



7 Lessons Hospitals Can't Afford to Learn the Hard Way

**LESSON #1:
STEP UP REPUTATION
MANAGEMENT – OR ELSE**



Media, algorithms and advertising combine to create a perpetual stream of content, noise and distraction, often intended to spark anger, which is shared widely on social media. This manipulated outrage complicates life for hospitals, in particular. We have to acknowledge the anger and often struggle to rise above it.

The secret is to proactively manage your hospital's reputation and the larger issues in health care that impact it.

Keep your ear to the ground, an eye on social media, and avoid missing a key community issue that evolves quickly – without you leading the conversation.

Effective Strategies for Managing Real — or Manipulated — Outrage:

1. SIT IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Reputation management is monitoring, responding to, and influencing the conversations about your hospital (that occur online, in the community or in the media).

Even if you're not tapped into and guiding these conversations, they're still happening – you're just not in control.

Managing the good and mitigating the bad of what people think about you is ongoing, ever-present work.

You must proactively cultivate your organization's brand – who you are and what you stand for – while never losing sight of potential threats to the hospital's reputation.

2. FOCUS ON THE TRAFFIC HAZARDS

Myriad channels mean there are endless opportunities to promote your brand through social media, earned media, owned channels and search engine marketing.

Focus your team on the channels that can bring the greatest ROI for your reputation.

Part of the picture is managing the everyday risks to your reputation that consistently arise.

- What are former employees saying on sites like GlassDoor?
- What do ratings on sites like Healthgrades and RateMD.com say about our providers?
- What are the last 10 news stories that mentioned the hospital?

Managing reputational risks often requires working with other departments like HR, quality and patient safety, and billing.

3. OCCASIONALLY CHECK THE ENGINE

Reputation management has **brand positioning strategy** at its core. Ensure the concepts and messages that reflect current initiatives are your home base.

Tools for media management and social listening (e.g., SproutSocial, Meltwater) help you know what people are saying so that you can respond in real time.

A **clear standard review process** so everyone involved in a MarComms role delivers messages as intended, in every column, ad, post, and tweet.

For over 20 years, SE2 has worked with hospitals and health systems across the Rocky Mountain West to engage and influence providers, patients and policymakers.

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