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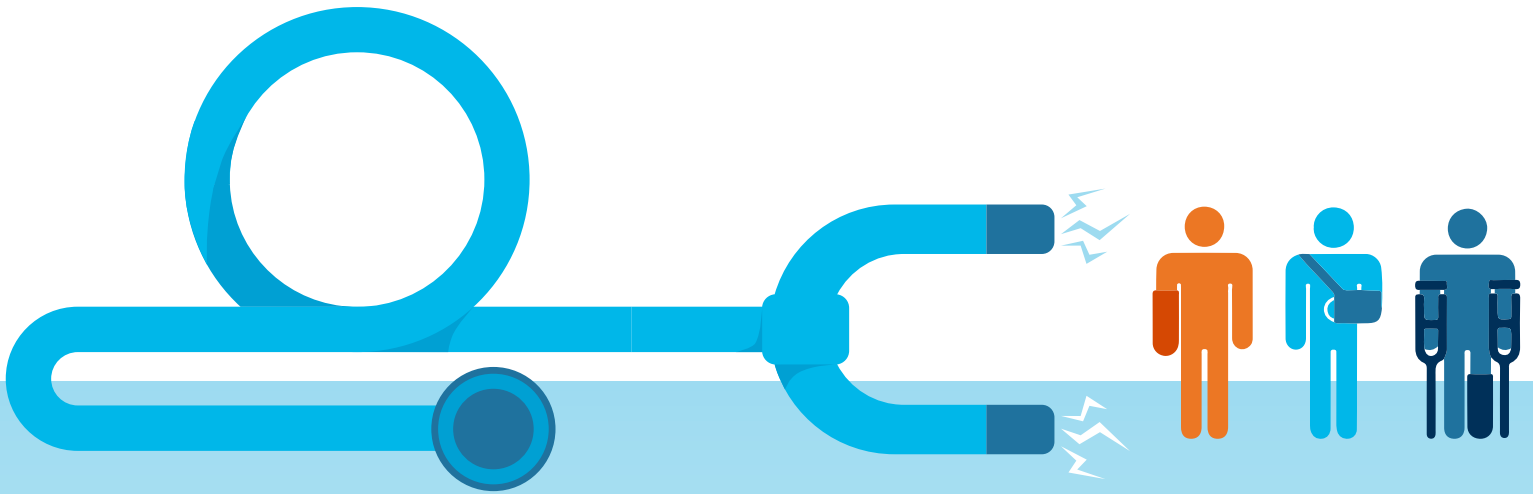
3 Steps to Attract High-Value Patients

White Paper

Introduction

The digital age has changed the way medical consumers look for a doctor, and marketing strategies must change as well to fit the new narrative. Consumers look for a doctor they can trust, and they turn to online reviews in increasing numbers to make those critical decisions. A recent survey by Software Advice found that 90% of patients use online reviews to evaluate doctors when searching for a new provider. What's more, 71% of patients rely on reviews as their first step in the process.[1]

Healthcare professionals need a strategy that employs cutting-edge technology to capitalize on these consumer behavior trends. They need a game plan that will improve their visibility in online searches, identify and attract ideal patients, and measure the ROI of their marketing spend. Adopting such an approach will bring healthcare practitioners and medical consumers together in mutually beneficial ways, allowing patients to find doctors they can trust and doctors to be seen by their ideal patients.

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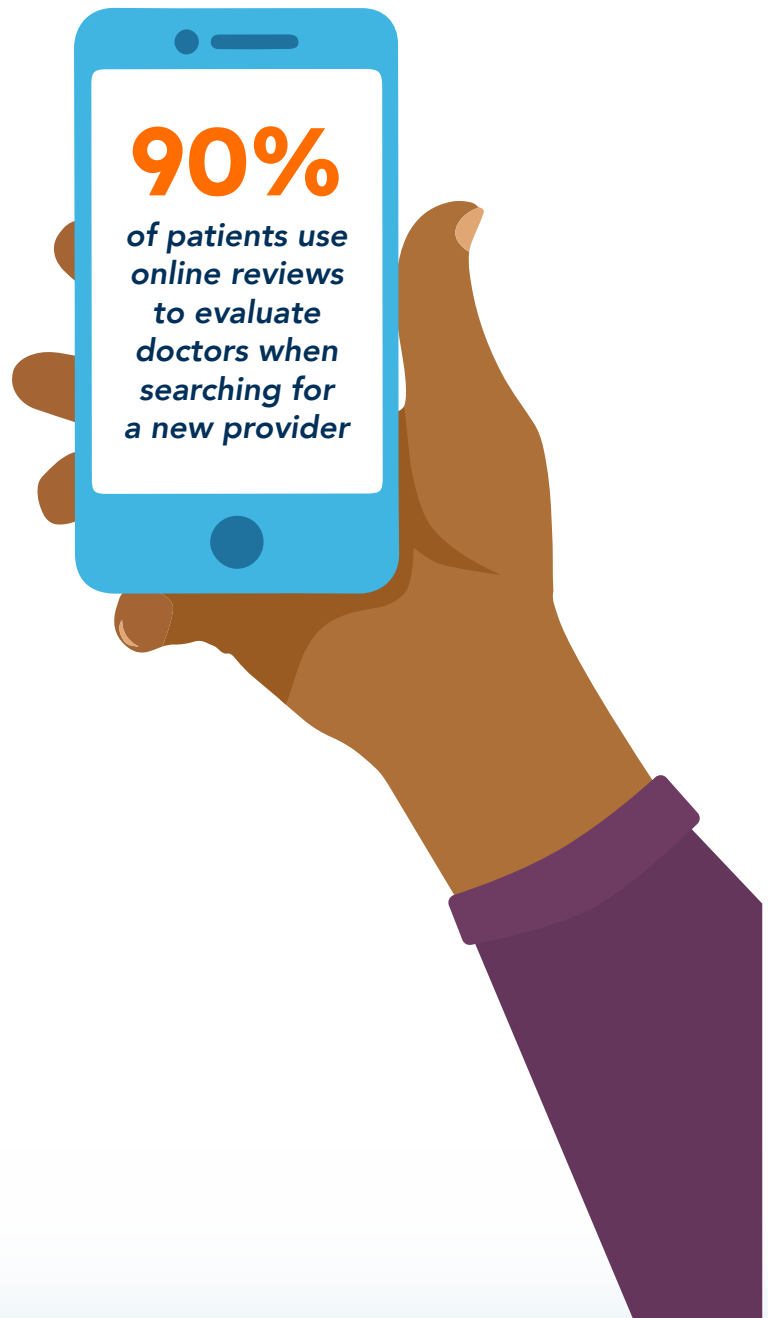
Medical Marketing in the Digital World

