

Reviewing Yelp Strategy for Urgent Care Centers



When people get sick these days their first stop isn't urgent care – it's [Yelp](#).

Consumers use the ratings site Yelp to guide and inform their spending decisions. Roughly 83 million people visit Yelp each month. And the number of patients using online reviews jumped 68 percent from 2013 to 2014, according to an article in [Software Advice](#).

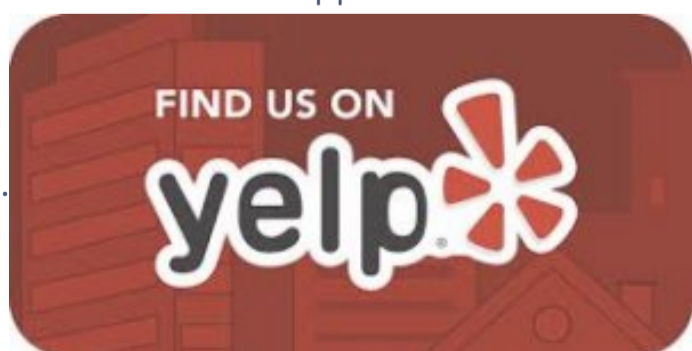
Because of this consumer behavior, it's critical that urgent care center operators optimize their Yelp profile, promote positive feedback, and monitor all online reviews. It matters to an urgent care center's bottom line: [Harvard Business School research](#) found that a 1-star improvement on Yelp can translate to anywhere from a 5 to a 9 percent swing in revenue.

But how do you net positive reviews? And just how many do you need? There's no one right answer to these questions, since patient behaviors vary and the ratings algorithm used by Yelp changes over time.

Yelp discourages businesses from actively seeking reviews. In fact, the website [PracticalEcommerce](#) says: "Yelp is possibly the most restrictive of all the business directories and review sites when it comes to asking for customer reviews.

The website's recommended approach is for staff to ask customers—in this case, patients—to check the business

out on Yelp.



This is intended to motivate people to leave feedback at the point of service. Yelp suggests using tent cards, QR codes, buttons worn by staff, and links from your website as conduits in the process.

[Playa Vista Medical Center](#) in California has hundreds of Yelp reviews, including enough high ratings to net the urgent care 4.5 stars. It's an impressive rating and higher than other medical facilities in the area near Los Angeles.

"We pride ourselves on having concierge-type services at non-concierge prices," said Susan Karpel, Director of Marketing and Client Relations at Playa Vista. "We've done a number of things (to spur patients to leave Yelp reviews)."

One technique is a big red rubber stamp put on discharge paperwork that says: "If you like us, Yelp us! Show your feedback." Karpel tells her staff to generally encourage patients to feel better, and if they had a good visit, tell their friends and family about the urgent care center.

Karpel feels like the initial surge of reviews for the center has tapered off, however. She speculates that returning patients (rather than first-time users) aren't likely to write a follow-up review. It's not like going to a restaurant, she pointed out, where you might eat a new dish and have a totally different experience going back a second time.

Since you don't want to miss any new opportunities for a Yelp review, it's important to raise awareness to patients in your center. To engage staff throughout the center in this process, some facilities implement a "flow sheet" on which the employee initials at each point in the patient encounter when they are supposed to speak to the patient about leaving positive feedback.

One idea for incentivizing staff to follow through with these mentions is to provide a contest



to recognize employees who do this consistently—or recognize

all staff members when the number of postings goes up. Without some stake in the outcome, it's likely staff will say they're uncomfortable doing it or they'll say they do it when they actually do not. Creating some type of accountability and incentive, particularly if a particular employee is complimented, will likely boost [staff engagement](#).

Here are a few more ideas from PracticalEcommerce for encouraging Yelp reviews:

Add a link to your business listing in Yelp in your email signature.

Share Yelp reviews on Facebook and other social media. It's worth including one or two negative reviews (along with the comments/efforts you made to satisfy the customer) so followers aren't skeptical of your ratings.

Use reviews in marketing materials, but follow Yelp's guidelines for doing so.

The impact of a positive Yelp profile will be felt in countless ways at your urgent care center as long as you invest some time and energy into boosting customer satisfaction and review activity.

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