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eBook

3 Trends Impacting Healthcare Digital Marketers in 2020

Foreword

A forward from **Patric Wiesmann** Managing Director and General Manager, Healthcare & Life Sciences at Reputation.com.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented strain on U.S. health systems and practitioners, pushing them to innovate and adapt quickly to what appears to be the new normal for the foreseeable future. Faced with this health crisis, healthcare organizations must accelerate adoption of digital tools and strategies, and communicate more effectively and authentically with patients and local communities. Collecting and analyzing feedback about experiences at your facilities in real-time and across channels will be essential to learning how to best serve patients now and in the coming months.

To accelerate digital transformation, healthcare organizations must implement the right technology and resources, and they must change the way they go about attracting, acquiring and retaining patients. In this whitepaper, we explore how your organization can adapt to the current environment, meet the evolving needs of healthcare consumers and capitalize on the new patient customer journey. You'll learn:

- **Digital transformation is no longer optional.** Faced with this health crisis, healthcare organizations must accelerate adoption of digital tools and strategies. For example, many health systems are guiding patients to telehealth services to reduce strain on ERs as well as prevent symptomatic patients from spreading the virus in healthcare facilities. And an increase in social media activity and online communications requires an emphasis on managing online communications, via social listening and responding, or location and provider web pages.

- **As the pandemic unfolds, patient experience management is necessary to understand and meet consumer's needs, especially now.** New information is available daily, and much of it is being learned on the fly, as patients contract the virus and come in for treatment. Collecting and

analyzing omnichannel feedback about experiences at your facilities in real-time will be essential to learning how to best serve patients now and in the coming months.

- **Finally, cross-organizational synergy and collaboration is more critical than ever.** We are all working together to better understand how to fight COVID-19, deliver the best-possible care to those with the virus and their families, and prevent further spread. Only by working together and across the organization can we ensure we're armed with the right tools and strategies to meet these challenges with confidence and at scale.

The COVID-19 crisis is pushing health systems to innovate and adapt quickly to what appears will be the new normal for the foreseeable future. Digital transformation initiatives must be accelerated, and that requires making sure the right technology and digital solutions — and the right resources — are in place.

If your staff is at capacity with the increased inquiries, we can assist you by managing your Google listings and social media activity on your behalf. Our industry-specific experts are at the ready to help you meet the needs of your customers. Please visit our COVID-19 microsite for more resources and information.

Sincerely,

Patric Wiesmann
Managing Director and General Manager
Healthcare & Life Sciences at Reputation.com

Digital Strategies for Effective COVID-19 Communications

Communicating effectively with patients and local communities about your response to COVID-19 (the coronavirus) ensures access to the information they need and eases strain on your staff. Here are some useful tips for leveraging digital tools and strategies during this time:

- **Local search and business listings:** Update the business descriptions in your Google My Business (GMB) listings to include information about COVID-19, as well as links to relevant resources on your website. Add Google posts that appear prominently within your GMB listing and in search results. Mark locations as "Temporarily Closed" if appropriate to mitigate the chances of patients showing up to locations that are closed.

- **Social media platforms:** Set up social listening to monitor conversations and respond to concerns. Remove inaccurate posts from the community to keep them from being shared widely, and use the "pinned" post/tweet feature to ensure the most important information stays prominent. Create pre-approved response templates for all social communications, to simplify and reduce the need for time-consuming, one-off responses to common inquiries.

- **Your website:** Update your website with prominent messaging and ensure that all pages, including provider and location pages, are consistent up to date. Consider creating a dedicated COVID-19 page with relevant information and resources, and enable linking from social media and Google posts. If you provide online chat, make sure your chat provider has current messaging and updated scripts.

- **Scheduling tools and telehealth:** Consider removing online scheduling capability from your website to discourage healthy people from showing up at your facilities without calling first. Provide information about telehealth options for non-emergencies.

