The Seven Essential Habits of Successful Online Reputation Management in Healthcare

binary**fountain**

"The Seven Essential Habits of Successful Online Reputation Management in Healthcare" is a free ebook offered by Binary Fountain. Binary Fountain provides healthcare systems, hospitals and physician practices a complete view into managing patient feedback from online ratings and reviews and surveys.

Your organization's and physicians' reputations are online – and at risk if you are not managing them right.

Seventy-five percent of healthcare consumers are researching online reviews when seeking a provider. As a result, more hospitals and physician practices are adopting online reputation management every day. It is a path they have never been down and they are seeking guidance on the best way to achieve its intended goals: influence patient acquisition and loyalty, and improve the healthcare consumer experience.

In this ebook, we look at effective ways to manage online reputation based on our years of experience in the industry. We will also share insights from healthcare marketers who are doing it right. Whether you are with a hospital or physician practice, you can turn lessons from these pages into practice.

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Set Goals and Objectives

When starting an online reputation management strategy, it is important to create benchmarks. Use available patient volume and online review data to establish a baseline for measuring program success and help you understand the climate of your organization.

Some questions to ask as you get started are:

1. Can we assemble data on new patient volume? Can we go back as far as one year? Three years?
2. How have our reviews been growing and trending in satisfaction during that period?
3. Are we tracking how patients selected our practice or hospital?
4. Are we acquiring new patients, or do we seem to be losing patients due to reviews?
5. Is there a correlation between referrals and new patient acquisition?

Gathering data may require coordination with other departments. It is worth the time. Aaron Clifford, SVP of Marketing for Binary Fountain says the answers here will likely lead you to one conclusion:
Online reviews impact revenue. Positive reviews increase patient volume, while negative reviews reduce new patient sign-ups and depress patient loyalty, increasing attrition rates.

"By tracking and improving online reputation, the physician practice increases patient satisfaction, builds loyalty, and sees the positive effects on growth and revenue."

-- Aaron Clifford, SVP of Marketing for Binary Fountain

2 Reviews and Responses

Online patient feedback is too important to have a rough or incomplete response plan, or even worse, no plan at all. Reviews, both positive and negative, are a goldmine for any physician practice or hospital. Negative reviews create opportunities for improvement and service recovery, and positive reviews can increase patient volume.

You need a game plan. Determine who from your organization is on your reputation management team, assign responsibilities and determine the workflow for responses. Who monitors or responds to online reviews? Who internally coordinates service recovery situations? Establish guidelines for tone of messaging, response time (within 2-3 days) and when to take a conversation offline. Consistency across all reviews and social media platforms is key to successful online communication with your patients.

"We know that when patient experience is improved, there will be a positive impact on revenue."

-- Aaron Clifford, SVP Marketing, Binary Fountain

Patient reviews can provide a wealth of information for providers. Engaging with reviewers' concerns and issues can help physician practices and hospitals create true opportunities for online service recovery, while consistently communicating patient experience as a top priority.

Here are 5 Best Practices for Engaging Patients Online

1. Establish a patient review response system.

2. Respond to all reviews.

3. Address issues in a timely manner.

4. Know when to take a conversation offline.

5. Be proactive in requesting reviews.

Healthcare Patient Experience Journey

Well-known consultant, author and speaker Brian Solis says we are in a new era of marketing and service and that **"your brand is defined by those who experience it."**

The patient journey begins well before their first appointment.

STEP 1 : Discovery: the patient researches their symptoms online and decides what type of provider to see.

STEP 2 : Selection: the patient consults search engines, provider directories and reviews to choose a physician.

STEP 3 : Point of Care: the patient notices aspects of the practice experience: office staff, wait time, physician bedside manner, etc.

STEP 4 : Feedback: the patient visits an online review site to leave feedback, positive or negative. Either way, the review they post will help other patients in their journey.

