



MARKETING 101

## Your Practice Needs More Star Power

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Imagine your next potential patient starting an online search for care. The patient opens up a browser and types in "chiropractor." A Google page opens that reveals a map at the top with locations and listings. You can try it now to see what comes up for you. (If you want to do a true search, enter a private browsing mode to limit the influence your past searches or website visits have upon the results.)

If you are interested in growing your business and reaching that potential patient, you may wonder: *How do I make my practice rank high when local patients search?* The answer is multifaceted, but let's focus on one factor that is growing in importance every year: online reviews.

It's been clear for years that patients care about your online reviews. According to a 2022 [Brightlocal survey](#), 82 percent of people pay attention to online reviews when considering health care options.<sup>1</sup> But while it's important to consider how online reviews influence your potential patients' opinions, reviews matter in another way as well - they influence *where you turn up in Google local searches*.

Understanding "Local Pack Listings" and Why They Matter



First, let's take a look at that section at the top of your patient's search results. The map with the red location markers and listings is called a "Local Pack" search. This is different from the typical blue links stacked lower on a Google search results page, which are called the "Local Organic" listings.

The two sections not only appear different, but also reveal entirely different results. This is because different algorithms influence what shows up in each section; everything from your Google business profile, to sites that link back to your page, to keywords on your website plays a role in where your business turns up when a patient searches. One of the factors that Google weighs is online reviews.

#### Do Reviews Help Local Pack Listings?

While several factors cause a business to rank higher in the Local Pack, some are more important than others. According to [Whitespark's survey](#) of SEO experts for 2021, online reviews are estimated to be hugely important - the second-most-influential factor dictating where your business shows up in a Local Pack search.<sup>2</sup>

For Local Pack, its perceived importance lands only behind your Google business profile. And these SEO experts have ranked the perceived importance of reviews higher over time: In 2013, the importance of reviews came in at 12 percent and it has risen steadily year over year, all the way up to 17 percent in 2021. The impact of online reviews on your Local Pack ranking is only growing.

#### Improving Your Local Pack Rankings: Two Critical Steps

If you're looking to improve your Local Pack rankings (and you should be), take the followings steps:

- Ensure your Google business profile is up to date and includes solid information.
- Continually improve your online reviews.

Not only are online reviews among the most impactful at improving your Local Pack rankings, they also may be the easiest to influence. With the right software that integrates with your EMR and automates the process of improving your online reviews, you can make a huge impact on your online reviews with minimal effort and cost.

### Amping Up Your Online Reviews

The experts at Whitespark note a few things matter when it comes to ranking in the Local Pack:

- Number of Google reviews
- High ratings
- Keywords in Google reviews

There are simple ways to amplify your online reviews without breaking the bank or taking up all of your staff's time. Most of these suggestions, with the right integrated software, can be automated to keep those five-star reviews rolling in regularly with minimal effort.

### How to Get More Google Reviews

Many practices miss opportunities to secure online reviews because of one reason: they fail to ask for them. The Brightlocal survey of reviews for 2021 notes that when asked to leave a review, 67 percent of people will leave one. However, in order to achieve a high response, your practice should do everything possible to make it convenient. A few suggestions:

- *Use text.* Send the review request via text with a direct link to your Google review page. Forget handing out notecard reminders that may get lost or buried. Send a text, where the patient is likely to open and view the request, and can take immediate action. Text is by far the best way to reach your patients; according to [Gartner research](#), 98 percent of text messages are opened and read, compared to only 20 percent of email messages.<sup>3</sup>
- *Automate the process.* Your staff is busy, so review requests are likely to falter under all the other daily tasks in your practice. Use a communication tool that integrates with your EMR to send automatic review requests at the proper interval after a visit.

### Ensuring High Review Ratings

Of course, your practice is dedicated to offering the best possible care. Beyond that, how can you be sure your great care is translated to your Google reviews via your biggest fans?

*Prescreen reviews.* A prescreen step offers a few benefits. When you send a text, start with a simple star-rating request that doesn't connect to Google. This way, customers can tell you what they think with one click. Then, if they rate you four or five stars, automatically send them the Google link to request that they share it with the world.

*Monitor reviews.* If you use the right system, it should be simple for your staff to monitor online reviews. A review dashboard can help you catch any negative reviews early to address concerns, or at least to respond with a professional tone, explanation or sentiment of care before a sour review becomes a problem.

*Keywords in Google reviews.* While you cannot control what people say in reviews, you can use the above automated, integrated suggestions to be sure your reviews are regular and ample. With frequent requests going out to your happy patients, you are sure to get a variety of excellent, authentic responses that hit all the keywords.

### Practice Pearls

Doctors of chiropractic who see the value of ranking high in Local Pack should consider attacking the issue with an easy and effective ongoing campaign to secure online reviews from satisfied patients - getting your practice the star power it needs to rise to the top.

Reviews are more and more important each year in placing your practice at the top in the Local Pack, but the process doesn't have to be complex or time-consuming. Set up an automated, integrated program that will amp up your star power year-round, helping potential patients find you.

### References

1. Pitman J. "Local Consumer Review Survey 2022." Brightlocal.com, Jan. 26, 2022.
2. Shaw D. "The 2021 Local Search Ranking Factors: What You Need to Know to Rank in Google's Local Results." Whitespark.ca, last updated Nov. 29, 2021.
3. Pemberton C. "Tap Into the Marketing Power of SMS." Gartner.com, Nov. 3, 2016.

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