Patients vs. Doctors: One-Star Reviews, Yelp, and Social Media

Neal Bhatia, M.D.
Director of Clinical Dermatology
Therapeutics Clinical Research
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DISCLOSURE OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY

Neal Bhatia MD

DISCLOSURES

None; Copies of pdf or questions: bhatiaharbor@gmail.com
Customers or Patients?

- Customers choose to do business with a certain establishment
  - As a result, the establishment’s revenue increases.
- Customer service is a business idea developed to attract and retain profits.
- Physician-Patient relationship is profit driven

- Patients needing health care may positively, neutrally or even negatively affect revenue.
  - Patients may carry good, poor or no insurance.
  - Institutions are legally obligated to care

- Physicians’ obligations for their patients does not translate to the language of customer service.
Where does patient care end and customer service begin?

- There is a fine line between customer service and people taking advantage of you.
- “Remember that you run your business, you make the rules, you follow your contract obligations, and you should never have to lose money on any claim because a patient tells you to…”
88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation

- Countless other studies have proved the same thing over and over again – “consumers” trust online reviews and those reviews heavily influence their “purchasing” decisions.

- 72% of consumers, will make purchasing decisions ONLY after they’ve read a positive review. If you can have both a high volume and a good score, you become the defacto choice for many consumers.
Freedom of Speech now means you can say anything you want

- Can any physician advertise any skill?
- Can the term “dermatology” or “skin care specialist” be applied when the services are not from a dermatologist?
- Who is a “cosmetic specialist?” “Cosmetic Surgeon?”
- And how can any organization stop the proliferation of the “fake derms?”
Customer-generated negative online reviews on hospitality employees and businesses

- Multiple research questions demonstrate how negative online reviews can have adverse and diverse effects on restaurant industry employees and businesses.

  - Practical implications - Four types of countermeasures are presented: preventative, protective, positive and palliative.

  - Social implications - Negative online reviews can exact a hefty toll:
    - reduced customer patronage → company profitability
    - human consequences → adverse stress reactions, loss of face, damaged personal and professional relationships
Preventative Strategies:
- Minimise service & product failures
- Maximise customer satisfaction

Protective Strategies:
- Instruct in online protocol
- Encourage private, rather than public responses
- Request filtering and removal of vexatious reviews

Positive Strategies:
- Encourage, reinforce, display, and strategically deploy positive reviews

Palliative Strategies:
- Build coping resources
- Enlist social support
- Encourage favorable re-appraisals
- Soften stress symptoms
WHY DO PATIENTS POST NEGATIVE COMMENTS?

**Bad Service Quality:**
52 percent complain about what they perceive as bad service.

**Not Happy With Product:**
31.4 percent complain about problems with products.

**Not Convinced With Your Policies:**
16.6 percent will complain about policies they disagree with.

(Source: Corra)

https://www.physicianspractice.com/patient-relations/5-smart-ways-handle-negative-online-reviews
What prevention strategies should we consider?

- Be your patient’s advocate
  - Share frustrations about current state of healthcare
  - Walk out for a break if discussions get adversarial
- Accept that we can’t be everything to every patient
- Don’t go to the next patient after a bad encounter, find a minute to take a breath no matter how behind you are

- Reputation protection services
  - Attempting to be your online bodyguard
  - Expensive and ongoing
- Search Engine Optimization
  - This is what every practice needs and not all think about
- Call patients routinely about their progress
  - Medical, surgical, aesthetic
How to Navigate the Review Storm

- Set systems in place that automatically monitor relevant review sites and alert you when new reviews are out.
  - Thank positive reviewers and reinforce some key points when appropriate.
  - Negative reviews should also be acknowledged. You should try to thank the reviewer for the feedback when constructive, and try to reach out to him/her to find a way to mitigate this negative experience whenever possible.
  - Some reviewers will delete their negative reviews once they realize you have been sincere and tried to find a positive resolution.
Social Media Extortion

- Do we now have to hang ourselves out and submit to predators that want free or marked down service?
- What protection does a small practice have?
- *Why do we let these petty antics ruin our day?*
- *Or do they slowly chip away at our drive and focus?*
One Star Reviews: Weapon of retaliation?

- 91% of consumers read online reviews before a purchase.
- According to a survey performed by Softwareadvice.com in 2013 and 2014, the percentage of patients using online reviews to find their physician increased from 25% to 42%.
- 1 star review from misunderstanding of healthcare system?
- How Soon Is Now?
  - Prior Auths, processing referrals, additional path stains all take time, regardless of efforts to ensure good patient experience.

842 reviews were examined—→ 200 reviews were included for analysis some with more than 1 comment why a patient gave the rating they did…264 comments, comprised of 152 comments for 5-star reviews, and 112 comments for 1-star reviews.

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Put out the fire…but does this solve burnout?

- Contact the reviewer directly
  - If you can get people on the phone, they’ll see you as a human and not a faceless business.
- Take the proper tone
  - The right tone can turn a complaint into a positive review.
  - Don’t make excuses. Don’t get defensive.
- Never threaten a lawsuit
  - Technically, you can sue someone for online defamation
  - Lawsuits draw negative attention, and the media backlash from suing a consumer will scare off other clientele.

Figure 3: Yelp Displays Each Restaurant’s Rounded Average Rating

Notes: Yelp prominently displays a restaurant’s rounded average rating. Each time a restaurant’s rating crosses a rounding threshold, the restaurant experiences a discontinuous increase in the displayed average rating.
The “real” fake review problem

- As of 2017: estimated 267 million Facebook users were fake or duplicates
  - unclear how many were involved in fake review schemes.
  - doesn’t include fake reviews from real accounts
- Fake reviews on Google is a “massive problem”
Spot the Fakes: Tricks to spot a fake Google review

- Compare suspicious complaints with your sales records to find any matching transactions
  - The buyer isn’t in your point of sale software system
  - The transaction date doesn’t match their complaint
  - Lack of detail (e.g., they haven’t named any specific employees)
  - There is a surge of bad reviews in a short period of time
  - There’s a connection between the reviewer and a competitor
  - The reviewer recommended a competitor in their complaint

How to Remove a Bad Google Review (and Flag Fake Ones): https://www.reputationmanagement.com/blog/how-to-remove-google-reviews/JONAS SICKLER AUGUST 9, 2018 UPDATED NOVEMBER 18
Woodsum is an e-commerce entrepreneur who owns a bill reduction company called Bill Slasher. They renegotiate customers’ phone and cable bills to save them money.

In early 2018, Woodsum launched a Google Adwords campaign targeting the leading competitor in the space, Billshark. When people searched for “Billshark,” they found Bill Slasher’s advert at the top of search results.
Real Story of Sabotage:
Cameron Woodsum

- Billshark wasn’t happy. Within 12 hours of launching that advert, Woodsum says the Bill Slasher Facebook page was flooded with 1-star reviews.
- Upon closer inspection, he noticed that they came from Billshark’s executive team, employees, and family members. Even the CEO’s wife was involved.
- As Woodsum watched his company’s review average plummet from a 4.9 to a 2.5, he realized he had a full-fledged crisis on his hands.
Improve chances of removing fake reviews

- Woodsum eventually followed this advice. He turned Bill Slasher’s Facebook reviews back on and responded to the competitors’ reviews openly, calling them out for what they did. He also encouraged his existing base of happy customers to leave positive reviews.

- The loyal support of Bill Slasher’s happy customers did get the company’s review average back above a 4.0.

- Make sure you have access to all of your social media and review site profiles and listings; Claim duplicate pages

- “If a fake reviews crisis happens before these are done, there will be more work to do before getting the situation resolved.”