DISCOVERY 1

SELECTION 2

POINT OF CARE 3

FEEDBACK 4

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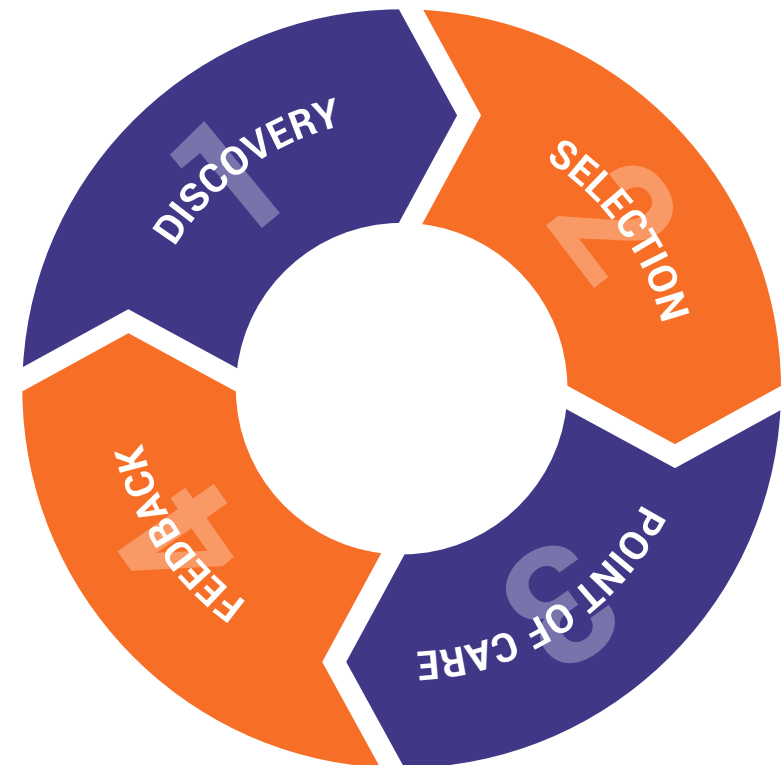
Statistics show there are potential pain points if online provider listings are incorrect, or staff attitudes are perceived as unhelpful. Furthermore, when a patient leaves negative feedback they influence the choices of potential patients who follow, which has an impact on revenue.

- **77% of people search online before making an appointment.**

- **76% of people search for a provider (not a facility) when looking for health information.**

- **48% of patients are willing to go out-of-network based on reviews.**

- **50% of consumers searching for a provider will not choose a provider without reviews.**

Patient reviews should not be one-way communication

A patient review should not be like a billboard you pass on the highway, where you glance at it and continue down the road. A successful online reputation management strategy takes every review and turns it into a productive two-way conversation, whether it continues online or offline.

Not only is this important for retaining current patients who may have had an issue during their last visit, but also for potential patients searching for input about your practice online.

They will take notice of a practice's responses to patient reviews, both positive and negative. Kim Mott, Marketing and Customer Service Manager with Florida Orthopaedic Institute, said that when they responded right away to an online review, "We have seen patients completely remove reviews or leave a comment on the review, saying, 'Oh, they got to me right away and handled the issue,' or change their star rating."

Aksana Koch from Binary Fountain's customer success team, says

"It shines a better light on a practice if potential customers can see that someone is reading the reviews and is concerned about patients' experiences."

How to get your online conversation started:

1. **Audit** your current online reputation.
2. **Claim** any unclaimed pages online (Facebook, Google Maps, etc.).
3. **Ask** patients to leave reviews.
4. **Enlist** help from a reputation management platform.

Reviews with Protected Health Information and other Legal Issues

It is important in responding to reviews to know when and how to direct the conversation offline. If a patient is simply oversharing on social media, it is still necessary to take action.

Additionally, Kait Phillips from Binary Fountain's Customer Success team, says any review that might have legal implications from PHI to libel, requires a call to the legal department.

"They can provide instruction on how to proceed, reach out to the patient about their issue and request the comment be removed," Phillips said. "It is important to address the issue promptly and take the conversation with the patient offline."

Another layer of protection when it comes to legal issues is to set up notifications for reviews based on keywords. If someone threatens legal action against a physician in a review using a specific keyword, the practice's legal department can be notified immediately.

And although it is not easy to have these reviews taken down, a well-thought-out response and an offline conversation sends a signal that you care enough to address the issue.

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Allow Feedback to Drive Change

Now that you are engaging in a two-way conversation with your patients online, it's time to really listen to what they are saying and be willing to make needed changes.

Signature Medical Group launched a two-pronged initiative using digital patient feedback with Binary Fountain's technology platform. This initiative helped them manage and improve operations affecting patient experience across 50 offices and better inform patients seeking physicians online.

Patient experience analytics let them pinpoint where they were having issues so they could take action to resolve it.

For example, if a patient writes a negative comment, the reputation management team can follow-up with the office manager of that practice and reach out to the patient and address the issue or concerns. This helps them provide the patient with a better experience—turning a negative into a positive.

Signature Medical Group Increased Patient Experience Scores 20%.