[2]"In today's digital age, having a robust online presence is more important than ever to meet the demands of the consumerization of healthcare. Patients expect to find information about healthcare providers online, including their location, services, and reviews from other patients."

Consumers in today's digital world use the information at their fingertips—often on their smartphones[3]—to make vital decisions. When consumers need to book a hotel, choose the best restaurant around, or find a pest control service, they increasingly turn to Google Search to help them make their decision. Way back in 2016, Google reported that 96% of people turned to their phones to get things done in moments of need.[4] You can bet that number hasn't gone down.

According to a BrightLocal survey, 93% of consumers searched for local businesses on the internet in 2020.[5] And in the last 12 months, StatCounter found that 92% of all online searches were conducted using Google's search engine.[6] That trend is poised to increase.

Medical marketing is no different. With an endless supply of instant information, medical consumers have changed the way they seek out medical care. Gone are the days when finding a doctor was as simple as getting a referral from a primary care physician. Bulk mailers, radio ads, and billboard advertising no longer have a significant marketing impact. Instead, the majority of today's medical consumers go online to search for physicians, compare ratings, and find immediate care. Even when they get a personal referral, medical consumers read online reviews to learn what other patients have to say, because they want a physician they can trust.

The Power of Online Visibility
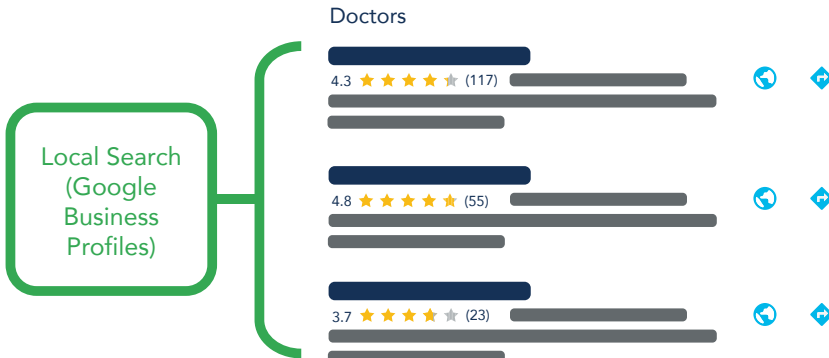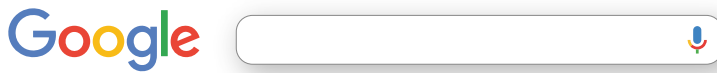
Today's effective marketing efforts focus on stepping into the patient journey to reach medical consumers at their decision-making moments. Physicians and practices need to show up in online searches with the credentials to be trusted by an internet-savvy generation.

To be more visible online when medical consumers search for care, the physician or practice listing needs to show up in Google's search results. Google's search engine finds the Google My Business (GMB) listings that best meet the search criteria and displays the top three in a Google Local Search 3-Pack. In many cases, a promoted listing matching the criteria is displayed as well.

If a physician or a medical practice does not have a GMB listing, or if their listing is not well optimized, they will not show up in a Google Local 3-Pack. Showing up in online search is a crucial part of earning the trust of medical consumers and lays the groundwork for effective digital marketing.

Three-Tiered Digital Marketing Strategy

Strategic healthcare marketing that attracts high-value patients is best done with a three-tiered approach. Healthcare professionals can integrate seamlessly into the patient journey by improving their online presence and reputation, identifying their ideal patients, and tracking their marketing spend to fine-tune their efforts.