Reputation.com offers resources for helping you communicate effectively with patients and local communities during the COVID-19 crisis. Visit www.reputation.com/covid-19/ for more information.
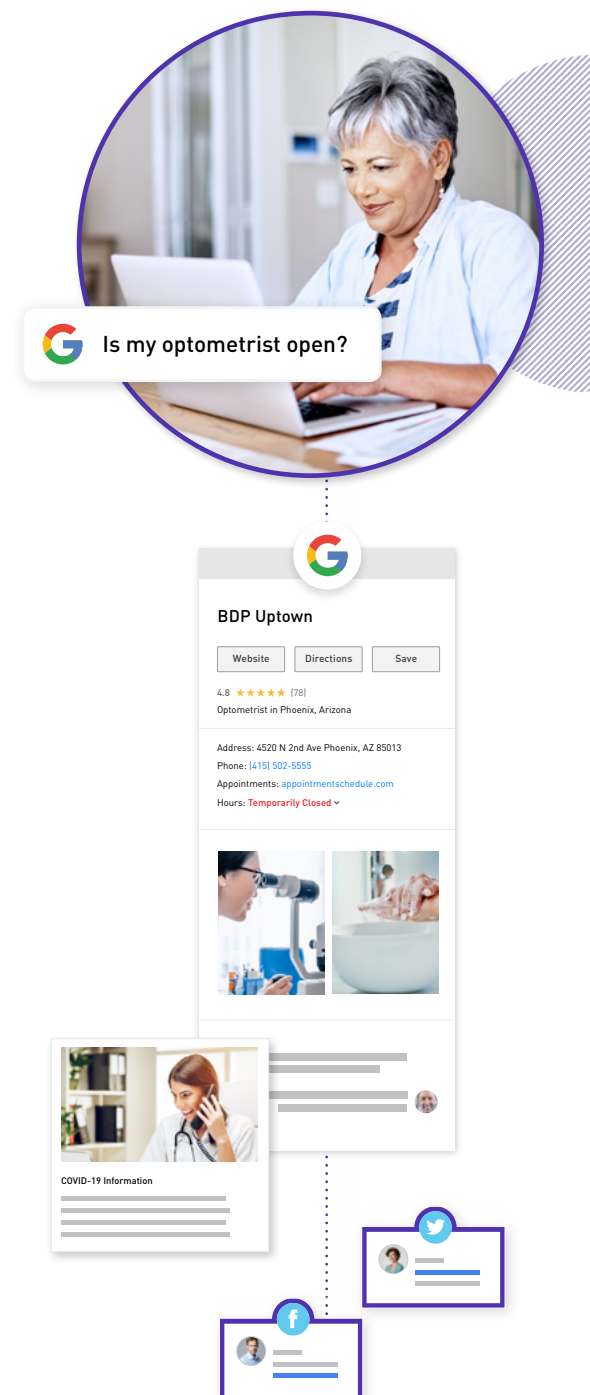
The Age of Consumerism in Healthcare

A New Reality

Historically, the term "consumerism" has been associated with retail. It emerged early in the twentieth century to describe the rising interest among Americans to attain goods and services in ever-increasing amounts, and advertisers and merchants caught on fast.

Only in recent years has the idea of consumerism taken hold in the healthcare industry. Escalating insurance premiums and higher plan deductibles mean patients are responsible for a much larger portion of their healthcare costs and are therefore more invested in researching and choosing the best possible options for care.

81%

81% of healthcare leaders said improving customer experience is a high priority.

— Kaufman Hall

Not only are healthcare consumers more informed about their choices, they're more informed about their health. Self-diagnosis is common, because information about any condition or illness is readily available online. Most patients already have an idea of what their symptoms mean before they schedule an appointment, and they're more likely to question a doctor's opinions and treatment recommendations. They can now research and validate referrals rather than just blindly follow a doctor's advice. Ultimately, patients are much more willing and able to change doctors if they feel the patient experience is subpar.

With an increasing awareness of their economic and decision-making power, consumers now have the same expectations of healthcare organizations and practitioners as they do of businesses in other industries.

Patients Demand Cost Transparency as Healthcare Costs Skyrocket

According to eHealth, in the U.S., the average monthly health insurance premium is $440 for individuals and $1,168 for families. Deductibles are also increasing, prompting consumers to demand transparency into healthcare costs. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) introduced new guidance for hospitals to disclose prices in consumer-friendly, digital formats. These will include negotiated discounted prices that hospitals agree upon with insurers.