In the case of online patient reviews, the old adage "if it ain't broke, do not fix it" applies in reverse. If your patient reviews repeatedly signal concerns about the same issue, you do need to fix it.

In the case of KureSmart Pain Management, which has offices across Michigan, Maryland and Delaware, having measurable data versus a general opinion about patient experience has helped the company improve the customer experience.

Nick LaRosa, Director of Sales and Marketing at KureSmart, said one physician really wanted to see his patient experience scores and feedback. "He was a brilliant doctor, but his scores did not fare so well in the customer service category. Once he was aware of the areas he needed to improve upon, he went from the lowest scoring physician at the practice to the top scoring doctor by implementing personal changes."

Also, LaRosa added, that circulating surveys, results and scores throughout the organization keeps physicians accountable and creates a friendly competition.

"The insights we have gathered have allowed us to pinpoint where we can make improvements. In one case, we identified there were issues with making appointments at one of our practices. We were able to dig deeper and discovered that the issue was the routing of calls in our phone room. We resolved that issue and now our patient experience scores have improved to over 90 percent."

-- Signature Medical Group

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KureSmart Pain Management Stats:

Online reviews and scores increased **95%.**

Positive online reviews increased over **30%.**

Google My Business score increased by **314%.**

Negative reviews went down by more than **60%.**

Patient loyalty went up **35%.**

Timely care scores soared over **100%.**

"**The Binary Fountain Health Analytics** platform has helped us improve our reputation and the brand image of KureSmart Pain Management by increasing transparency with our patients as well as throughout the organization."

-- Nick LaRosa, Director of Sales and Marketing at KureSmart Pain Management

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4 Gain Perspective and Buy-In

No Super Bowl or Stanley Cup or World Series is won alone. You might have a few rock star players, but it takes a team to pull off a big win. Same goes for online reputation management. Everyone involved needs to understand the ultimate goal, buy into the program and their role in the process in order to win.

Getting physicians to buy into an initiative concerning online reviews can prove challenging. Here is some insight on how to navigate the buy-in process:

- Doctors are motivated by results and data.
- Gaining visibility into patient experience data, which affects their practices, can grab their attention.
- Physicians can be highly competitive. Once they have seen a benchmark report, many want to continue receiving it so they can track where they rank among their colleagues. It can also motivate them to make changes.
- These reports can serve as a basis for making the argument that it is important for physicians to play a role in taking control of their online reputation -- and provide an opportunity for you to lay out your strategy on how this can happen.

Many physicians have a stake in a practice and some are even financially incentivized by patient experience scores. Data can fuel behavior change and show how making changes leads to positive outcomes. It is hard to argue against a program that delivers these results.

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KureSmart Pain Management, uses Binary Fountain to help manage patient experience and gain actionable insight into its online reputation. They have seen significant changes:

- KureSmart's **overall patient experience score** increased by **68%.**

- **Patient loyalty** increased by **52%.**

- **Ratings on bedside manner** rose by **150%.**

- Number of **positive online reviews** increased by **52%.**

- Number of **new patients** nearly **doubled.**

In order to be successful, online reputation management has to be part of an overarching strategic marketing plan. Physicians, executives and staff need to be educated on why it is important and their role in the process. As many online marketers have said, "your reputation is already online. If you do not own your reputation online, someone else will."

At Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System in Spartanburg, S.C., Mary Reid, RN, the system's senior physician development consultant, said the explanation of the reputation management process is part of a physician's onboarding.

"It starts on the physician's first day working here, alongside other typical first day presentations such as welcome, payroll, email, operating policies and so on. Our Marketing VP reviews the patient experience, and presents on the service recovery process. The physicians receive and review the hospital's complaint and grievance policies and procedures. We introduce Binary Fountain and how it works for Spartanburg; for example, how we ask every patient to complete a post-appointment survey."

The response from new employees is overwhelmingly positive. Reid says because the physicians arrive understanding how important online reputation management is, from day-one they are on board with the overall mission.

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Positive Feedback as a Motivator

Patient Feedback is a great way to understand where to make improvements. It can provide teaching moments and help you prevent potential bad reviews. What should not be lost in the mix is the impact of positive reviews. These reviews are a powerful tool to help drive staff engagement. We recommend sharing them at team meetings to recognize the work employees are doing. Having a friendly competition to see which office gets the most positive reviews can be a motivator. In the end, positive reviews can help gain buy-in to your reputation management program.

