

HOW TO IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM TO BOOST YOUR ONLINE REVIEWS

MEMBER ARTICLE | BY LAN ALEXANDER, DAADOM

Reviews are an effective way to boost a dental practice's online reputation and attract new patients to your practice. They help lead patients to your practice before they even take the first step of contacting your office. If you have not developed a system within your practice focusing on obtaining high-quality reviews, then now is the time. Here are some considerations when developing your online review program.

PROVIDE EXCELLENT SERVICE

The first step to receiving positive reviews is to provide consistent, excellent service to your patients. Do not underestimate the power of a friendly, positive, caring team, especially the administrative team members who answer the phones and emails and welcome your patients when they check-in.

- Take time to listen to your patients and their concerns
- Explain procedures clearly
- Ensure they are comfortable during treatment

Speaking of comfort, a comfort menu goes a long way if you have the appropriate patient base! Remember that you must deliver consistently on patients' expectations after setting the bar high, because you do not want to disappoint patients on subsequent visits. Go above and beyond so that patients will have an exceptional experience that they will be happy to share with everyone else.

TIMING IS IMPORTANT

To increase your success in getting the review, ask when the patient is most satisfied with their experience. Being selective of who you ask and when is key. If one of your team members has a great rapport with a patient, they should be the person to

ask the patient for the review. This will increase the likelihood that the patient will write a review. Here are tips to find the "sweet spot" of your timing:

- Ask immediately after a successful appointment
- Ask when the patient compliments you about the office
- Utilize your morning huddle to identify patients who will be ideal
- Coordinate the "ask" so the patient isn't asked by three different people on the same day

EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF REVIEWS

Let your patients know that reviews are important for the practice and can help others find you when searching for a new dentist. Let them know the best compliment they can give is to refer family and friends and write a review sharing their experience. I gently remind them that writing a few sentences would be ideal, and I preemptively thank the person for taking the time to do it.

MAKE IT EASY

The easier you make it for patients to write a review, the higher your chances are that they will follow through. There are many software options that will send a link for patients to write a review shortly after their appointment. I prefer using the software because you can also de-select people who are not good candidates for reviews (ensuring they don't receive a link). If you do not want to utilize software, you can ask the patient if they could share their experience on your preferred website. Or you can create a QR code for patients to scan.

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PRACTICE

Practice asking for reviews with the team to help ensure the request comes off naturally and is something everyone is comfortable doing. Spoiler alert—not everyone will be enthusiastic about doing this, especially if this is out of their comfort zone. That's why practicing will be crucial.

GAIN BUY-IN FROM THE TEAM

Introduce the concept at a team meeting by explaining the importance of gaining more reviews. This will help achieve “buy-in” from your team, and they will be more likely to participate. I found that having a fun activity helps bring this message home. Here is one that was hit with my team:

- Print out reviews from random establishments and pass them out
- Ask your team to read the reviews and choose the place they want to go to most and which they would avoid
- Have them share and discuss why they made those decisions

MAKE A PLAN

The practice should share the written plan for review requests. Start small if it is a brand new concept for your office so that it doesn't feel like an overwhelming task. It will help to have general bullet points of how to approach the conversation and encourage your team to phrase things in a way that is natural to them. Have your team practice with each other by pretending to be a patient and a team member while asking for the review. This part may take some time to perfect, and that's okay. Have fun with the process!