Step 1: Take Charge of Your Reputation & Brand

As more medical consumers choose health providers based on reviews, reputation management has become essential to medical marketing. A healthcare-focused reputation management system to automatically send review and/or survey requests to every patient. Approximately 10% of patients will leave a review when asked for feedback, giving voice to the silent majority of happy patients and raising ratings by 1.2 stars on average.[7]

A good reputation management company will help practitioners improve their reviews. Full API integration with both the patient management system and Google My Business is essential for success. Integration will maintain patient privacy while providing access to important data and analytics. A robust platform empowers healthcare professionals to manage their reviews, surveys, and data from a single location. They will also be able to track how many calls have come in from a GMB listing, set up targeted ads, and access a variety of reports so they can see the results of their marketing efforts.

Brand security also plays a role in improving visibility in search results. When a patient searches for a specific brand online, paid advertisements show up on top of organic results. Medical practices should set up inexpensive brand ads to ensure their practice or doctor shows up at the top of the list.

Once rating and review volume is healthy, GMB listings are fully optimized, and the brand is secured, dominating Local Search results becomes the natural result. Healthcare professionals can then leverage their reputation and optimized GMB listings to find and target their ideal patients with their marketing efforts.

[8]*"Your online presence is the path to your practice's front door...you need to put yourself in [patients'] shoes. Once you understand their interests, problems, and desires, you can improve your online presence and tune it to your patients' demands."*

Step 2: Attract the Right Patients

High-value patients increase profit margins and secure your business. Attracting the right patients is accomplished by finding the sweet spot of paid advertising using effective search terms, social platform audience demographics, conversion data, and predictive analytics.

Google, Facebook, Instagram and other platforms capture data on users to improve their experience. The data they capture can inform marketing decisions so that bids are adjusted to target audiences more likely to convert.

BGO BLUEGRASS ORTHOPAEDICS

Bluegrass began working with SocialClimb in August of 2019 and implemented Boost Ads in one of their locations in January of 2020. They experienced the following results in the first three months after implementing the ads:

49% INCREASE IN CALLS

52 APPOINTMENTS

35% CONVERSION RATE

$59 PAC

1,242% ROI

> "[SocialClimb's] targeted ads and the predictive advertising are game changing...It is the best marketing dollar I've spent. Hands down."

Andrew Carlson
Bluegrass Orthopaedics Director of Sports Medicine

Predictive analytics is an additional layer of information that can be used to identify risk for specific health concerns among populations with surprising accuracy. AI tools sift through aggregated data collected on consumers nationwide to find potential patients at risk for specific medical conditions and with the right financial profile that will positively impact reimbursement.

When physicians and medical practices put all of the available tools into play, Google search ads and display ads sent through Facebook and Instagram will show up for high-value patients looking for medical care. Medical professionals will maximize the value of their marketing dollars and protect their bottom line.

Step 3: Measure Your ROI

Just like any other business, medical practices need to be measuring the return on investment (ROI) of their marketing dollars. HIPAA-compliant digital marketing platforms can integrate with both Google My Business and practice management systems, allowing medical professionals to track where patients come from and how much they spend.

Patient acquisition cost (PAC) is one of the most valuable metrics in healthcare. It's calculated by dividing the marketing spend by the number of patient appointments derived from that spend. A platform that integrates with Google can identify the patients calling to make appointments through a GMB listing or from a Google Ad.

Once a patient has made an appointment, their journey can be tracked using HIPAA-compliant software to see the revenue they bring in, all while maintaining patient privacy. The ROI can be calculated from the actual patient revenue or, for a more general number, from an average per-patient value.

A reliable PAC and ROI will empower healthcare professionals to aim their marketing strategy directly at driving revenue rather than throwing money at outdated efforts no longer relevant in today's market.

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Desert Orthopaedics Center consistently holds the #1 spot in Google search results for orthopedic specialists in their area. With SocialClimb's marketing reporting, they can easily see their PAC and calculate their ROI. These numbers reflect data from one of their doctors:

Reputation Alone:
PAC = $17
ROI = 6,500%
ROI Ratio = 66:1

Ads Alone:
PAC = $52
ROI = 2,015%
ROI Ratio = 20:1

Reputation & Ads:
PAC = $37
ROI = 2,856%
ROI Ratio = 29:1

"The ROI changes the mindset of physicians about the value of marketing in general. We're very happy with how this is working."

Michael Pendleton
Desert Orthopaedics Center CEO

Conclusion

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HEALTHCARE MARKETING PLATFORM

Yesterday's healthcare marketing strategies cannot keep pace with medical consumer behavior trends. Healthcare professionals need to be visible in the patient journey by making sure their online presence and reputation provide an accurate representation of why they are to patients looking for a doctor they can trust. Bringing a more authentic online profile into focus will conntent patients and medical practitioners in mutually beneficial ways.

Adding machine learning to the marketing process moves medical marketing into the future, enabling healthcare professionals to pinpoint and acquire the patients they need to build their revenue. Medical practices, hospital systems, and doctors must embrace the potential of current technologies to attract high-value patients by managing their reputation and brand, finding their ideal patients, and accurately measuring the value of every marketing dollar they spend.

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