"We strive to create a great overall experience. Binary Fountain has given us an opportunity to share positive feedback and encourage staff members to enhance their performance. It is making a huge impact on employee morale which affects patient experience. The insights gathered from the comments have also given us a way to coach and train our staff in areas needing improvement."

--Kim Mott, Marketing and Customer Service Manager at Florida Orthopaedic Institute

Making the argument for online reputation management

You need to communicate why this is a pain point that the organization and providers need to address. Yes, consumer behavior has shifted and they now have easy access to a multitude of online review sites to help them make decisions. Many stakeholders may know about this, but are not aware of their impact. Providing industry trends can help you educate them and make the case for the program.

When presenting your case for a reputation management program, these statistics can help you do the talking:

- **75% of Americans say online ratings and review sites have influenced their decision when selecting a physician.** (source: Binary Fountain)

- **95% of respondents find online ratings and reviews "somewhat" to "very" reliable.** (source: Binary Fountain's Consumer Survey via One Poll)

- **As many as 8 in 10 patients consult physician reviews before selecting a healthcare provider.** (source: softwareadvice.com)

Why online consumerism makes managing online reputation a must:

- According to a McKinsey study, consumers want the same qualities in healthcare companies that they value in other companies.

- **77% of people** search online before making an appointment with a healthcare provider.

- **85% of respondents** will trust an online review as much as a personal recommendation, according to a 2017 BrightLocal consumer survey.

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Cultivate a New Culture

As consumerism continues to influence and even drive healthcare decisions, hospitals and practices need to emphasize "the patient experience" as part of the delivery of medical care.

Forrester Research reports that **72%** of businesses say **improving customer experience** is a **top priority.** However, statistics show that healthcare does not put that same emphasis on the importance of customer experience. Only **43%** of physician practices surveyed by The Beryl Institute say **improving the patient experience** is among their **top three priorities.**

This can require training employees who have not come up through their career understanding the customer-first mentality that is hardwired into the culture of many service-related industries. They need to understand that each potential patient has a very visible platform where they can loudly proclaim to potential patients how their experience was in your hospital or practice.

Look for customer experience inspiration from other industries. What lessons can you apply from Ritz Carlton in heallthcare? By striving to create a patient-first culture, you will have a bigger hand in controlling your practice's or hospital's online reputation.

The top-tier retailers and hotels have figured out that it is not enough anymore to sell a product or deliver a service. Those things are a given. It is everything else around that transaction that elevates, or deflates, the experience.

A recent story in Forbes Magazine uses the label "healthcare disruptors" to describe those in healthcare who are taking the extra step and focusing on the customer experience.

The article says that healthcare disruptors understand that good business is about the entire patient experience, not just the level of care provided. Patients are looking for seamless solutions, on-demand services and personalized interactions.

"Commercial enterprises have made customer experience a priority because they recognize that their customers have a choice -- and will choose to do business with the company that does the best job of engaging them. Healthcare organizations need to realize that patients now have a choice too."

– Forbes

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Florida Orthopaedic Institute, recognizing a shift in the market to a patient-centered culture, hired a former executive from Starwood Hotel and Resorts to head up marketing and customer success. Starting from scratch with staff and physicians, the new Director of Marketing, Donna Bossuyt, set out to change the organization's mentality to reflect the "above and beyond" service culture of Starwood. This included implemented a customer service training and development program. Donna, recognizing the importance of the patient's online voice, created an online reputation program to increase more positive online reviews, deliver high-touch online service recovery, and improve the patient experience based on insights gathered.

Once you are able to understand the importance of customer experience and put some of your best Ritz Carlton service into play, it is time to ask patients to share online what they thought about their experience. Knowing you are asking for very publicly displayed opinions can hold everyone on your staff accountable for ensuring each patient has great things to say when they leave your practice or hospital.

Another great example of the mentality your organization must take to win over today's savvy consumers is to solve customer experience challenges like Uber. In a recent Deloitte Consulting white paper, Deloitte Principal Matthew Hitch, says healthcare executives need to learn from companies like Uber who address the consumers' issues first and work backwards from there.

