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Character and Reputation: Have they Harmed Your Brand?

Drew Stevens, PhD

"Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing." - Abraham Lincoln

Doctors of chiropractic are similar to any product or service. Doctors, their staff and their practices have a brand and a reputation, and like all products or services that brand must be protected. Brands offer instant recognition and identification. They are also promise consistent reliable standards of quality, size or even psychological attraction. Several national and regional surveys typically illustrate that consumers choose a brand not because of price but simply name alone! People will make a purchase and choose a doctor solely for brand value.

The value of a brand is that consumers will purchase for the brand's own sake and not with the usual amount of analysis, cynicism or caution. A brand creates a response among the public. Think of brands that you use that create eponymous communication. When you want to copy you Xerox. When you require a personal computer you purchase IBM or Dell. And, if you thirst, you desire Coke. These responses create emotion and get the public to act. Branding is more about the perception of excellent than about the perception of a good deal. This holds true for services just like doctors.



A brand is harmed by illicit information. And, with the array of electronic content in today's world, negative press can instantly and immeasurably harm brands. Presently, doctors must be involved with a new process known as reputation management to aid in protecting their brand and ensuring that prospective patients find you.

Reputation Management

The use of the Internet is outstanding, with more than 670 million webpages and more than 33% of the world's population now engaged online. Prospective patients are now utilizing search engines to find new doctors while conducting a tremendous amount of research to determine if that doctor's brand matches with the consumer's value. In addition to the myriad of websites, there exists numerous places such as forums, Twitter, Facebook and many other platforms where your existing patients are placing positive and negative comments about your services. True, false or indifferent, these digital footprints are available throughout the Internet and can cast a grave on your practice.

Reputation management is a technique that trolls the Internet securing the negative comments. Reputation management is meant to decrease any negative press so that the public relations of the practice are not tarnished. In effect, reputation management is nothing more than an electronic form of public relations.

Is It Worth It?

A proactive approach requires doctors and staff to monitor the web on a regular basis. With well over 2000 patients seen per year, and many of those calling the front desk but not making appointments,

there it's simply too many entry points that create bad press. Additionally, the World Wide Web has also created a revolution of individuals that dispense negative information online that would never be said to you personally. However, what gets printed gets repeated. And with more than 1 billion searches per day, these negative ratings, comments or even thoughts can harm your brand.

For example, I am certain that everyone reading this article has made use of Amazon to some degree. Amazon, as many know, is a broker of goods and services to consumers that want them. Many products are sold on Amazon such as books, music and even movies. With each one, there is a comment area so that readers or listeners can allow others to understand what they've enjoyed and not about the particular product or service. Herein lies the question, how many products have you refrained from because of another reviewer's comments whether they were truthful or not? This then is similar in your world.

How to Begin

The first step in any successful campaign is simply utilizing a search engine such as Google or Yahoo and research your own name. Simply enter your first and last name into the search bar and begin to review the sites that allow comments. Determine for yourself what existing and prospective patients are saying about you and staff. By the way, this is a tremendous way to also mystery shop your practice.

Now all this seems practical, but there is also the idea that you're very busy seeing patients and don't have the time. If this is true, then it is always helpful to hire a reputation management company, a social media management company or even an Internet virtual assistant that continually monitors the web for such activity. While the prices are altered based upon the experience and level of sophistication, the fee invested will be better than the lost opportunities.

What many doctors fail to realize is that their name and their practice is a brand. Based upon services offered, customer service and other nuances, there is value placed in the customer's mind. It is this positioning that creates an emotional appeal whereby patients book appointments for brand sake. Therefore, harming your brand will hurt your position and future appointments.

In the era of changing healthcare practices from affordable care to insurance issues, chiropractors can ill afford bad press. So much is harming the practice today that many are faced with looking at the practice differently. Furthermore, competitive pressures constantly impact practice revenue. There is no reason to place additional pressures on the practice. Reputation management, when handled appropriately, could potentially increase pipeline flow, decrease obstacles to prospective patient entry and increase your revenue. Similar to planting a tree and ensuring that it has tremendous root structure, reputation management is analogous to that. You will see a richer reputation and successfully root your future revenue flow.