

## **Brand Identity and Online Reputation of your Cosmetic Surgery Practice**

With the ever-growing influence of the Internet on a universal scale, it has become more important than ever before for cosmetic surgeons to care about their online reputation. In a highly democratized online environment, particularly with the explosive popularity of social media networks, people are able to free express their opinions and comments and share their personal experiences with others. The moment a message is posted over the Internet, it literally becomes accessible to the whole world.

In this scenario, while it is impossible to control the free-flowing Internet environment, it is still possible to manage your brand identity and your online reputation to a large extent. Online reputation management (ORM) for cosmetic surgeons involves a set of techniques to generate a distinguished, positive and likeable image and presence on the World Wide Web.

This web presence essentially refers to any online content that includes a mention of the cosmetic surgeon. This content could be in the form of online news, blog posts, messages on discussion forums, comments on personal websites, reviews and ratings online, pictures, videos and social media presence. In the case of a cosmetic surgeon, the average online commentator would be an existing or past patient or a professional review or rating website.

### **Proactive Reputation Building**

Professional SEO and Online Reputation Management companies recommend a proactive approach to online brand and reputation building for cosmetic surgery practices. Their goal is to maximize the number of positive references appearing online about the practice. More importantly, these professionals employ innovative SEO strategies to ensure that these positive references are viewed by potential patients who actively search for a cosmetic surgeon on a search engine, or simply make a general search for healthcare or cosmetic surgery and eventually find the positive references about the cosmetic surgeon.

If the web presence of the cosmetic surgery practice is negligible or non-existent, except for a cosmetic surgery website, a professional ORM expert will try to build a positive online identity and image. Experts will also proactively deal with any specific issues or problems with regard to the online reputation of a cosmetic surgeon. In case a review or rating website for doctors has misrepresented the facts about the cosmetic surgery practice, or an individual's opinion online needs clarification, a professional will address such issues proactively, rather than brushing them off as aberrations.

## **SEO and Online Identity Management**

One of the key aspects of online reputation management process is to enhance the quality and volume of online traffic to websites that contain positive content related to the cosmetic surgeon. This is where search engine optimization comes into play in order to drive the targeted traffic towards targeted websites. The only difference in this case is that the primary keyword is the name of the cosmetic surgeon or the brand name of the cosmetic surgery practice.

The object of SEO in this case is not just the cosmetic surgeon's own website, but in fact all such websites that may carry positive online references about the cosmetic surgeon or the practice. Therefore, from an SEO expert's point of view, the goal here is more complex, and includes achieving high rankings for as many targeted websites as possible when an average potential patient searches for the cosmetic surgeon's name or the brand name of the practice.

## **Reputation on Social Networks**

One of the biggest emerging challenges for ORM experts handling online reputations for cosmetic surgeons and other doctors is to manage a positive image for the cosmetic surgeon on various social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Orkut, Myspace and others. Messages posted on these networks have a potential of going viral, and command a much higher readership due to the very nature of online networking.

Positive messages on social networks can be great publicity for a cosmetic surgeon because people are highly influenced by such impressions. Impression management, or trying to create a positive impression about the cosmetic surgeon on social network, is an area that is of prime concern to ORM experts today. If the cosmetic surgeon is proactive on social media, it is possible to engage with potential patients on a personal level. This can give a huge boost to the online image of the cosmetic surgeon and the cosmetic surgery practice.

## **Risk of Misinformation Online**

The Internet, by and large, allows users to operate anonymously or under pseudonyms, if they so desire. That freedom also gives rise a culture of spreading false information, negativity with an ulterior motive, or simply unfair or irresponsible messages on the Internet. Even professional review or rating websites may sometimes carry one-sided versions or misinformation when they fail to scrutinize an issue closely or do not exercise due diligence.

Such false information against a cosmetic surgeon or a cosmetic surgery practice can lead to an "echo chamber effect," which means that fragments of such false information may start showing up in search results when a potential patient searches online for the cosmetic surgeon or the practice. A vigilant online reputation management company will constantly monitor the Internet for such issues, and address them effectively to ensure the cosmetic surgeon enjoys a fair online reputation.

## **Top Ranking Personal Website**

At the end of the day, a strong website that presents the cosmetic surgeon and the practice in a positive light, and backs up the claims with facts, figures, videos and patient testimonials, still remains the best weapon to defend and build an online reputation. With great content and strategic SEO techniques, if the website continues to rank at the top of the search results, it can overwhelm all other forms of online impressions on the Internet.

Cosmetic surgeons can hire a professional SEO services and online reputation management company with an exclusive focus on the medical profession. With the backing of such experts, it is possible to achieve a greater market share and dominate the Internet locally. With the patients universally becoming increasingly Internet-savvy, it is time for every cosmetic surgeon to start an evaluation of his or her online reputation and web presence, or the absence of it.