How do healthcare organizations respond to evolving expectations and meet the needs of today's increasingly informed and discerning consumers?

This ebook examines three trends impacting the healthcare industry and paving the way for health systems and practitioners to embrace consumerism in healthcare and meet the high expectations of today's healthcare consumers.

In this ebook, we explore three key trends:

- Digital transformation is an imperative for today's health systems.

- Healthcare organizations are moving beyond CAHPS to understand and improve PX.

- Customer relationship, patient experience and reputation management have merged.

1 Digital transformation is an imperative for today's health systems.

Across nearly every industry "digital transformation" has become a buzzword, underpinning the investments organizations are making to implement digital technologies that replace slow, manual processes. Healthcare organizations are no exception, and leaders in this industry are leveraging digital strategies to improve patient care and experience, comply with regulations, protect sensitive patient data, manage costs and compete more effectively.

Although healthcare organizations have traditionally struggled with digital transformation, a new wave of healthcare-specific tech startups as well as tech giants such as Google are helping to change that.

For example, in late 2019, Mayo Clinic forged a decade-long strategic partnership with Google to adopt advanced cloud computing and AI-powered analytics — the first time a major health system has taken steps to migrate its EHR platform to the cloud. Other digital transformation initiatives that healthcare leaders are beginning to implement include telemedicine, AI-enabled medical devices and blockchain electronic health records.

Why Digital Transformation?

Assuming the quality of care is consistent, health systems and practitioners must set themselves apart by providing an exceptional patient experience, from the initial search to post-care follow-up. Convenience and easy access to care must be top of mind; removing any barrier to finding and choosing you is an essential first step to attracting and converting new business. Digital technologies are critical to meeting these objectives and providing patients with the convenience and transparency they demand.

Strategic initiatives should incorporate plans for:

- Accurate, detailed business listings that rank high in search

- Fast, easy access to relevant healthcare content and information

- Online booking from search results and directories

- Mobile access and capabilities

- Online bill pay and live chat

- Alternative care options such as telehealth, virtual visits and same-day appointments

- Systems for engaging with patients and healthcare consumers on review sites and social media — an essential aspect to building reputation and trust

- Integrated ticketing systems that enable operations staff to act quickly to address issues

