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## Revealed: Your Million-Dollar Review Strategy. Three Strategies Guaranteed to Make Reviews Count More!

By David Evans, PhD, MBA



Online reviews can make or break a practice, but not all reviews are created equally. Some stand out from the fray.

Generating the type of ratings and reviews that help you grow your patient base and increase your conversion ratio starts with:

### Going for the Gusto

Software companies, such as DemandForce or SolutionReach, can be very powerful because they generate many reviews, but these types of software are designed for commodity types of services such as regular oil changes, routine teeth cleaning, or eye exams, not for high-end elective healthcare procedures. As such, software-generated reviews tend to be very short and focused on how nice the staff is—eg, “I love Dr X’s staff; they are so friendly.”

This resonates for an individual seeking a routine treatment because there is no differentiation between the treatments. If all practices provide the same service, why not choose someone who is nice or whose office is closer? This is not true for aesthetic procedures.

Of course, a friendly, competent staff

matters, but this won’t be the only reason that someone decides to drop \$10,000 on a procedure. For high-end lifestyle procedures, prospective patients want more than friendliness. They want the most educated, acclaimed surgeon and a great cosmetic outcome. Reviews that contain this type of information will generate more new patients.

When asking for reviews, request comments on the whole experience, including the consult, day of surgery, and outcome. These types of requests will encourage the longer, more detailed reviews that will better resonate with your prospective patients.

### Staying Ahead of the Game

Prospective patients put much more weight on recent reviews. If there are no recent reviews, they may wonder why. Think about it: If you researched a restaurant online and could only find reviews from several months ago, you would wonder what has changed or even if the restaurant is still in business. Don’t stop soliciting reviews after you have acquired more than a few dozen. When reviews are placed on your site, they should have a specific date and there should be a series of recent reviews. When patients see reviews that are older (more than 4 or 5 months old) or that do not show a specific date, they are suspicious.

Tip: If you use a feed in which you are pulling reviews, always select “Most Recent” as the default. Often, practices select “Top Reviews” as the default, and this can sometimes lead to prospective patients initially seeing reviews that are positive but very old. Time is precious—don’t expect visitors to dig deeper and see the most recent reviews.

### Keeping Reviews and Testimonials Separate

There’s a difference between a testimonial and a review, and don’t think your patients aren’t aware of these

nuances. Testimonials are solicited and are always positive. They usually have a patient’s first name, the first letter of their last name, and perhaps a procedure in the title. By contrast, a review has a specific date, is often anonymous (hence, more believable), and has a star rating, typically on a five-point scale. Don’t mix and match reviews and testimonials on the same page of your website. Separating them will allow you to emphasize the reviews, which will then be seen with more weight.

And remember to keep your reviews real. Too many positive reviews looks gamed. Today’s patients often look for a few negative reviews to validate your positive ones. A study by Stanford Business School confirmed this, calling it the “Blemish Effect.”

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