



# Tools and Tips to Manage Your Online Reputation

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“Your brand name is only as good as your reputation.”

– Richard Branson

We all remember that fateful day when we passed through the doors of our High School for the very first time. Brows sweaty and backpacks brimming, we knew that our reputation from years past would follow our footsteps down the hallway, but that we'd also have an entirely different arena in which to create one anew.

The scenario itself may have changed, but many of the principles remain the same. Our reputation still precedes us when we enter a new environment, though now the World Wide Web is usually the messenger, for better or worse. Whether it's for a new job, a meeting, a fundraiser, a date, or

something in-between, there are more ways than ever for those around us to do their homework, on us, before meeting face to face.

That's right, a simple Google keyword search can bring up anything from your veterinary practice's website to your Facebook page, and hopefully not those Instagram pictures from your best friend's wedding. While it may seem like you have no control over what people find out about you online, the truth is that you have more of a say in the matter than you think.

Google has a remarkably comprehensive system in place for coordinating user search results and delivering them in a timely, deliberate, and meaningful fashion. What might seem like random results at first glance are actually a highly methodical process unfolding in real-time. “Crawlers”

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(known singularly as Googlebot) continuously sort through billions of web pages from each corner of the globe, algorithmically analyzing, assessing, ranking, and indexing web pages and sorting through each applicable result.

So what does this mean for you? It means that when a pet owner is looking for the best care online and nonchalantly typing in “pet hospital in your city;” your results aren’t random. In fact, they’re far from it. Google, which accounts for approximately 70% of search engine market share, is calculating your keywords and weighing out millions of results before delivering them to you, all in about 0.5 seconds

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flat. The key take-away here is this: practice owners can, and frankly need to, monitor and enhance their practice’s search results in order to maintain and leverage their online reputations.

For example, when searching online for a local veterinary practice, customer reviews will gravitate toward the top of the screen, and instantly display the name, website, address, phone number, and -- here’s the kicker -- one to five star average rating of nearby practices. In a Google search (by far the most common kind of online

perusal) this one to five score is the combined average rating of the Google Reviews that have been left for your practice. These scores can dramatically influence the amount of new clients that find, and ultimately choose, your practice, which is why a practice owner must safeguard and even encourage the establishment of a positive online reputation in order to fully optimize the practice.

Ok, so keyword searches and Google Reviews are all important factors to consider when managing my online reputation. But what can I do about it and how can I use these tools to enhance my practice? Well, I’m happy you asked!

### **Quick Tips: Improve Your Online Reputation**

**1** First, you’ve got to search for your veterinary practice online. If you’ve never looked, you might be a bit intimidated at what you find. But you can do it; dive right in. We recommend that you search on Google, Bing, Yahoo, and Yelp; and then “Claim Your Listing” once you’ve found the right result. Verify that this truly is your practice, and presto, you’ve claimed your online listing.

**2** Next, set up your online alerts. By using both [google.com/alerts](https://www.google.com/alerts) and [mention.net](https://www.mention.net) you’ll have two powerhouse services monitoring the Internet for results about your practice. Now you’ll be notified by email whenever a new result or review is available. Convenient? I think so.

**3** Now, bookmark your top online listings in a folder within your browser. This will save you time when you wish to check back on your results, and lets you easily review your listings at least several times a month.

**4** Here’s the fun part: engage with positive reviews! The average veterinary practice receives one review per month. You can reply to a positive review online, call and thank the client, or get creative and send a personalized Thank You card. Engage how you see fit, but definitely reach back to those who’ve been impressed with your practice. This little bit of effort can most definitely go a long way when it comes to encouraging positive reviews and ensuring client retention.

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## **Go the extra mile. You can engage directly with happy clients at checkout by encouraging them to leave a positive review for your practice**

**5** Finally, go the extra mile. You can engage directly with happy clients at checkout by encouraging them to leave a positive review for your practice. If they’re on board, send them a friendly reminder email at the end of the week, with a direct link to help them leave a Google Review.

It’s really that simple to enhance your online presence and manage

your online reputation. Doing so could mean the difference between countless new customers, and a haphazard Web presence. By pro-actively managing your online

reputation, you'll stay ahead of the curve, reach more clients, and ensure your veterinary practice maximizes its resources. In the digital age, you may not be able to

control everything that's published online, but you can certainly nudge it in the right direction.



## About the Author

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Eric Garcia is an IT expert. Digital marketer. Industry thought leader. When it comes to helping veterinary practices streamline their technology and attract and retain clients, Eric Garcia has a proven track record of educating the industry and producing results. Eric works exclusively with

veterinary practices. In addition to a long list of satisfied clients, Garcia's work has been recognized throughout the industry. He speaks regularly at conferences throughout the world.

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