As healthcare organizations begin to implement these new digital capabilities, choosing the right technology solutions — systems that can scale effectively, meet regulatory requirements and enable staff to get up and running quickly — will be critical. Multiple point solutions can result in high operational costs and integration nightmares, whereas an integrated platform that satisfies many of these needs can eliminate risk and implementation roadblocks, while helping organizations keep costs under control.
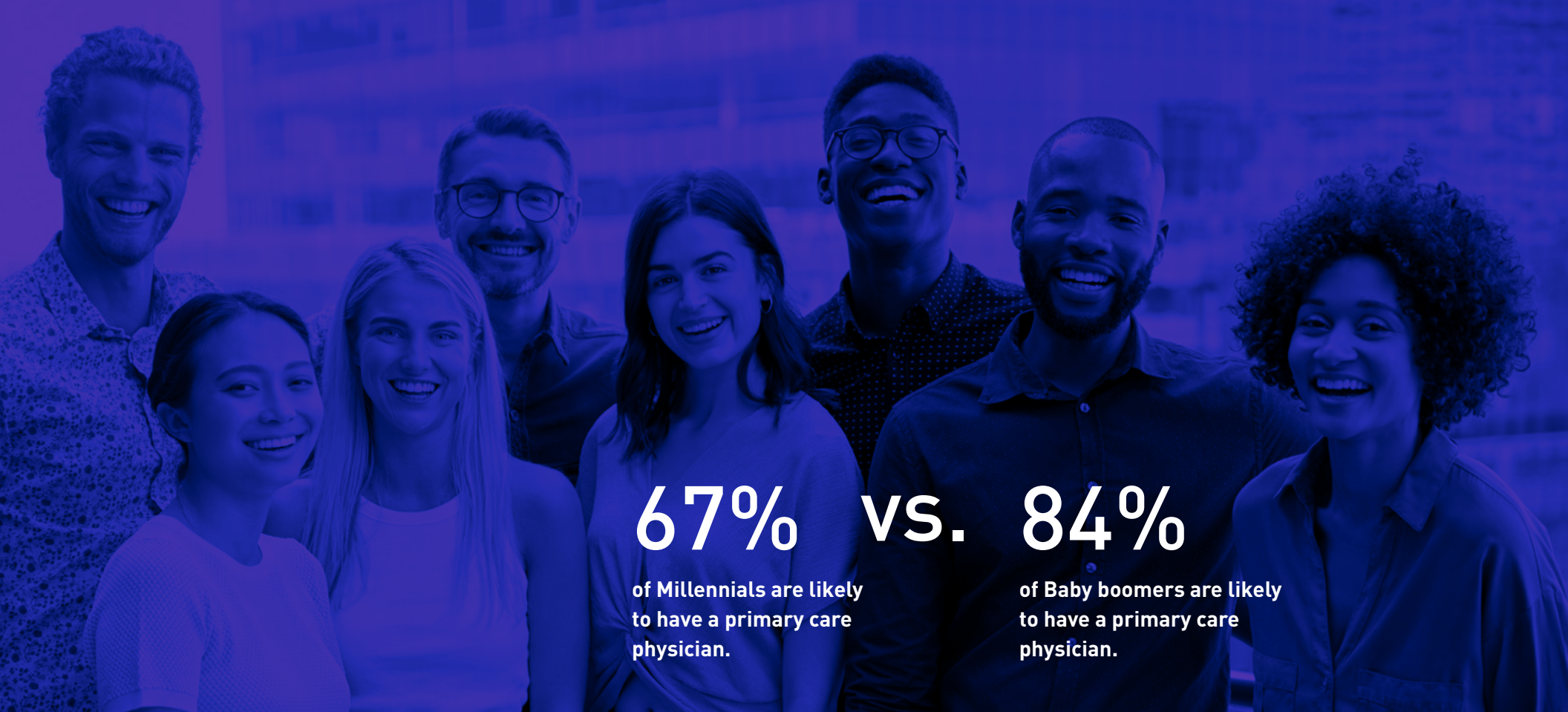
67% vs. 84%

of Millennials are likely to have a primary care physician.

of Baby boomers are likely to have a primary care physician.

Younger Consumers Expect More

According to Accenture's 2019 Digital Health Consumer Survey, Millennial and Gen Z consumers are dissatisfied with many aspects of patient care, ranging from the convenience of a provider's location to transparency about care.

Accenture's Survey also found that younger consumers are less likely to have a primary care physician — only 67% compared to 84% of Baby Boomers — **which means that health systems and practitioners will need to meet their expectations in order to earn their business.**

2 Healthcare organizations are moving beyond CAHPS to understand and improve PX.

We want to hear about your experience!

How easy was it to obtain an appointment?

1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10

Historically, health systems have used Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey scores to assess patients' experiences. Publishing CAHPS scores on a physician's directory page satisfies organizational initiatives for transparency and helps consumers make informed decisions about where to go for care.

Although CAHPS surveys are valuable for helping to evaluate clinical measures of care quality, they fall short in their ability to assess the entire patient experience. Aspects of care that extend beyond the patient-physician encounter — such as staff interactions, parking, convenience and more — are not measured by CAHPS surveys. Additional drawbacks to relying solely on CAHPS survey results to demonstrate care quality include:

- **Assessment methods are behind the times.** Most CAHPS surveys are still conducted via live phone interviews or on paper.

- **Response rates are low.** Response rates are less than 5%, making results inconclusive.

- **Results are delayed.** CAHPS surveys are typically administered after significant time has passed since the patient interaction, so feedback is delayed and less detailed, as the experience may no longer be fresh in the patient's mind.

- **Feedback is not actionable.** Physicians may receive feedback several weeks after the care is delivered, and are less likely to take any action.