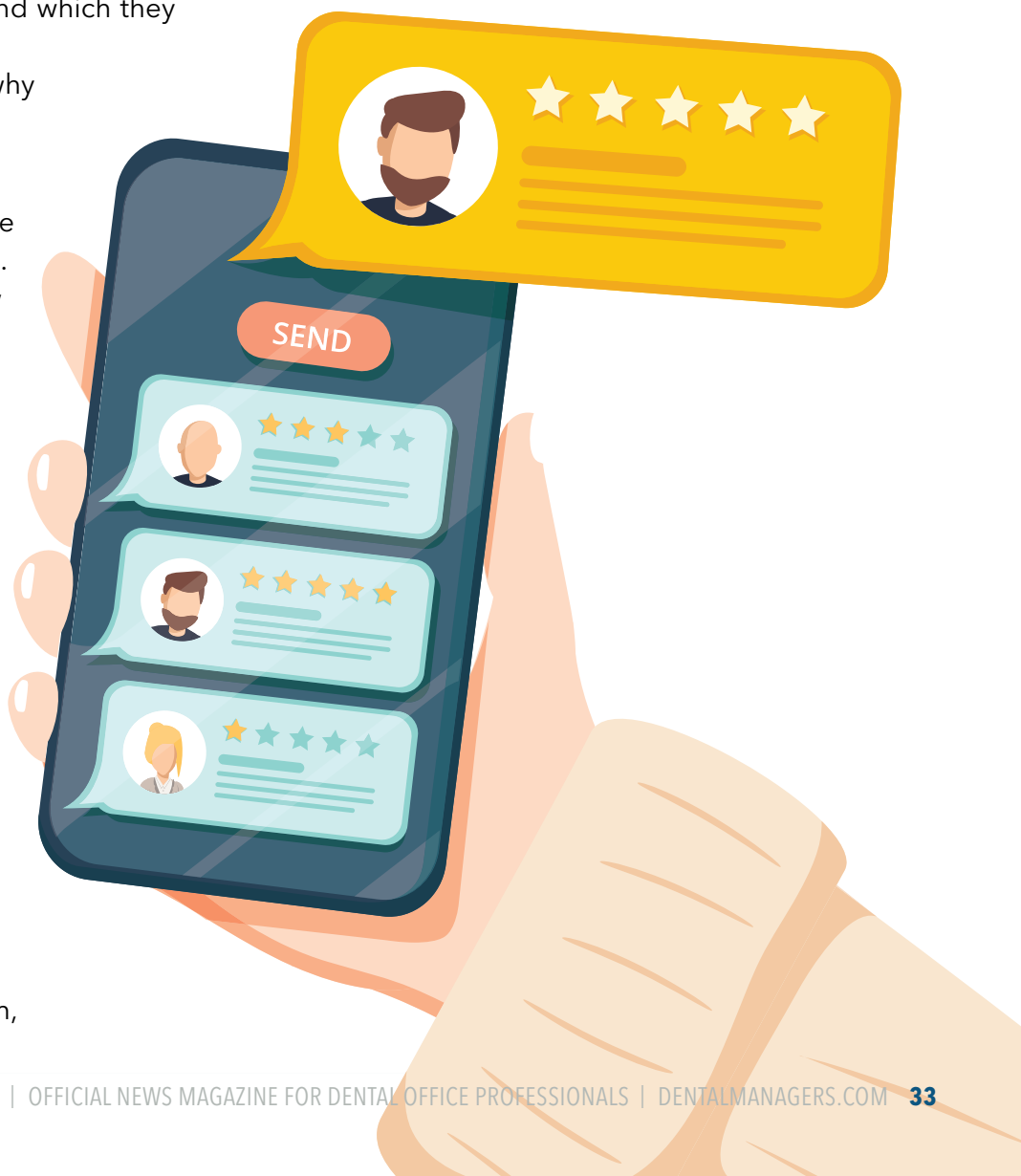
TRACK PROGRESS

Track your progress by creating a realistic and achievable goal for your team,

such as “x” reviews a month (you can even use a set number of reviews as a team bonus if you want), and check back weekly to see your progress. Be sure to have a referral source for “online reviews” to measure the data easily. The goal should be achievable by asking one or two people a day. You can edit the goal as things progress. Remember, you don't need thousands of reviews to achieve the amazing online reputation you want. Use a few hundred reviews as a baseline and then a steady stream of a few per week, adding to those consistently.

Once you get the reviews, respond to them (without divulging any specifics) and thank them for their feedback! You can even thank the patient the next time you see them in the office so they know you appreciate their efforts.

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"BAD" REVIEWS

If you end up with a dreaded one-star review - don't panic. This happens to all offices occasionally. If you usually get amazing reviews and this is an outlier, it will likely be drowned out by the positive ones and will actually legitimize them more. A practice with all five-star reviews might not seem "real", so a few four-star or three-star reviews is fine. It might even help you.

If the review is poorly written or is completely "out there" and nonsensical, most people will disregard it. I would not recommend responding online if the review seems like someone's genuine feedback. Not only do you want to be cautious of an accidental HIPAA violation, but a poorly executed response can worsen things. Here are a few tips on how to finesse a bad review:

- Contact the patient by phone and address their concerns professionally and tactfully
- Take responsibility to amend the situation if appropriate
- If there is an opportunity for improvement, then take it

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Reaching out personally may encourage the person to take the review down on their own. If they don't, then you did your best; remember that you cannot please everyone. Sometimes, you do everything perfectly, and someone will still give you one star. You cannot control others, so do not be too hard on yourself.

CONCLUSION

A strong and steady online review presence can help your practice grow and bring in valuable new patients. You can grow your online reputation efficiently and organically by providing consistently excellent patient experiences, asking the right patients for reviews, and measuring your success. ■



MEET THE MEMBER

Lan Alexander grew up in Cambridge, MA and graduated from college with a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Neuroscience. Lan's dental career passions include creating a positive, fulfilling work culture and providing exemplary service to patients.

She has been an AADOM Member since 2017 and served as president of the Dental Manager Collective - Boston, AADOM's DPLN Massachusetts Connection. Lan earned her AADOM Diplomate designation at the AADOM conference in 2023.

Outside of work, Lan loves spending time with her husband, Ron. She loves movies, exploring new restaurants, playing board games, and going on walks.