



The 5-Star *Medical Practice*

A NEW SYSTEM FOR BUILDING

Your New Patient Pipeline

BY KRIS KILER

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INTRODUCTION

Smartphones and Social Media have dramatically altered the landscape of the market. Consumers have become more dynamic, empowered, and capable of easily voicing their opinions online. This has significant relevance for healthcare providers throughout the country.

Patients are concerned about the quality of service they receive as practices try to maintain profit margins in the face of competition. This is nothing new. However, online reviews on websites like Yelp have completely altered and revolutionized how patients approach selecting and referring a doctor.

Traditionally, patients found their preferred doctor or practice through word-of-mouth referrals or direct mail advertisements. Patients had limited access to information and lack of time prevented them from gathering reviews and referrals from a collection of people before booking an appointment.

Online review sites and platforms¹ have turned this model on its head in three ways:

- Firstly, they allow consumers to easily rate their experience, both quantitatively (via star rating) and qualitatively (via text).
- Secondly, they aggregate reviews in real-time, allowing visitors to know the number of reviews and average rating.
- Thirdly, and most importantly, review platforms allow consumers to compare reviews and ratings with other local medical practices.

Review sites and platforms allow all of this to happen without practices having a voice in the process or in deciding what reviews stay or go.

Consumers are leaving reviews and affecting your competitiveness, practice's online presence, reach, and affecting how people will perceive your quality of service.

Whether your business is actively monitoring and managing its reviews or not, your patients (satisfied or otherwise, prospective or current) are reviewing your service or those of your competitors.

The 5-Star Problem

You cannot prevent patients from reviewing and rating your practice or your competition. You can only manage it.

Reviews and rating works two ways: If the patients offer the right star rating and review, your aggregate goes up. However, if they have not been qualified to give you the rating you deserve and are left on their own, lower star rating (even a 4-star) can affect your overall rating.

How is it possible to lose a star rating even if you deserve it?

For instance, a patient may make a subjective negative assessment, let's say 3 stars, of the practice because their wait time was over 20 minutes. Additionally, the patient adds a generic review about why he/she gave you less stars because of the long wait time.

Both the star rating and review create a perception that may not be reflective of the actual experience or even what the patient intended to say. Perhaps the patient was late to the appointment but the wait time did not match their expected wait time so they felt let down and maybe even late for another appointment. The experience is out of your control but the rating and review is in the patients control.

What motivates a patient to leave these reviews? It would be a quick assumption that they are being spiteful and want to harm the practice in some way. Maybe the patient is trying to be helpful by providing feedback indirectly. It's not like they are going to call the practice back and tell the front desk what a poor job they did to manage the wait time even after they were a little late to the appointment. But if that information was public then the practice would read about it and take action.

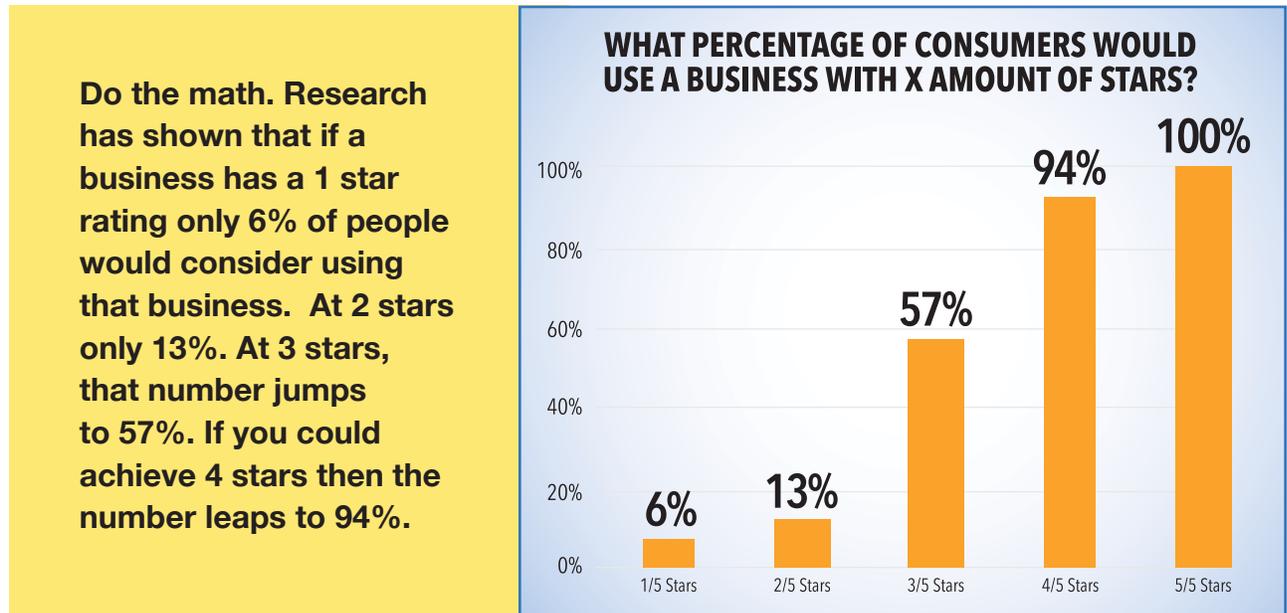
With the popularity of these review sites, it's critical to manage this feedback system. You can't leave it up to unhappy patients, for whatever the reason, to go out and leave their feedback on public review sites. It is important to design the feedback into your process so the patient feels included. When the satisfied patients don't leave detailed, helpful reviews, then your practice(s) are not only losing the reviews you deserve, they are losing the potential volume of traffic of new patients.

