to see you and will post an exaggerated negative review online.

If you have a feedback system that monitors your patients' happiness with your service, you can catch these things before it's too late. Doing so means you can increase your patient retention and spread your good "reputation" across multiple sites.

Strategy #4: Offer an Easy-to-Use Patient Communication System

Your patients are busy, on-the-go people. They want appointment reminders via text, not a phone call. Remember how long it took one staff member to do the appointment confirmation calls everyday? What a waste of time when the same task could be done in seconds by a software.

What if the patient has a quick question about their appointment? With today's technology, you can receive text messages right on your computer and may even be able to use your main business number to send and receive texts. You can add this feature to your website, business cards, signage and direct mailings. Let people respond the way they want to - by text message.

Strategy #5: Ensure Your Online Listing Profiles Are Congruent

Google will rank your website based on the links going back to it, the content contained in its pages, and a few other things (which can all be very complicated). With that said, if you can get all of your online profiles (also known as listings) to match - and if you can get profiles added on all the various directories specific to your industry, and those profiles all match - Google will trust you more.

More importantly, patients finding you through these various sites have the same, correct data, and can contact you easily. Remember what we covered earlier about making it easy for them to schedule? There is enough competition out there. Don't get in your own way by having the wrong number, an old address, mismatched names, etc.

The Rewards of Reputation

All five of the above strategies equal your reputation. It's how you are found, how you present yourself and how you communicate with your patients; which, added to your service of course, makes the total experience for the patient. The beauty is that technology can automate all five strategies, leaving you and your staff available to actually treat patients.

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