

How Online Reputation Management Increased Ratings and Reviews for the Nation's Leading Hospice Care Provider

A Case Study with VITAS[®] Healthcare

It is no secret that reviews help consumers make everyday purchasing decisions for everything from toothpaste to travel destinations. When it comes to engaging with a brand or service, **positive online reviews affect consumer decisions 90% of the time**, according to a study by BrightLocal¹.

However, when it comes to selecting a hospice provider, reviews and ratings carry additional weight. People will go to great lengths to find good care; another survey² found that 47% of patients searching for healthcare options would consider going out-of-network to a provider with better reviews. While a majority of patients are willing to look past a few negative reviews, they're also more willing to explore all options to get the best care available for themselves and their families.

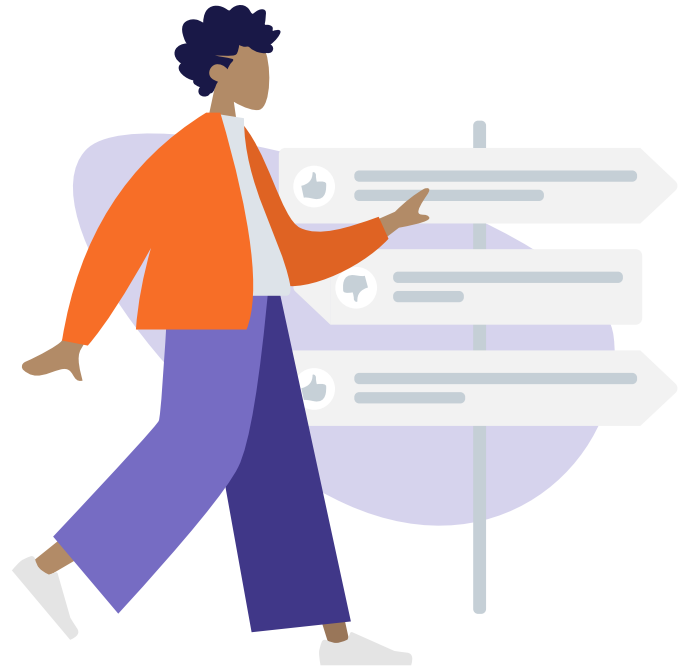
This increased reliance on digital reviews from consumers has motivated leading hospice care providers like **VITAS Healthcare** to implement online reputation management services to better leverage feedback and increase overall positive reviews and satisfaction scores.

In this case study, we explore the dramatic results VITAS saw within the first year of their online reputation management implementation, which include:

- 34% increase in patient satisfaction scores
- 52% increase in total Google reviews
- 10% increase in total positive feedback
- 121% increase in total Facebook reviews
- 20% increase in total online reviews

¹BrightLocal, 2018 <https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/>

²Software Advice, 2019 <https://www.softwareadvice.com/resources/how-patients-use-online-reviews/>



Reviews can and will influence patients and families in the consumer journey. The opportunity then comes from the ability to build a solid foundation for not only managing or responding to reviews, but also for generating more reviews altogether.

The Challenges

VITAS is the nation's leading provider of hospice care. Based in Miami, Florida, VITAS is a pioneer and leader in the American hospice movement. Operating in 47 hospice programs in 14 states, they care for over **18,000 patients every single day** – primarily in patients' homes. They also have a series of approximately 27 in-patient units across the country and admitted more than 68,000 patients in 2018.

Through their online reputation management initiative, VITAS aimed to solve several challenges:



Respond to Reviews and Increase Satisfaction Scores

VITAS believes every patient, family and caregiver deserve a quality end-of-life experience with dignity and compassion -- it is their mission and what they strive for as they care for over 18,000 patients every single day, nationwide. VITAS wanted to ensure they listened to the patients' families at every step of the patient journey and analyze reviews and responses internally to make sure their local management teams were providing the best experience and care possible.

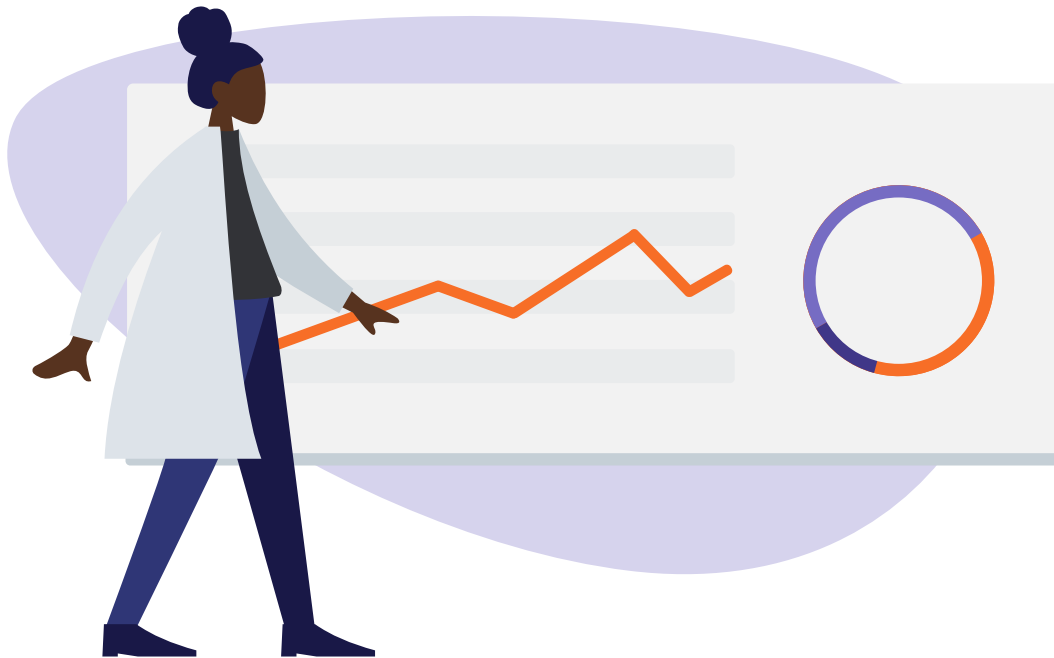
Maintain Accurate Listings and Generate Reviews

