

The Dos and Don'ts of Responding to Online Reviews

Overview

A strong online presence is essential to maintaining a thriving business and responding to online reviews is a key element of that presence—what's often called “online reputation management,” or ORM.

Understanding how to appropriately respond within the parameters of privacy laws can be nuanced, and we recommend that practices engage the help of experts to manage their online presence to avoid liability. At the very least, practices should appoint a designated individual to respond to all online reviews using only templates for responses. For example:

- **Related to positive reviews:** “Thank you for taking the time to leave us a review!” or “We appreciate the positive feedback!”
- **Related to negative reviews:** “At our medical practice, we strive to provide the highest levels of patient satisfaction. However, we cannot discuss specific situations due to patient privacy regulations. If you are a patient and have questions or concerns, please contact us directly at [phone number].”

Top dos and don'ts of ORM

DO

- Appoint a designated individual to respond to online reviews
- Respond as soon as possible
- Investigate negative feedback
- Follow up—negative reviews should trigger a prompt and direct phone call, but never back-and-forth on the online review platform
- Contact external experts before posting any response deviating from the language used in the above templates

DON'T

- Be defensive—don't let emotion play a part in responses
- Respond to specifics
 - Do not mention the practice or the patient's name
 - Do not even remotely infer or confirm that the review relates to a patient of the practice
 - Do not mention details that could identify the patient
 - Do not acknowledge that the practice was involved in the treatment that is the subject of the review
- Pay for positive reviews
 - Do not engage with any services that offer paid reviews or practice review “gating” (soliciting feedback and only directing those who had positive experiences to leave a public review)

By the numbers

90% of people use online reviews to evaluate physicians



7/10 patients use online reviews as the first step to finding a new doctor

More information

To learn more about online reputation management and the ways that Curi can help you protect and enhance your online presence using our Arrowlytics platform, reach out to one of our experts at Curi Advisory by calling 800.662.7917.