This problem/challenge can be overcome if you "qualify" patients so they will take the time to give a substantial positive review and rating for your services—a review that is actually reflective of the service and patient care your practice has delivered.

The question is: *How do you qualify patients to give you 5-star reviews?*

And how do you use the collection of reviews to build a strong patient pipeline for your business?

This report will address the importance of gaining 5-star reviews and how they enable your practice to maintain a strong patient pipeline; the best review sites to target; and the challenges of qualifying patients to share substantial and effective reviews.



[Local Consumer Review Survey 2015]

IMPACT OF REVIEWS ON YOUR PATIENT PIPELINE

I said at the beginning of this report, social media and the proliferation of smartphones have significantly altered consumer behavior. Especially how and where they search and use information.

Over 92%² of consumers trust the aggregate information shared by other consumers on online review sites. They habitually read online reviews about a product and service before making any decisions.

This translates into 62% of patients³ whose first step, when finding a new doctor, is to search online reviews on the doctor and clinic.

Consequently, a majority of the patients and prospective patients are relying on gathering information about you and forming perceptions about your level of service based on the reviews left by other patients on the review sites and platforms.

Even more concerning is the fact that using the review site is not just the first step. About 19% of the surveyed users stated that they used the online reviews for validating their choice before making an appointment. So potential patients are not only using the review sites to short list doctors but also to strike out the ones that they won't visit. Additionally, patients also use the reviews to compare their existing doctors with others.



TAKEAWAY: Your prospective patients and existing patients are using review sites to find, short-list, validate, and compare your services.

How does this work?

Once the patient has short-listed the doctors/clinics, she/he checks how they compare to one another. The only way to do that quantitatively is by comparing the number of 5-star

and negative reviews. Hence, doctors and clinics who have not converted their satisfied patients into actionable 5-star reviews are losing new patients and can potentially erode trust and loyalty of existing patients.

This holds true for patients using online reviews to find doctors across all age groups — 30% for patients aged between 25 and 34 years, and 27% for patients aged 65+⁴.



TAKEAWAY: Online review sites and platforms have become the new, free, and consumer run consultancy. AND people trust them.

Online Reviews Are Driving Market Competitiveness

Did you know nearly 88% of the patients⁵ trust online patient reviews as much as they value any personal recommendations? Additionally, for 72% of the patients, positive reviews were the deciding factor between trusting any local business.

As a result, it was found that a 3-star aggregate review rating dropped the prospects of a business by 43%, as only 57%⁶ of the potential traffic was willing to choose the medical service and make an appointment.



TAKEAWAY: The only way a practice can market its commitment to quality service is by gaining 5-Star ratings from their patients.

Think of it in terms of someone referring your practice to a friend or colleague. A 3-star rating shows that someone is doubtful about the service. It is similar to someone saying “It was good, but if they improve these (1, 2, 3 and so on), it could have been much better”.

The star rating of your practice is becoming the number one factor most consumers will use to judge the level of your service.

