

# How to Boost Your Online Ratings as a Dermatology Professional



Lay the groundwork to win the numbers game that has become the heart of website rankings.

**BY NAREN ARULRAJAH**

>> Online marketing and social media promotions are driven by numbers. Be it search engine rankings, page views, followers, or product and service ratings, in the digital world, higher numbers are always good for business.

As a dermatologist, receiving favorable reviews and ratings from patients is one of the most important factors that will boost your online reputation and bring more patients to your practice.

Having a couldn't-care-less attitude towards patient reviews can cost you dearly. Content posted online spreads at a very high speed, in some cases reaching millions of people in a few seconds.

If used wisely, this is actually a platform where you can reach out to a very large number of people instantly. So make sure you have something good to show and promote it systematically online.

Patients often leave reviews about their medical treatment experiences. If people have a good experience with you, they are likely to show appreciation for you online, especially on the web pages they found your services on.

But if they have had a less than satisfactory experience with you, they are more than likely to share it and warn others about your practice.

Over time, your online ratings and reviews can influence the popularity of your dermatology practice to a considerable extent. Making sure that you always feature in the top medical professional rankings is a vital part of reputation management, and this can be done by taking certain measures.

## 1 Have an Extensive Online Presence

Many medical professionals believe that their work will speak for itself. But in today's world of social media frenzy and online marketing, you need to have your presence on as many online platforms as possible.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram pages, YouTube channels, blogs, your brand website, and any platform where you can engage with your patients and visitors directly is necessary.

Your website needs to be search engine optimized and compatible with all the necessary statistics and techniques that a marketing specialist will guide you with.

## 2 Be Active On Social Media

Just having multiple accounts on different social media sites is not enough. You must be active on all platforms, post content, reply to queries, share your contact information, respond to reviews, and inform people about the industry and related news, apart from promoting your own services.

Communicating with patients improves your reputation as they see a medical professional that is attentive and responds quickly. If you cannot manage these pages on your own, hire a social media manager to do it or a team, if your establishment is large, but make sure these accounts do not get neglected.

A good online reputation will come in handy if and when you have to do any damage control against criticism or negative reviews.

## 3 Be Responsive to Online Reviews

Pay attention to and reply to reviews patients leave for you online. Always be thankful to patients who take time to give you positive reviews. Responding quickly to posi-

tive reviews encourages other people to write good things about you, as well.

If you come across a negative review, see what went wrong and apologize for the situation. Assure the patient that the problem will be resolved. Getting back to the individual with a solution will get you even more brownie points. *NB:* Mind HIPAA regulations and avoid revealing any protected health information (including confirming an individual is a patient).

Communicating with your patients is important for a good patient-doctor relationship. Many negative reviewers change their mind after speaking to the doctor and understanding the reason for their bad experience or being assured about better services.

Personalized care prompts people to come to you even if they have had a not-so-great experience with you before.

#### 4 Encourage Patients to Leave Reviews

People put a lot of trust in online reviews. Encouraging your patients to share positive reviews about you online, on sites like Yelp or Google, will definitely boost your reputation, get you higher up in search engine rankings, and ultimately bring in more patients.

#### 5 Promote Positive Reviews On Your Website

The reviews that people share about your medical practice are a great addition to your website and social media pages. Prospective patients, who reach your website looking for information, will be able to see all the happy patients you have had. This will create a good impression about you in their minds, and they will come to you with a positive attitude.

If your medical establishment is big, you can have multiple sections on your website for reviews about different doctors separately.

#### 6 Make Use of Automated Feedback Systems

Automated feedback systems are a great way to get reviews even from reluctant patients.

A questionnaire or a rating system may be used for patients to make their satisfaction or dissatisfaction about your services known, all in complete confidentiality. A follow-up email can be sent to those giving positive ratings so they can be encouraged to write a detailed review about their experience.

You can also send a follow-up email to unhappy patients to check what went wrong and determine how you can serve them better in future. This system gives you some amount of control and also provides you the opportunity to quickly identify patients who are likely to give you negative reviews; so you can deal with it better.

#### 7 Utilize Reviews to Improve Yourself

The objective of reviews is not just to receive praise from your patients but also to understand what they like, what they need, and what is lacking. If you notice recurrent themes in negative reviews, try to address the issue as soon as possible.

If many people seem to complain about slow technology, you need to upgrade your system. If there are complaints about waiting time, crowded periods, or unfriendly staff, maybe some changes in scheduling appointments, making the waiting rooms more comfortable, or providing soft skills training to your staff may help.

#### MEET EXPECTATIONS

If you are expecting positive reviews from your patients, you must be able to function up to their expectations and standards.

By boosting your online ratings, you become more visible to a larger set of target audience who will perceive you positively. This includes both current patients and prospective patients. So receiving high ratings and good reviews is something you must aim for in order to have a thriving dermatology practice. ■

*Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dermatologists. With a team of 180+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps dermatologists who know where they want to go, get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call 855-598-3320 to speak one-on-one with Naren.*

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