Managing your practice’s online reputation

By paying attention to what patients say about you on social media, and participating when it’s appropriate, you can help ensure your practice is fairly and positively represented online.

‘Claim’ your online business listings

Without a complete, accurate and up-to-date listing on web portals such as Yelp! and Google+, you’ll miss attracting the attention of many potential patients. After claiming and verifying your practice’s listing on these sites, you can create brand-consistent profiles and monitor them to see what patients are saying. Having verified, standardized listings will also net you a number of SEO benefits.

Monitor online conversations relevant to your practice

By monitoring social media conversations about your practice, you can determine what patients love about their experience and what they don’t. Using this feedback, you can initiate meaningful improvements at your practice. Studies have shown that for every person who complains online, 26 more could complain but don’t, so virtually every negative comment is worth considering.

Respond appropriately to patient comments whether positive or negative

Create a swift and effective response to negative online feedback when appropriate. Be authentic and compassionate: own up to valid complaints, apologize and, if necessary, outline what you’ll do to make things right. Conversely, don’t be afraid to gently correct patients whose complaints contain information you can verify is incorrect. Most issues should be resolved through private correspondence, not in a public forum such as your practice’s Yelp! or Facebook page.

Friedman is president and chief executive officer of Sesame Communications. She has a 20-year success track record in leading dental innovation and marketing. Throughout her career Friedman served as a recognized practice management consultant, author and speaker. She holds an MA in sociology and an MBA from Arizona State University.