Lack of 5-star rating and a less than stellar average rating loses you potential patient traffic, as 26%⁷ of the patients are willing to book an appointment with a doctor who has good online patient reviews, even when it lies outside their insurance coverage network. This shows that quality of treatment is the priority with patients and that online patient reviews have high priority.

Practices that avoid building their new patient pipeline by the lack of emphasis on gaining 5-star reviews from their patients in their marketing strategy will be overwhelmed by local competition online.

This raises the question: Which review platforms should your business target?

Various online review sites are competing for a larger audience — ranging from dedicated portals such as Yelp, Healthgrades, and RateMDs to social media platforms including Facebook and Google.



TAKEAWAY: When finding a new doctor 62% of patients search online reviews on the doctor and clinic.

These platforms cater to different types of reviews. Yelp and Google cater to address-specific businesses so the reviews are focused more on the practice as a whole. Healthgrades and RateMD's cater to reviewing specific providers. Facebook reviews reside on your practice's Facebook page where you have more control.

Targeting all of them can be complex and overwhelming.

However, studies show^{8,9,10} that Yelp caters the largest market share, has the most profound impact for businesses, and drives the most referrals for the healthcare professionals.

Yelp — Why it Should be Central to Your Online Marketing Strategy

According to the research survey, around 22,534 calls are placed everyday from the Yelp mobile site and app.

All of them are directed to medical and health businesses!

Additionally, 30,155¹¹ visits were recorded to medical and health websites — all of them originating from a Yelp business page. This shows that consumers are relying heavily on Yelp as the choice of review site to browse through online reviews to select a doctor.

The study findings further revealed that if Yelp was the only source of reviews about a business, it drove the points around 27%¹² more frequently.



TAKEAWAY: Over 92% of consumers trust the aggregate information shared by other consumers on online review sites.

The Next Step

Once a business recognizes the importance of Yelp reviews for their business, it is essential that they keep all reviews up to date, encourage patients to leave positive feedback and reviews, and diligently monitor all patient reviews to effectively address all forms of negative feedback.

How do you do that?

By assessing, understanding, and re-aligning your marketing strategy.



TAKEAWAY: 22,534 calls are placed everyday from the Yelp website and app to medical and health businesses.

TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR ONLINE REVIEWS

As a medical practice, your first priority in marketing is *attracting new patients*.

The patient experience starts before they ever get to your practice. The data shows that consumers are researching, gathering, analyzing and taking action based upon these online reviews. But you can't ask everyone to leave you a review because you would have no idea whether people would be leaving a positive or negative review. What if you could contact your patient after the appointment and ask a simple question that would help navigate the positive reviews online?

Enter the Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score was introduced in the Harvard Business Review in 2003 and has since become the standard for measuring the loyalty that exists between a provider and a consumer.

Using the simple question: *How likely is it that you would recommend our company/product/service to a friend or colleague?* providers can distinguish their overall level of consumer experience.

Since 2003, extensive research has shown that a business's Net Promoter Score, or NPS Score, can act as an indicator of growth and competitive benchmark. In the health-care services industry, the NPS Score can act as a measurement framework of the overall patient experience.

Using A Single Question for Powerful Results

Based on patient response, Patient Promoter indexes your practices on a scale from -100 to 100 that measures the collective outcome of the experience you are delivering to your patients. This is like taking the blood pressure of the practice. A single score that, when combined with patient feedback, has immediate application to diagnosing how well you are doing at serving your patients.

How likely is it that you would recommend Kids Dental Care to your friends and family?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(Click a number above - 0 least likely, 10 most likely)

Based on their response to this question, patients are grouped into 3 categories:



Promoters
(response is 9-10)