Inconsistencies Create Distrust

In addition to these drawbacks, high CAHPS scores could be misleading, particularly if there is a major discrepancy between the scores and reviews left on third-party sites such as Google or Healthgrades. An inconsistency between CAHPS scores and online reviews could create doubt and distrust among potential patients.

CAHPS + Online Reviews Provides a 360°
View of PX

Consumers are increasingly looking to third-party reviews and ratings before selecting providers. Nearly 80% of consumers report using online reviews as a first step to seeking a provider, while 16% use them to validate the choice of a doctor they've chosen. And, almost half (47%) would go out-of-network for a doctor who has more favorable reviews versus a similarly qualified in-network doctor.

Given these statistics, publishing patient satisfaction (i.e. CAHPS) scores on your website is not enough. Requesting and managing third-party reviews — and publishing them alongside CAHPS scores — is the only way to provide consumers a 360° view of the quality of care you deliver. It also builds credibility and patient trust, and provides healthcare consumers all the information they need to make a decision about where to go for care.

More Reviews = Higher Rankings

+266% Click-through rates

A greater number of recent reviews improves search engine rankings. Reputation.com research revealed that just 10 new reviews can move a healthcare provider's business listing on Google from page 2 to page 1, and an additional 50 reviews can increase click-through rates by as much as 266%.
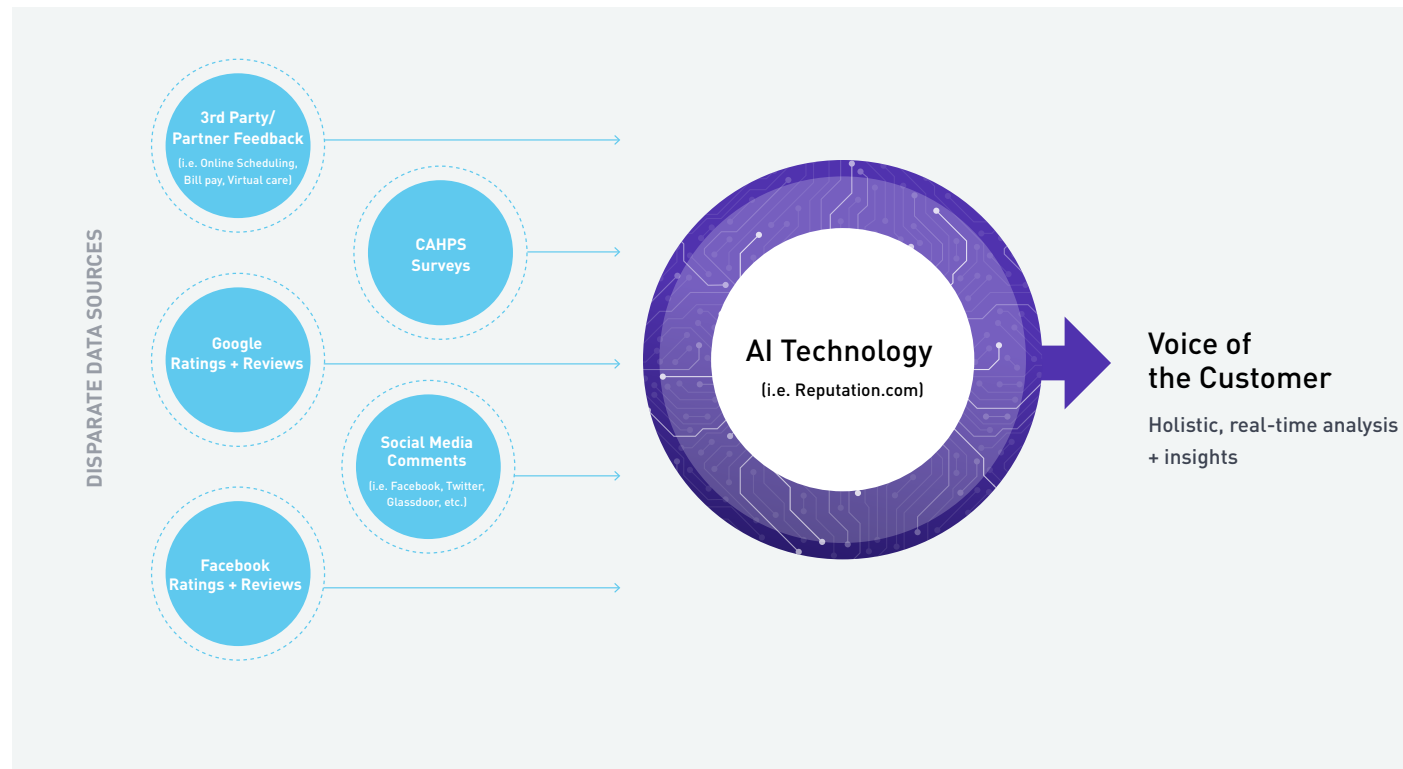
Why High Rankings Matter

