

## 5 Steps for Managing Your Reputation Online

Do you want patients to be able to post reviews of you and your practice online? We have some news. They're probably already doing it. In fact, Yelp, the primary vehicle for online reviews, [recently produced an advertisement](#) about a dental practice.

After accepting that reviews are a part of operating any kind of business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what can you do? With some help from the [ADA Practical Guide to Internet Marketing](#), here are five steps for managing your reputation online:

### Step 1 – Review Your Online Reputation

The first step in online reputation management is finding out what's been said about your dental practice. Go ahead and do a Google search of your name and practice, and note any reviews listed on the first three pages. And to make sure you're up to date on anything posted about you, set up email alerts about your name and practice name at [Google.com/Alerts](http://Google.com/Alerts).

### Step 2 – Claim and Complete Your Business Profiles

According to Yelp, the best way to manage your practice on the site is by claiming your Yelp Business Page and creating a business login. Learn more about why you should claim your business page at [Biz.Yelp.com](http://Biz.Yelp.com). And [claim your business on Google](#), too.

### Step 3 – Develop a Plan for Responding to Negative Reviews

While it may seem difficult, with a little creativity and out-of-the-box thinking, you can have a positive impact on your online reputation. But what about those negative reviews? Usually these situations call for a less is more strategy. If you choose to respond, be sympathetic and courteous and thank the reviewer for their feedback. You can also offer a phone number for them to call your practice directly. Responding to negative reviews is an opportunity to rebuild trust with the reviewer, as well as cement your reputation as a reasonable and caring professional to others who may read the review.

When commenting, remember that you are legally obligated to protect your patient's information, and the patient's posting does not waive their privacy-related rights.

### Step 4 – Create a Strategy for Gaining New, Positive Reviews

More people will take time to complain than to compliment, so as part of managing your online reputation, you should consider asking your patients to post online reviews about their experience in your practice. Saying something like, "I just want to thank you for letting me be your dentist. If you like being my patient, leave me a review online" can go a long way.

### **Step 5 – Manage Your Staff**

The most proactive way to manage your online reputation is by managing how your team interacts with patients offline. Train your team members to identify the signs of unhappy, frustrated or scared patients. Teach your staff how to diplomatically deal with those uncomfortable situations so patients feel respected and content. Oftentimes, discontented patients present a great opportunity. Going above and beyond to please an unhappy patient can result in the best word of mouth—or online—testimonials.

For more information, see the [ADA Practical Guide to Internet Marketing](#).