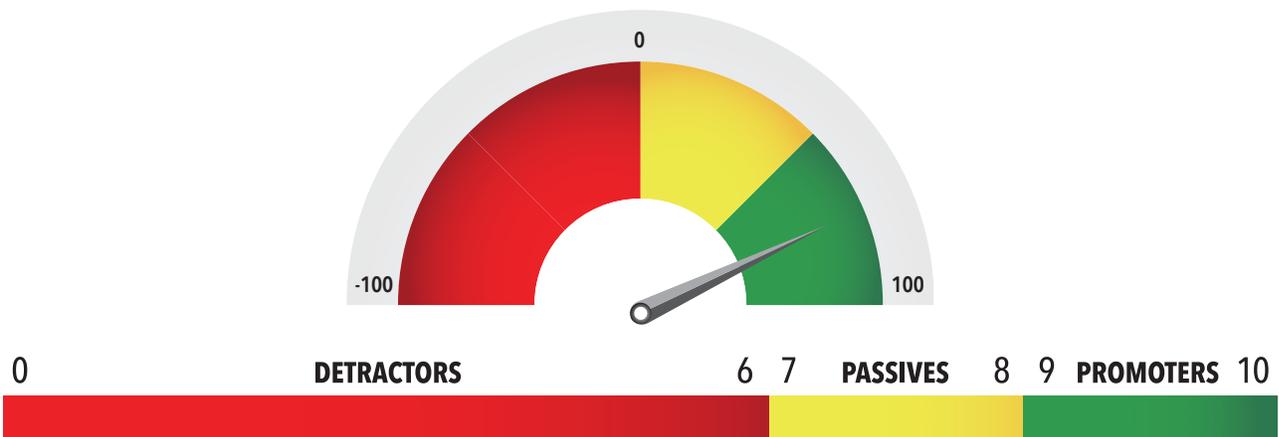


Passives
(response is 7-8)



Detractors
(response is 0-6)

The NPS Score is determined when you take the percentage of Promoters and subtract the percentage of Detractors.



$$\text{NPS}^{\text{®}} = \% \text{ of Promoters} - \% \text{ of Detractors}$$

PROMOTERS (9-10)

Promoters are your raving fans. They have been with you for awhile and have referred their family and friends. They are the most likely to respond favorably to a request for a testimonial.

PASSIVES (7-8)

Passives are satisfied patients who are susceptible to switching practices. They are the patients who say “I really like them but.” Their feedback tends to be helpful operational suggestions that are actionable and the least subjective.

DETRACTORS (0-6)

Detractors are unhappy patients who are most likely to go to online review sites and give you a negative rating and review. The patients have had such an unpleasant experience that they want to tell others to stay away. Their feedback tends to be very emotional and personal, often targeting a specific provider or staff member. Regardless of why they are unhappy, their expectations were not met and they are frustrated and impassioned.

Can We Influence Behavior?

As we’ve covered, your online reviews are too important to leave to chance. You must take deliberate action to get results and manage your online reputation (reflected in your star ratings and online reviews).

We have designed a system using the NPS stem question to segment patients to target the Promoter—the group that is more likely to provide a positive rating and review.



How likely is it that you would recommend Kids Dental Care to your friends and family?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

0-6

Detractors

7-8

Passives

9-10

Promoters

Kids Dental Care

"We're Truly Sorry About That"

Please accept our sincere apology for any trouble or inconvenience we may have caused you.

While we'd like to think we're perfect, we know that's not the case. The greatest advertising we can have is word of mouth from a satisfied patient. We take pride in providing the highest quality of service to our patients and we are disappointed when any patient problem exists.

It is our goal to keep you satisfied and will hope to serve you again in the future. We would appreciate you taking some time and let us know what we must do so that you **would** recommend us to others.

Thank you.

How could we have done better?

Send To Our Team

Kids Dental Care

"Thank You For Your Response!"

Of course, we won't rest until we're the best!

In the box below, please share your experiences at our office. What would have had to happen so that you would recommend us **even more** to others?

Thank you!

How could we have done better?

Send To Our Team

Kids Dental Care

"Thank You For Your Feedback!"

Thank you for taking the time to communicate to us why we did not meet your expectations. We appreciate your loyalty and want to ensure your complete satisfaction.

Again, we highly appreciate your feedback as it will assist us in becoming better at what we do. All responses are kept confidential and anonymous.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Kids Dental Care

Kids Dental Care

"Thank You For Your Feedback!"

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How likely is it that you would recommend Kids Dental Care to your friends and family?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

0-6
Detractors

7-8
Passives

9-10
Promoters

Kids Dental Care

"Thank You For Your Time and Kind Support!"

Your opinion is important to us.

The greatest advertising we can have is word of mouth from a satisfied patient. In the box below, would you please share your experiences at our office so that others can read about us on the web?

Thank you.

Rate & Review

Submit Review

Kids Dental Care

"You Make Us Wanna CELEBRATE!"

Thank you for your review!

Would you mind sharing your experience with others online?