70% Use Google to Find a Doctor

Ranking high in Google search results is an essential part of a healthcare organization's marketing strategy. More than 70% of consumers favor Google Maps when looking for doctors, and Google is used 52% of the time when looking for healthcare listings information. The vast majority of healthcare searches are non-branded, as well, meaning people aren't looking for a specific health system or doctor's name. Only 15% of healthcare consumers go directly to a provider's website when looking for care.

Actionable Insights Lead to Targeted Improvements

In addition to helping health systems and physicians attract and convert new patients, reviews provide critical information that can help elevate patient experience. Health systems are relying on natural language processing platforms to begin to understand sentiment around their brands, service lines and doctors, and with advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning, they can analyze the unstructured data in reviews, surveys and social commentary at scale to uncover actionable insights.

DISPARATE DATA SOURCES

3rd Party/ Partner Feedback
(i.e. Online Scheduling, Bill pay, Virtual care)

CAHPS Surveys

Google Ratings + Reviews

Social Media Comments
(i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Glassdoor, etc.)

Facebook Ratings + Reviews

AI Technology
(i.e. Reputation.com)

Voice of the Customer

Holistic, real-time analysis + insights

These insights can be used to make targeted PX and operational improvements that help increase patient retention and revenue, while reducing costs.
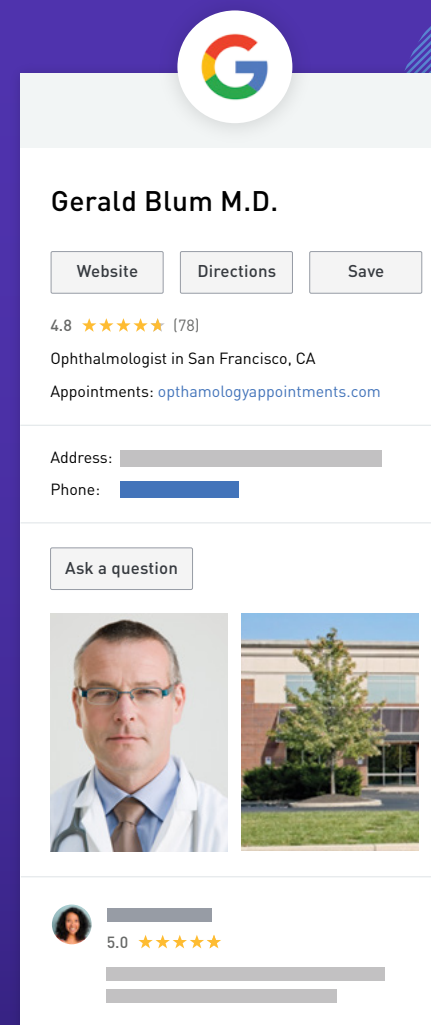
3 Customer relationship, patient experience and reputation management have merged.

Historically, patient experience management efforts have been managed by hospital operations teams, who primarily used CAHPS scores to gauge sentiment and identify potential PX issues. However, in the Feedback Economy, patient feedback exists outside of CAHPS scores, and more can be learned from collecting and analyzing "data in the wild" — the unfiltered, unstructured feedback patients provide on review sites and social platforms. Mining data and insights from these sources requires a different skillset and approach. As such, new roles such as Director of Reputation Management have emerged in healthcare settings.

