



SOCIALCLIMB

HEALTHCARE MARKETING PLATFORM



Reputation Management for Doctors

White Paper

Introduction

The way a patient finds a new doctor has changed in recent years as technological innovations transform our world. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning impact everything from the way we learn,¹ to the way we drive our cars, and even the way we diagnose and treat medical conditions.² The internet has become our de facto source of information gathering, with an endless supply of knowledge literally in the palm of our hand.



Medical consumers harness data-informed decision making practices as they look for doctors they can trust. They search online and turn to reviews for crowd-sourced validation of effective care. Doctors who don't show up in an online search won't even be considered by these medical consumers. If they want to remain independent, doctors need to manage their reputation and automate their patient acquisition to compete in a digital world.

Reputation Management and Patient Acquisition

According to a recent BrightLocal survey, consumers read an average of 10 reviews before they put their trust in a business.³ The same survey found that 76% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations. Results of a 2020 Software Advice survey found that 90% of patients use online reviews to evaluate doctors, and for 71% of them, reviews are the first step they take in finding a new doctor.⁴ Clearly, online reviews play a critical role in connecting doctors with new patients.

These findings show that when patients want to find a doctor they can trust, they read online reviews, and they want to read more than two or three. Doctors need to make sure they are visible online and that their online reputation is an accurate representation of the level of care they provide so they can get noticed and chosen by prospective patients.

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90%

90% of patients use online reviews to evaluate doctors.

Online Reviews

Patient reviews are an essential component of an online reputation. Doctors with a low number of reviews run the risk of being overlooked or not seen at all.

The process of asking for reviews can be fully automated, making it easy for patients to share their opinion and provide feedback. When asked in a simple, automated way such as a text message, approximately 10% of patients will leave a review,⁵ giving voice to a doctor's silent majority of happy patients. However, when left to chance, only patients who feel strongly will leave reviews. This tendency leaves doctors vulnerable to an unfavorable and inaccurate online reputation.

A healthy, representative number of reviews will give medical consumers a valid way to vet a doctor as they search online for care. In addition, medical practices actively soliciting reviews from their patients improve their Google star rating by 1.2 stars on average.⁶ A steady flow of reviews and a high star rating will help doctors get seen and trusted by potential patients. Gathering reviews is essential to building a doctor's reputation, but reviews and ratings are only part of the equation.



STAR RATING
IMPROVEMENT

400%

INCREASE IN
REVIEWS

OrthoCarolina

OrthoCarolina began working with SocialClimb to manage their reputation and automate their patient acquisition in 2017. Within the first few months, they improved their average rating from 3.3 to 4.7 stars, increased the number of reviews at each location from 20 to over 100, and achieved top positions in local search results for every office location.

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GMB Listings

Doctors need to claim and properly optimize their Google My Business (GMB) listings in order to show up in Google search results. Around 92% of online searches are conducted on Google's search engine, with the other 8% spread among several other search engines.⁷ Google has done an excellent job of dominating search traffic, and doctors can use that dominance in their favor by putting GMB listings to work for them.

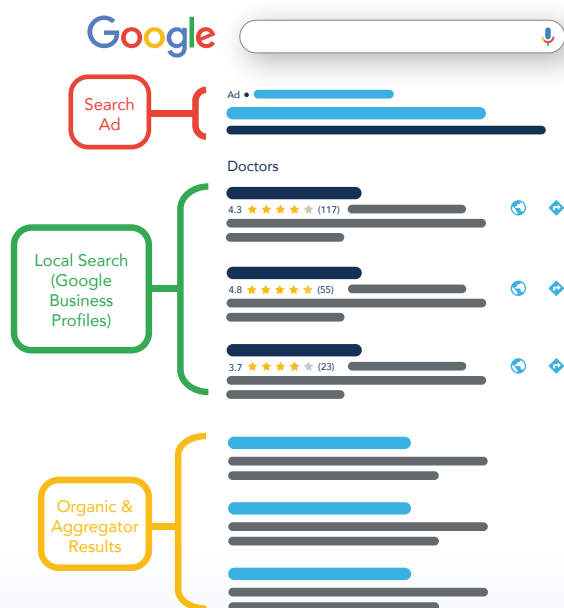
GMB Optimization

- Posts with Relevant Topics
- Practice Location
- Cover Photo
- High Number of Reviews
- High Rating
- Category
- Service Lists

When patients use Google's search engine to find a doctor, results typically show up in a Google Local 3-Pack—often with a sponsored ad or two above that. Google search algorithms decide which providers' GMB listings are in those top three listings.

A well-optimized GMB listing with a growing number of reviews shows Google that the doctor or medical practice is relevant and worthy of notice. Google's search engines look at several factors in the GMB listings to decide which physicians or practices they will list in Local Search results such as whether the practice location is listed and if the listings includes a cover photo.

GMB listings not claimed or properly optimized will keep doctors from being seen in an online search. With the way Google has set things up, patients have to scroll down to find a doctor's regular web page, but with all the information they need in those top three GMB listings, patients have no reason to scroll down.



Targeted Ads

A good number of reviews, a strong rating, and in the case of Google, a well-optimized GMB listing, makes the time right to implement reputation ads targeted directly to patients best suited to a doctor's needs. In other words, doctors can leverage their reputation to attract the patients they want.

Preferred patients are found using predictive analytics that pairs big data with machine learning to identify individuals at risk for specific medical conditions. Financial information within these data sets can also be taken into account in finding the most profitable patients for individual doctors. These tools, which used to only be available to large hospital systems, are not available to doctors and medical practices. Predictive analytics level the playing field for independent doctors to compete with large hospital groups.

“Delivering targeted ads is a crucial component of effective healthcare marketing targeting. By using paid search and social media ads, you can craft personalized, relevant messages and deliver them to customers that you want to become your patients.”

Ads targeting preferred patients can be sent through Google, Facebook, and Instagram. And with Google, that means potential patients see a doctor's GMB listing in an ad at the top of a 3-pack of listings, right at the moment they are searching for medical care. This one-to-one or personalized marketing allows a doctor to place their excellent reputation right in front of patients with the medical conditions they want to treat and with the right type of insurance to benefit their practice. At the same time, patients find physicians most suited to their needs.

Conclusion



Given the digital environment, reputation management that makes use of current technology is the most effective treatment plan to grow a medical practice. Automated patient acquisition allows doctors to fill their schedules with the patients they want with little or no effort on their part.

Current technology and software tools make good use of the data collected on internet users across the nation, and big players in healthcare have been using this data for years. It's time for doctors to manage their online reputation, automate their patient acquisition, and tap into these available resources that will allow them to remain independent.

References

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² Davenport, Thomas, and Ravi Kalakota. "The potential for artificial intelligence in healthcare." *Future healthcare journal* vol. 6(2), (2019): 94-98. doi:10.7861/futurehosp.6-2-94

³ Rosie Murphy, "Local Consumer Review Survey," BrightLocal, December 11, 2019, <https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/#summary>

⁴ Lisa Hedges and Collin Couey, "How Patients Use Online Reviews," Software Advice, April 3, 2020, <https://www.softwareadvice.com/resources/how-patients-use-online-reviews/>

⁵ Based on results from SocialClimb customers, www.socialclimb.com

⁶ Based on results from SocialClimb customers, www.socialclimb.com

⁷ Search Engine Market Share Worldwide, Statcounter GlobalStats, accessed Oct 15, 2020, <https://gs.statcounter.com/search-engine-market-share>

⁸ Healthcare Marketing Targeting Results in Higher Conversion <https://socialclimb.com/blog/healthcare-marketing-targeting-results-in-higher-conversion/>