



New Patients

What Is the Single Greatest Factor in Attracting New Patients?

Patient reviews can make you or break you.

BY RANDY ROSLER

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What is the single greatest factor in attracting new patients? It's reviews. Really, reviews? Not a website or advertising?

Why are reviews the single greatest factor? Because savvy prospective patients understand that everything written on your website or in ads is officially "podiatrist-approved." Nothing you put out there will mention that your appointments frequently run behind or that your front desk rarely smiles. That important consumer information comes only from online reviews.

Although there will always be people who find something to complain about no matter what, most people understand that reviews are very subjective. Intellectually, they know that all review comments should be taken with a grain of salt. Still, the perspectives and opinions of "real" people with first-hand experience is very persuasive. It is often the factor that tips the scales towards or away from one podiatrist to another.

Comparison Shopping

93% of potential patients read online reviews before choosing a podiatrist. How your patients talk about you in reviews can be a deal-breaker for or against you when you are compared to all the other podiatrists in your local market.

ence other patients had with a particular practice or doctor. Searchers extract bits of information that are impactful to them, winning them over or causing them to drop you as a viable candidate.

The Holy Grail for those seeking a new podiatrist would be to find a

You can't delete negative feedback, but you can use reputation management to mitigate the damage.

If you've ever searched online for the "best" new car, you can probably relate to people searching for a new podiatrist. The layperson can find a lot of information to sift through, and still gain nothing to help them distinguish between an excellent DPM and a merely competent one.

Most people look to reviews to point out the good, the bad, and the ugly to get the flavor of the experi-

local practitioner who has great online reviews (meaning a great reputation).

Review Power

Why Do Patients Bother to Give Reviews?

- They are angry and need to vent
- They feel smart and generous helping peers by offering a recommendation

Continued on page 54

A Guide to What Podiatry Practices Learn from Reviews

There are three parts to most reviews: stars, comments, and quantity.

Stars

- 1–2 stars = Your practice is in trouble!
- 3 stars are not good enough
- 4 stars is good
- 4.6–4.9 are excellent
- 5 stars may seem questionable (too good to be believed)

94% of potential patients do not consider podiatrists with less than 4 stars!

Comments

- Bad comments can shut down your online presence.
- A good comment is one that does not dissuade anyone from choosing you.
- A great comment gives reasons to choose you above others.

It is always good policy to thank reviewers and to directly address any negative comments as a reply under the comment.

Number of Recent Reviews

- Too few reviews suggest that no one uses you as their podiatrist.
- Old reviews may seem like you might have stopped practicing.
- Lots of recent reviews show that people have chosen you as their provider. **PM**

especially on a third party site like *Yelp* or *RateMDs*, not only can cost you your organic review, but many also result in a monetary fine.

- *Posting Real Patient Reviews from your Office*

Of course you should ask patients to review you and your practice. But do not provide an iPad at your office for them to use to do it! Google can identify the IP address at your office. Multi reviews coming from one IP address can seem suspicious and you may be penalized.

- *Dictating What Patients Should Say*

It is unethical to manipulate what people say about you or your practice.

- *Posting Fake Reviews*

Do not ask family, friends, or office staff to pose as patients and write glowing reviews for your practice. These reviews by non-patients are easy to spot. They boast few facts, but lots of adjectives. Only ask real patients to write reviews.

- *Paying for Fake Reviews*

Do not pay an agency to post fake reviews. Too many reviews received at once is subject to suspect. Plus, review stuffing using fake accounts is just not a sustainable way to build your brand. If you get caught, you will lose all credibility. The proper way to increase the number and quality of reviews is through reputation management.

Reputation Management

Online reviews are the gooey center of your public reputation. It doesn't matter to most what your professional peers have to say. We all want to know what "everyone" thinks. Fortunately, smart podiatrists can work with reputable digital marketers to encourage, root out, and leverage positive reviews so that they attract new patients. **PM**



As the National Director of Podiatry Content Connection, **Randy Rosler** helps private practice DPMs leverage the power of the internet to increase their visibility and gain new patients.

Attracting New Patients (from page 53)

- They are appreciative of extraordinary service

Why Do Reviews Matter to DPMs?

Negative reviews damage a podiatrist's ability to attract new patients. You can't delete negative feedback, but you can use reputation management to mitigate the damage. Positive reviews build potential patients' confidence in their choices.

How Reviews Influence Google Search Results:

- Google's algorithm determines your practice's relevance in the market, in part by how often you are reviewed.

- Stronger online reputations often find themselves at the top of search results—which, in turn, can drive more web traffic and lead to practice growth.

How NOT to Get More Reviews

It is vital to have new reviews coming in at a steady pace to attract new patients and boost reputation. Too many DPMs leave the review process to chance, but that is so last decade!

How can you get more 4+ stars and positive comments? NOT like this:

- *Incentivizing Reviews*
Do not offer anything to a patient in exchange for a good review—not money, not free services. Doing so,