The other challenge VITAS faced was building a solid foundation for managing or responding to reviews, and for generating more total review volume. This was no small feat considering the sheer number of social media and online review sites they managed, including 150 of their own Google My Business listings and affiliate websites.



To do this at this scale, they needed an online reputation management tool that allowed the company to **bring accuracy and uniformity to listings and responses**, as well as a solution that could **proactively spot trends** and **boost its brand reputation**.

Solution 1: Binary Health Analytics



VITAS committed themselves to respond to all reviews, regardless of sentiment, within 24 hours of posting.

messages, general feedback comments and contact information links. Staff members can add their own voice to the templates for personalization and empathic responses.

Through monthly reporting, VITAS began tracking data regarding responses and the response times among internal management stakeholders, comparing it to the data from the previous month and sharing the results within the organization.

Binary Fountain's platform allowed them to take an automated approach to review responses. With automated alerts and reporting in place, they identified staff members to take responsibility for review follow-up and established an internal hierarchy to help keep lines of communication clear and improve response times.

They began responding by using a series of templated messages, including thank you

Results

Customized Responding Process

VITAS now **responds to reviews within a day or less**, sometimes as little as 4 to 12 hours. The only times they do not are situations that might be more complicated and require more internal discovery. The team always wants to make sure they have all of the information they need to understand the context and scope of a situation before providing a response.

Boosting SEO with More Reviews

VITAS saw a **20% increase in total reviews year over year**, corresponding with the time of their implementation. More responses led to more reviews, which ultimately improved their Google My Business listings rankings, giving the providers greater search visibility.

In all, VITAS had a **10% increase in total positive feedback**, a **52% increase in total Google reviews** and **121% increase in total Facebook reviews**, all within the first year of implementation

Solution 2: Deep Analytics, Reporting & Benchmarking



Binary Health Analytics leverages analytics, reporting and benchmarking tools to generate actionable insights on customer engagement and satisfaction levels.

ends with the death of the patient. This time is obviously filled with grief and emotional stress for the patient's family and friends as they mourn their loved one and make preparations for final arrangements. The priority of VITAS providers is always to respect and empathize with those mourning, give them proper time and space to process their loss – like any other healthcare provider, they required an objective way to evaluate the quality of their services to make improvements for other patients.

Binary Health Analytics collects consumer feedback from multiple online resources including ratings and reviews, surveys, social media sites, as well as from affiliate websites of VITAS. The organization is able to leverage analytics, reporting and benchmarking tools, as well as powerful **natural language processing (NLP)** technology, for full-scale, accurate and actionable insights on customer engagement and satisfaction levels.

Another strategy involved shifting the action of requesting feedback to the beginning of care, rather than the end of the process.

Because VITAS specializes in hospice and palliative care services, it is expected that the patient journey

VITAS decided to make the “ask” for reviews closer to the beginning of the patient journey, while the family of the patient was still actively involved in the administering of care. Now, every admission packet that families and patients receive has a comment card in it, directing them to leave reviews online. They can also distribute the cards to local managers, nurses, home health aides, social workers, and physicians to give directly to someone who has had a positive experience.

Results

Increasing Star Reviews and Patient Satisfaction Scores

VITAS saw a **34% increase in patient satisfaction scores** within the first year of implementation. This was important for two reasons: firstly, star reviews often influence patients and families considering hospice care. Secondly, it also gave VITAS a better read on how they are performing as a company. By benchmarking review volume by location, they are able to see which locations or providers need improvement and can identify specific areas of concern.

Greater Listing Accuracy and Data Insights

Through Binary Fountain’s deep analytics and listings partner, VITAS is able to **optimize its listings on Google** and benchmark analytics across multiple locations.

With this foundation in place, VITAS can experiment with **new patient engagement strategies** and **direct consumers to popular review sites** while relying on an internal feedback system for email and surveys

About Binary Fountain

Healthcare organizations big and small use Binary Fountain to improve their online presence and protect their reputation.

Binary Fountain uses proprietary natural language processing (NLP) and data capture innovation to create customized online reputation management solutions for healthcare providers on a nationwide scale.

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