Five Secrets for Responding to Negative Criticism

Provided by Einstein Medical*

1. Stay cool.

Think, “what would the Fonz do?” Then do that. It’s just not the end of the world. Nobody bats a thousand…people understand you can get bad reviews. You can improve. You can work on this. You can make it better. Don’t freak out. There’s not that much competition under your name. You can get good information out there under your name. Most reputation management issues start with a search for your name and you don’t like the result. Your whole practice is not going to crumble. You’re going to be able to take care of this.

2. Don’t get defensive and respond online.

Some people are just ragers; they’re just angry people. Don’t get sucked into communicating online with someone. It’s a dead end. You’re just giving the thing legs and fanning the flames for the search engines to pick up on a developing story. If a review that’s only three lines long is well cataloged, think how well a review with your 20 line long response will catalog. You’re just improving the search engine optimization of that thing by responding to it.

3. Get it offline ASAP.

Basically, don’t respond to anything online unless it’s positive. Take it offline as soon as you can; don’t let the conversation live in perpetuity on the web. Don’t even send an email. Call on the phone. Get a human-to-human interaction. Evaluate the problem and address it. If you screwed up you need to hit it head on. If the person is really crazy, you might need to let it go. The sooner you get them offline, the sooner you can diffuse it. Communication is the root of all reputation management issues. The sooner you can get it offline, the sooner you’re on your way to addressing it.

4. Have a plan.

The Air Force has a department that’s devoted to damage control. They want to have great information out there about the Air Force and they see negative information as a form of terrorism, just like you.
Isn’t it interesting that everyone is dealing with this issue? Look how the Air Force has planned to handle all types of comments: “Trolls and ragers” – Just monitor the situation. If they’re misguided, fix the problem. If they’re unhappy, look for reasonable resolution. If it’s a positive online post, agree with it. You can want to give that legs by saying, “Hey, thanks! We appreciate that!” When you find something positive, stroke it. This is a great example of planning your strategy BEFORE you have a situation. It’s a great idea.

5 Let it go.

There’s very little you can do with a bad post, really. There’s nothing that can be said or done short of calling that person up and getting it offline. Most any response is just going to allow the situation to get bigger and bigger. No one has perfect reviews. Don’t feed into the hype; you’re better off to just let it go. You’re better off setting good systems in place to deal with unhappy patients before it gets this far down the path. People are First Amendment protected; if someone wants to do it, they can do it. You need to have good systems in place to deal with the truly unhappy patient and if you find a bad review, don’t work on that. Let it go. Work on more positive info.

Interested in learning more?
Contact the experts at Einstein Medical.
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