The Feedback Economy has also impacted the way health systems and practitioners attract and retain patients, rendering traditional means of relationship management insufficient. Optimizing Google properties — Google Listings, Google Maps, Knowledge Panels and Q&As — and focusing on other aspects of reputation management such as reviews and ratings is now vitally important to improving patient relations.

But analyzing and taking action on patient feedback across all sources will require cross-functional teams to work closely together. Operations and patient relationship management teams must now work closely with reputation management professionals, who are knowledgeable about reviews and social media management, and can put in place the technologies to execute effectively on these strategies.
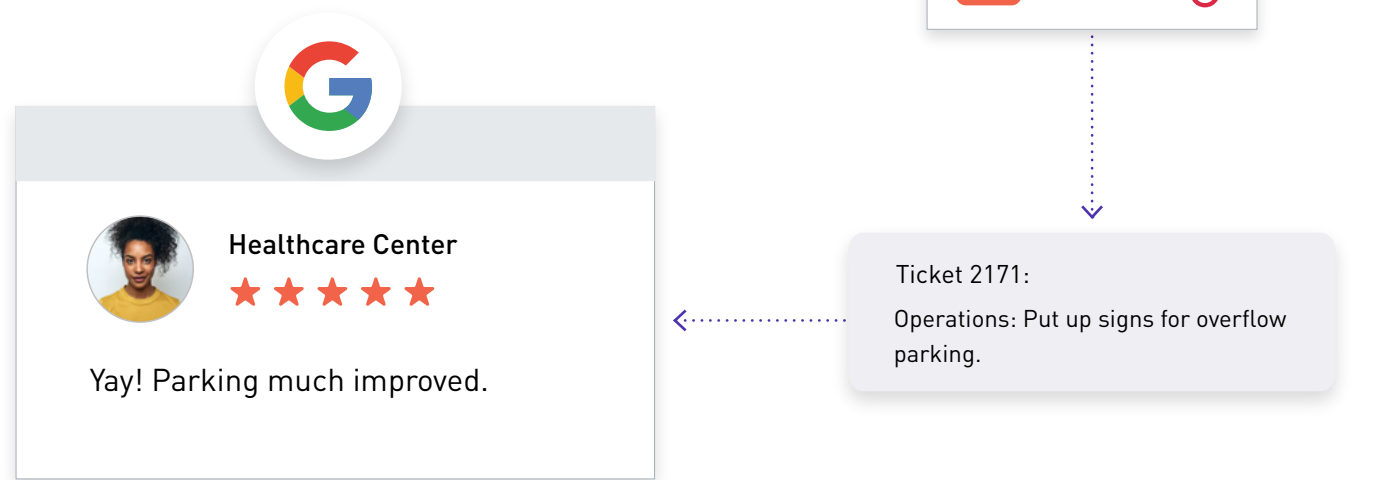
Gerald Blum M.D.

| Website | Directions | Save |

4.8 ★★★★★ (78)

Ophthalmologist in San Francisco, CA
Appointments: opthamologyappointments.com

Address:
Phone:

Ask a question

5.0 ★★★★★

67% of consumers lose trust in a business when there's inaccurate information on a location or physician listing.

More Effective Together

Tight integration across CRM and reputation management platforms will facilitate the sharing of actionable insights, where feedback analysis informs next steps for operations staff. For example, online customer feedback about parking issues at a hospital or clinic location can be shared with operations staff, who can then take action to hang signs or expand parking lots. Together, these teams can work to create a better overall PX that takes into consideration factors not covered in CAHPS scores, resulting in the ability to drive more business and revenue.

To enable this new synergy between the three previously separate disciplines, health systems need integrated platforms. Point solutions for CXM, reputation management and ticketing create roadblocks for the seamless flow of actionable data. A full-service, integrated platform enables all teams to tap into the same information and act faster to improve PX.

Healthcare Center
★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Could not find parking :(I was late for my appt.

Create Ticket
Ticket 2171

Category

Operations ✓

SEND

Ticket 2171:

Operations: Put up signs for overflow parking.

Healthcare Center
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Yay! Parking much improved.

