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TURNING
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Into Political
Leadership



Online Reputation Management Part 3

Putting Your Best Foot Forward

BY KIM KELLEY, FRBMA

Share the feedback

Positive customer reviews make excellent marketing content. Social media posts, testimonial videos, or in-office displays are all ideal places to share this information. If you are making the effort to ask for and collect customer reviews put them to good use. Be prepared to publicly thank your customers for their time and comments online. Make every effort to respond promptly, be professional regardless of the situation, take responsibility for service gaps, and do your best to offer solutions to problems. Identify the appropriate people or departments in your organization to take ownership of responding to negative reviews and consider developing a script to allow you to respond professionally and timely without using words that may irritate your customers further. Above all, learn and improve from customer feedback. Your reputation will be enhanced rather than damaged by a negative review handled well. Borrowing a quote from Warren Buffet, “You can never have enough reputation.”

When you're not in control

Hospital based practices, mergers, acquisitions, and external billing companies present a whole new reputation scenario—one that you may not fully control. Professional-only groups need to ask themselves if they can create their own reputation, or will they share the hospital's reputation. That may not be a bad thing, but if the hospital struggles with providing positive patient experiences, the radiology group will need to strengthen its own brand. Make sure your team has a seat at the table for these discussions with hospital leadership and, if this is currently not on their radars bring some of the tools shared in this article and start the discussion. Regardless of the reputation of the hospital, look for opportunities to build the reputation of your radiologists. “Leverage physician review sites such as HealthGrades or Rate MDs. Participate in reputation growth opportunities—such as claiming online listings, following the patient journey, and asking for reviews,” says Jennifer Kammer, executive director at Vancouver Radiologists.

If your organization is considering pursuing a joint venture opportunity, or may be part of a merger in the near future, be mindful of the impact of your reputation. From the initial discussion and exploration of a possible merger, to acquire or work more collaboratively with another organization, your reputation can be immediately impacted. As news spreads of the potential business opportunity, customers will begin to speculate about your business and who you have chosen as a partner. By engaging in mergers, companies partially associate their reputation with that of the merged organization. From the outset of the decision to merge, the effect of assimilating another firm's reputation should be explored. Due diligence in the form of not only studying how another firm appears on paper but doing online searches for reviews could be very telling. Knowing whether there are any skeletons in the proverbial closet could play a role in potential business partnerships. In some cases, a merger may enhance the reputation of a struggling entity, but in others, the stronger entity could be associated with past service gaps of the weaker entity. Further, corporate reputations have bottom line impacts—a good online reputation enhances profitability.


A prime example of working with and having to take responsibility for another company's reputation is when working with an external billing company. Remember, there are emotional ties for the patient to imaging services—and when it comes to unexpected bills and out-of-pocket costs, those emotions run even higher. If the billing company has service gaps

the radiology group is likely to take the hit for that because the patient bill has the group's name on it. Work with your business partner to strengthen these processes and don't forget to include them in your online reputation management efforts.

Developing a strategy for managing your company's reputation is important. The question is—are you ready to take the first step and craft a plan? The tools and suggestions provided in this three-part deep dive are a great place to start! Develop a process within your organization to proactively monitor your reputation, do your best to influence reviews by creating an exceptional customer experience, and don't forget to ask for reviews. Enhance your marketing efforts by using positive customer reviews to build your reputation. Your company's future success may depend on it. Ask yourself and others in your organization if you are putting your best foot forward in your daily interactions with your customers to help build your organization's positive reputation. ■



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