



Letting Your Care Shine Online

How Your Reputation Drives Preference and Choice

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You understand the importance of your reputation when it comes to attaining referrals, but did you know that nearly 90 percent of consumers find the reputation of a long-term care organization to be important or extremely important, according to a 2015 NRC Health study? And, with the baby boomers reaching their golden years, the demand for care—and staff to provide that care—is higher than ever. This necessitates a shift in your focus from hospital-driven to consumer-driven referrals.

The time has come to reach out to your future customers and employees directly—but how?

- How can you earn trust and drive preference for your organization before your services are needed?
- How can you meet your potential customers and employees?
- How can you make sure you are sharing with them the information they desire to make well-informed decisions for themselves and their loved ones?

Your Customers and Employees are Part of an Online, Social Community

Healthcare consumers today live their lives online. A Pew American Life study in 2014 stated that 87 percent of consumers access the Internet regularly, and NRC Health Market Insights data show that more and more consumers are visiting provider websites to seek healthcare information.

Websites aren't the only destination for these info-seekers. The NRC Health *2015 Healthcare Consumer Trends* study found that 57 percent of consumers trust information they receive via social media. Social media is not merely a means of reaching your Millennial employee base. Your customers—decision makers for long-term care services—are social too. In fact, the average social media user is 48 years old.

Another hotbed of customer-influencing information is found in the form of online star ratings and reviews, which are viewed by more than two-thirds of the population (73 percent). Even among the 65+ senior population, 52 percent view online ratings and reviews. And not only are they viewing, they are trusting. Gone are the days when a provider referral is the end all, be all. The vast majority of consumers—77 percent—trust ratings and reviews as much as or more than personal recommendations.

And if you think this proclivity for ratings and reviews doesn't extend into long-term care services, think again. Nearly 90 percent of consumers find ratings and reviews for long-term care services to be important or extremely important. So how can you use this to your organization's advantage?

Give Yourself A Digital Reputation Check-Up

Whether or not you like it—or are even aware of it—there likely are star ratings and reviews about your organization online. Sites like Facebook, SeniorAdvisor, and Yelp! allow consumers to voice their opinion of your organization and services. And on the employee side, Glassdoor offers a forum for former staff to rate and review your organization as an employer.

While you can—and should—monitor these sites to know what is being said about your organization, here are five examples of what more you can do to influence what consumers find when they head online to search for care or employment in your market.

The Transparency Movement – One way to bolster your organization's online image is to publish your customer and employee feedback in the form of online star ratings and reviews to your own website. Unlike third-party site reviews—which are unverified and often have a handful or fewer reviews—publishing your own feedback will give consumers a more accurate picture of the care your organization provides. Learn more at nrchealth.com/transparency.

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The Power of SEO – Another method to enhance your digital reputation is through SEO (Search Engine Optimization). SEO is the process of optimizing your website’s content so you appear higher in search results and drive more traffic to your website.

You can increase your site’s visibility by utilizing keywords that your consumers are searching for in the body text, title, and keywords of your pages.

- Do you know what consumers in your area are searching for?
- Are they searching for “Skilled Nursing” or “Nursing Home”?
- Do they use words like “client/patient” or “resident”?



TOP KEYWORDS SEARCH	
LTC CONSUMERS	PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES
Senior Living (insert City, State)	Nursing Jobs (insert City, State)
Independent Living	Certified Nursing Assistant Jobs
Retirement Communities	Retirement Home Careers
Assisted Living Communities	Senior Living Wellness Jobs
Service Line (i.e. Alzheimer’s care)	Part-Time Nursing Jobs

Social Media Sway – An additional and budget-friendly way to engage and interact with consumers in your market is through social media. These interactions increase consumer familiarity with your brand. In fact, 31 percent of consumers would prefer a healthcare provider based on their interactions with them on social media, according to the NRC Health *2015 Healthcare Consumer Trends* study. Provide consumers with helpful resources that link back to your website to demonstrate you are an expert in long-term care.

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Paid Persuasion – If you want to supplement your SEO efforts or social media, you can run paid advertisements through Google Adwords, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others. Paid ads help enhance your organization’s online and social presence by allowing you to reach consumers outside of your current follower base and drive more traffic to your website. You can set your budget at an affordable rate and target specific audiences with your ads. Discover what channels your prospective customers and employees interact with most, and focus your advertisement efforts on those channels.

Digital-Centric is Customer- and Employee-Centric

Your organization’s reputation is a living thing, fed by referrals and word-of-mouth—both face-to-face and screen-to-screen. In an era where healthcare consumers are on-demand—and long-term care services are in-demand—a strong online presence that showcases your stellar care is not an option; it’s a necessity. Learn more at nrchealth.com/transparency.

About the author



Rich Kortum is the Director of Strategic Partnerships at NRC Health. Rich works closely with state and national healthcare associations to develop strategic partnerships that empower customer-centric healthcare across the continuum. Rich provides NRC Health partner organizations with support, education, and guidance to effectively utilize employee and customer experience data to drive organizational performance. He works in conjunction with association leaders to advocate for improving the quality of care offered in post-acute care settings.



NRC Health enables healthcare organizations to illuminate and improve the key moments that define an experience and build trust. Guided by a uniquely empathic heritage, proprietary methods, and holistic approach, we help our partners design experiences that exceed expectations and inspire loyalty among patients, residents, physicians, nurses, and staff.