It will only take a few seconds... and it would mean SO MUCH to us and would be tremendously helpful.

Thank you.

"Just COPY Your Review Below"

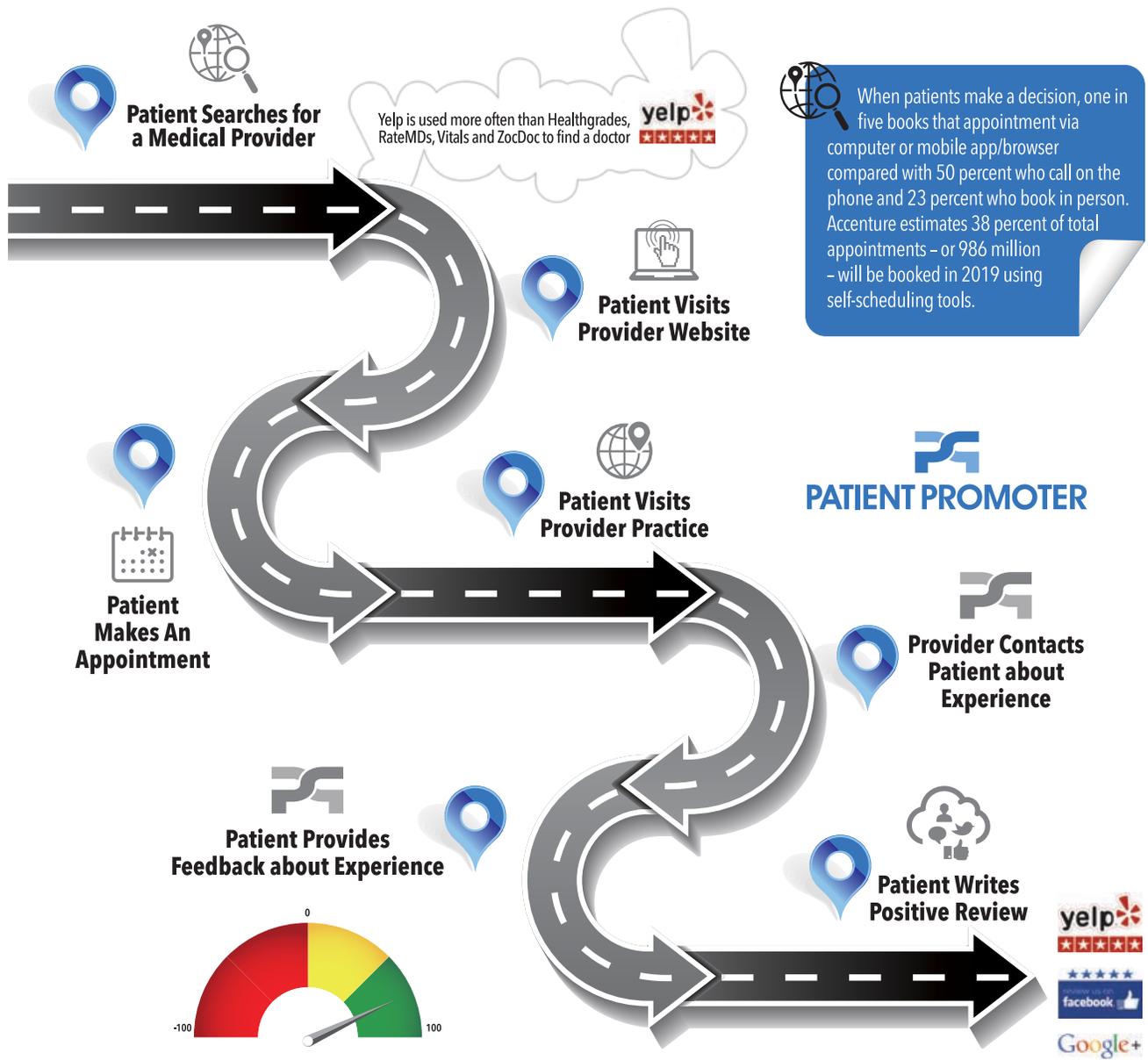
You're awesome!