When seeking any kind of service, Hitch says, customers tend to become frustrated when their needs are not met. **The most successful companies go a step further than many by designing an experience around a customer's wants and desires.**
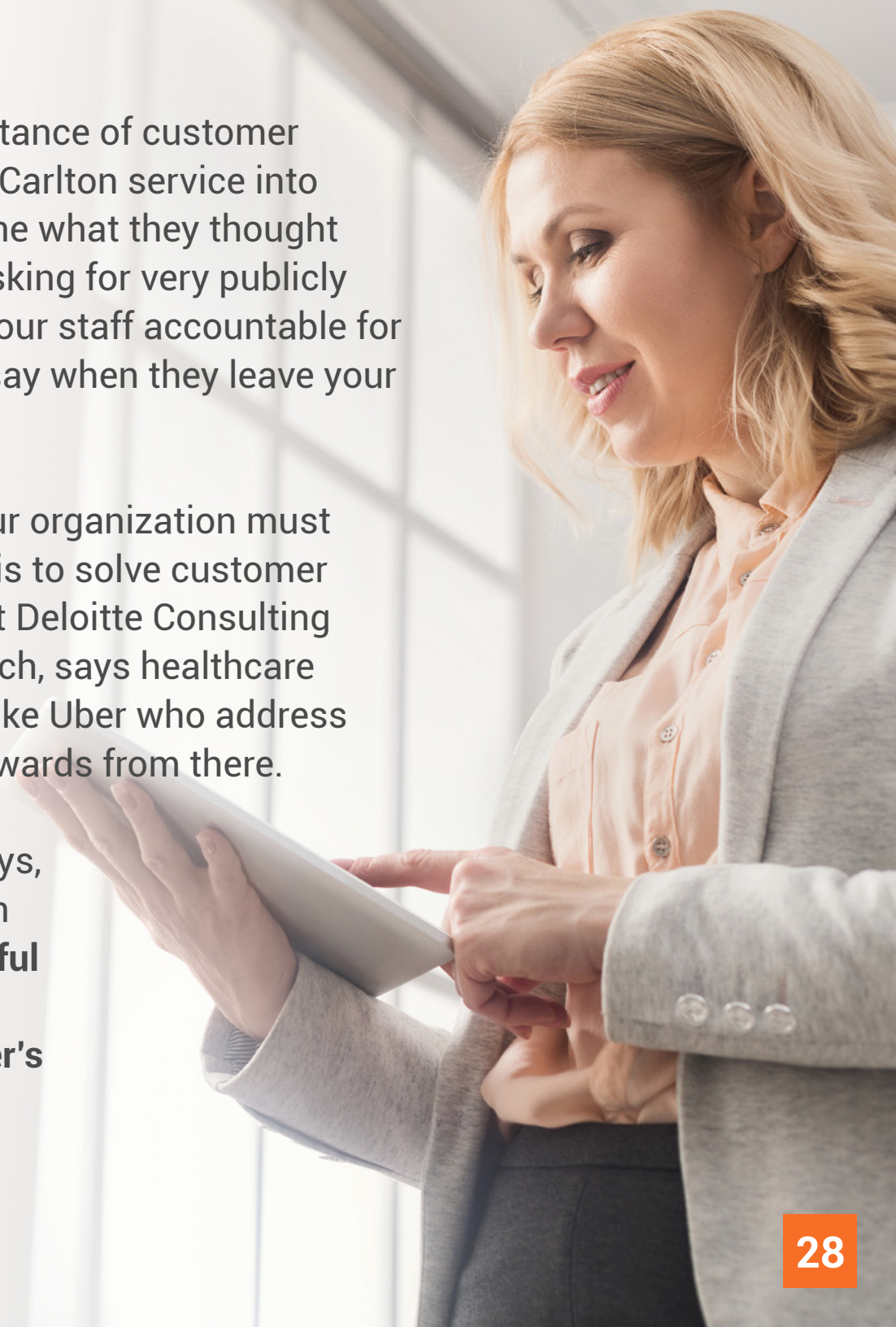
Designing the Uber Experience

When trying to get a cab, what people want is convenience and clarity. Uber took all of the issues around a traditional taxi cab experience and solved them.

Question: When is the cab going to arrive?
Uber: You can track it.

Question: Will the driver take a credit card?
Uber: Payment is already taken care of.

Question: Who will the driver be?
Uber: A pre-screened individual.

"**This level of convenience is what people are expecting, which is why Uber is disrupting the taxi marketplace. It is not because the taxi service itself is any different, but how the company delivers it.**"

– Matthew Hitch, principal with Deloitte Consulting.

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6 Be Efficient

The healthcare world did not form in a millennial generation like Uber did. So how does a healthcare organization evolve its traditional thinking with limited resources?

It has to become a focus, have universal buy-in and be done efficiently.

Partial buy-in to customer experience and managing online reviews can be the enemy of efficiency. For example, manually tracking and managing online reviews can be a bit like herding cats and time consuming. But it does not have to be that way.