Capitalize on the Trends

Consumerism in healthcare is here to stay and will continue to influence the way people find and choose where to seek care. To succeed, health systems and physicians must lean into this trend, take necessary steps to meet patients where they are, and provide timely access to the information and resources healthcare consumers need:

- **Optimize your Google listings.** Be prepared for the continued rise in no-click searches by having complete, accurate, rich Google properties that help you engage with healthcare consumers and tell your brand story. Actively request Google reviews to help improve your rankings and drive patient acquisition and retention.

- **Tune into "Data in the Wild".** Neglecting to monitor your reviews and social media would be an enormous mistake — and a missed opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to your patients and local communities and their experience with your organization. Use available tools and technologies to help you request, monitor and respond to reviews, and engage in digital conversations at scale. This will help you pinpoint problem areas as well as strengths, and take action to address any issues and concerns.

- **Take the platform approach to ORM and PX management.** Scalability will be critical as you develop and execute your online reputation and PX management strategies. Rather than cobbling together multiple point solutions over time, start with a modular platform that has everything you'll need and is built to scale — listings and directory management, reviews, ticketing, surveys, social media, and analytics and reporting are essential capabilities.

"Near Me" Search   Local 3-Pack   Knowledge Panel   Relevant Action   Arrival Onsite
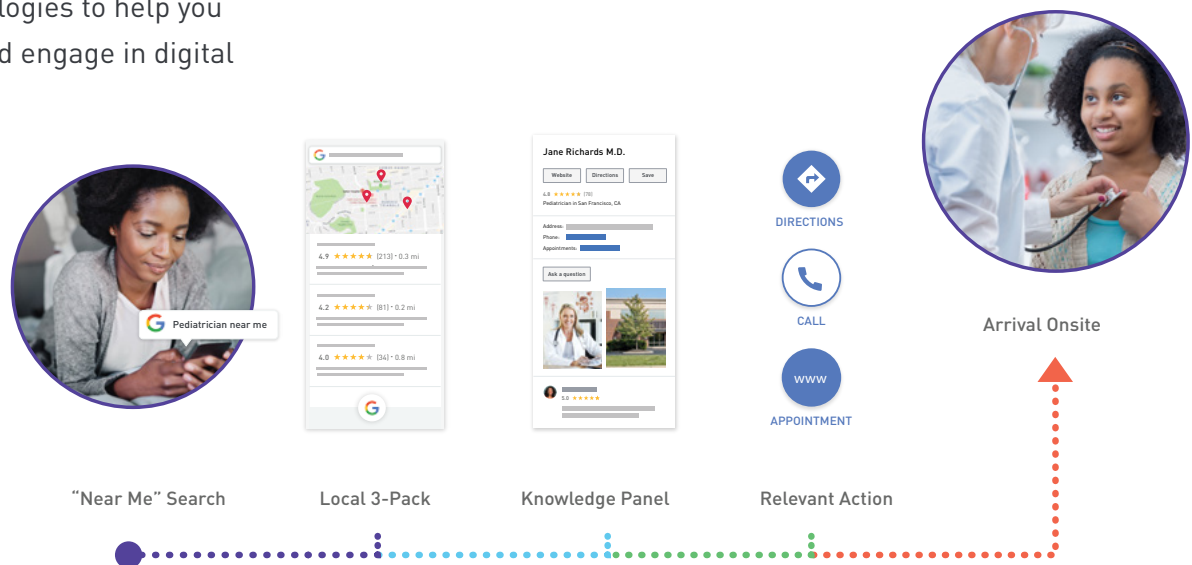
About Reputation.com

Reputation.com pioneered the online reputation management (ORM) category. We continue to lead the charge with the only proven, unified CX and online reputation management platform, and innovative, customer-driven solutions. Our SaaS-based platform manages tens of millions of consumer reviews and consumer interactions across hundreds of thousands of touchpoints. The patented algorithms behind Reputation Score are based on more than a decade of deep machine-learning and data science expertise, providing businesses with a reliable index of brand performance that they can use to make targeted CX improvements — and increase their ability to get found, get chosen and get better.
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Get Found. Get Chosen. Get Better.™