"Then RATE US At Any Website Below And PASTE"

yelp

Overview of the Patient Journey

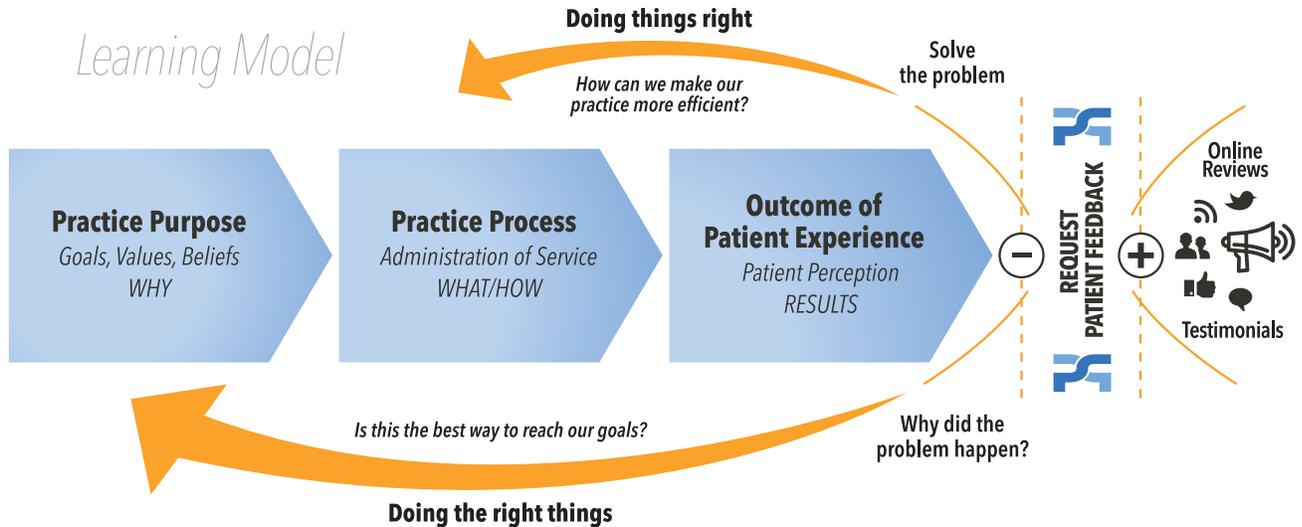
Taking charge of your online reviews and testimonials requires a system designed to provide the results you need. Patient Promoter provides a long term solution to making sure you're only asking the people who are likely to give you a 5-star rating to provide their feedback on review sites.



Advanced Application of Patient Feedback

Patient feedback can be a powerful tool for practice development. Listening to the voice of the patients and seeing things through their eyes can provide a method for uncovering process errors and unpleasant truths of the practice. When you listen to patients, great things happen. The path to uncovering areas for service improvement starts with giving your patients a voice.

WHEN YOU LISTEN TO PATIENTS, GREAT THINGS HAPPEN.



Tip: Print off feedback report and talk frankly with staff about the feedback patients are providing. Stick to an objective discussion free of names or blame and focus on a discussion about quality, process, and service.

NOTES

¹ Ranging from dedicated portals such as Yelp, Healthgrades, and RateMDs to social media platforms including Facebook and Google

² Local Consumer Review Survey 2015 - <https://www.brightlocal.com/learn/local-consumer-review-survey/>

³ Patient Use of Online Reviews 2013

⁴ Patient Use of Online Reviews 2013

⁵ Local Consumer Review Survey 2014

⁶ Local Consumer Review Survey 2015

⁷ Patient Use of Online Reviews 2013 - <http://www.softwareadvice.com/resources/how-your-patients-use-online-reviews/>

⁸ Impact of a 5 Star Yelp Review on a Company - <http://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/110415/impact-5star-yelp-review-company.asp>