Nashville-based HCA operates 174 hospitals; 1,000-plus practice locations; 90-plus urgent care locations; 119 surgery centers; employs 37,000 active physicians; and records some 8.4 million Emergency Department visits a year.

In building a case for a unified reputation management software solution, the HCA reputation management team demonstrated that online reviews represented a wealth of actionable data and unaddressed opportunities for improvement.

The team took a hands-on approach to demonstrate the value of engaging with patients to optimize reviews. One Nashville clinic recorded more than 2,000 views on Google business, 100 calls and 150 web site visits in one week.

Patients were asked one crucial question on patient experience surveys: Did you book your appointment based on information you found online?

HCA learned that new and returning patients look online for information on which practice to choose, how to make an appointment, how to get there and many other steps on the patient journey.

Assembling their business case, the team could clearly see that enterprise-wide reputation management could not be maintained manually without adding a lot of employees.

The team chose Binary Fountain for its automation and template features, healthcare-specific Natural Language Processing capabilities, and because Binary Fountain embodies forward-thinking expertise and functionality.

Today, HCA oversees its company-wide reputation management program with a central office staff of three people, and with a point of contact in each practice - typically the practice manager - to help them resolve patient experience issues. They also partner with YEXT to more easily maintain provider and location detail related to, hours of operation, services, location and contact information across third-party platforms publishing physician and location data.

Five Main Characteristics Consumers Look for in <u>Healthcare Interactions</u>

1. They want it to be personal.

2. They want it to be simple, seamless and efficient.

3. They want to feel like their time is valued.

4. They want transparency.

5. They want their information to be secure.

Source: David Betts, principal and leader for Customer and Digital Transformation for Health Care Providers for Deloitte Consulting, LLC.

Success
with a little help from your friends

The Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics—MMI Division, a physician-owned practice with more than 40 providers and 5 locations in Frederick, Maryland.

Their director of marketing in managing the practice's online reputation was spending the bulk of her time looking through survey cards and manually monitoring third-party review sites one at a time. "It was a painstaking, manual process that was challenging to stay on top of every week," she said.

The director of marketing enlisted the help of Binary Fountain's reputation management solution to maintain the efficiency and productivity of the process.

"It was truly an 'ah-ha' moment when we first implemented Binary Fountain's reputation management solution," the director of marketing said. "I am now spending 70% less time managing patient feedback while getting over 200% more survey responses. I could not imagine doing my job without this platform again."

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Director of Marketing for The Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics -- MMI Division.

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Keep it a Priority

Online reputation management is a marathon, not a sprint. You do not win at this race quickly. So, as you ramp up your efforts, you must have a plan and commitment in place.

It is a significant step to go from realizing the importance of online reviews and feedback to implementing a strategy that allows your organization to participate in those conversations. However, it is a journey worth taking as you can have a measurable impact on your practice or hospital.

About Binary Fountain

Binary Fountain is the leading provider of patient feedback management solutions designed specifically for healthcare in a single cloud-based platform.

Its patient experience platform is built on a proprietary healthcare-centric Natural Language Processing (NLP) engine that mines patient feedback from surveys, online ratings and review sites, social media, and other data sources to equip its customers with the actionable insights needed to improve patient satisfaction and loyalty, increase engagement and drive sustainable bottom-line results.

Leading organizations, large and small, rely on Binary Fountain to understand the patient experience, drive comprehensive operational intelligence throughout the organization, and engage patients with innovative transparency and reputation management solutions.

How Binary Fountain Helps You Improve Online Reputation and Patient Experience

Healthcare Experts
We're built for healthcare. Our healthcare-focused platform is trusted by 4,000 healthcare facilities globally. Customer Success Team advises clients on industry best practices. Partner with industry leaders, Press Ganey and Yext.

Holistic Online Platform
Single view across the patient experience. Quickly respond to patient reviews to improve online service recovery, protecting your brand, and influencing patient loyalty and acquisition.

Deep Patient Analytics
Our healthcare specific Natural Language Processing (NLP) technology continuously mines digital patient feedback for sentiment, equipping organizations with the actionable insights needed to increase patient engagement, manage your brand and improve patient experience.

Request Your Free Demo

Let us explore how Binary Fountain's solutions can help you efficiently manage your online reputation, improve patient experience, benchmark against the competition, and promote your brand.

https://www.binaryfountain.com

"**Binary Fountain** is helping us empower consumers to see what other patients are saying and find the best physician."

-- Orest Holubec SVP of National Communication and External Affairs, Providence St. Joseph Health

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