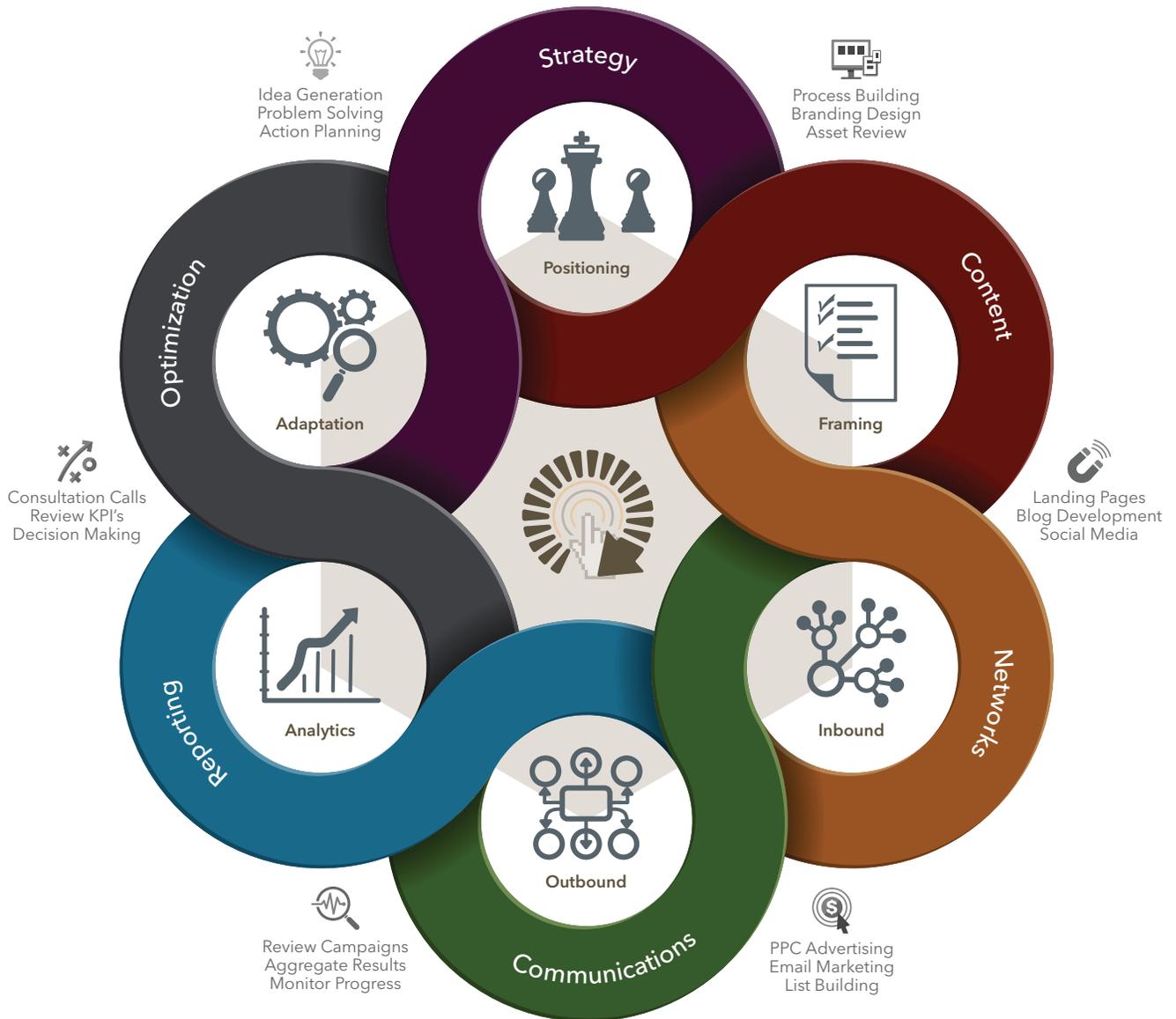
⁹ New Study Reinforces the Value of Yelp for Businesses - <http://officialblog.yelp.com/2012/09/new-study-reinforces-the-value-of-yelp-for-businesses.html>

¹⁰ Yelp is # 1 Choice for Finding Doctors - <https://www.patientpromoter.com/yelp-is-1-choice-for-finding-doctors/>

¹¹ Yelp is # 1 Choice for Finding Doctors - <https://www.patientpromoter.com/yelp-is-1-choice-for-finding-doctors/>

¹² New Study Reinforces the Value of Yelp for Businesses - <http://officialblog.yelp.com/2012/09/new-study-reinforces-the-value-of-yelp-for-businesses.html>

Medical Practice Marketing System



88% of consumers who search for a type of local business on a mobile device call or go to that business within 24 hours. *SME Website Statistics. February 27 2014. Rareform New Media.*

Online Marketing Since 1996

The difference between success and failure. One click.

Net One Click provides full service outsourced marketing services to small to midsize medical practices. Our Platform Marketing System focuses on strategic development of core assets that provide our clients with a unique competitive advantage to develop, engage, and acquire patients for life.

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