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## TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR REPUTATION!

Want an easy way to generate feedback for your law firm, boost your online presence, get more positive reviews, and discourage negative reviews?



Check out the brand spankin' new DSS Reputation Management tool!

Give us a call at **888-886-0939** to see how the Reputation Management Tool can improve your online reputation.

# First Impressions Are Critical to Your Online Success



by Tom Foster, Founder and CEO at Foster Web Marketing

**With their rise in popularity, online reviews have shaken up the world of public relations and marketing. Managing your online reputation has become a difficult and delicate balance, but those that have cracked the code are benefiting greatly from their efforts.**

I am telling you right now that managing your online reputation is, in almost all cases, the differentiator between one law firm getting more business than another. It's the way the solo, small, and medium-sized practices get noticed over those big giant firms that spends millions on TV—those firms that you thought you could never beat. If you take an active approach to managing your reputation, you can not only compete with those big firms, but you can come out on top.

When you do your own research for a service you need, you start by searching Google. You could search using any of the hundreds of thousands of possible keyword variations, but almost every search result will produce a combination of the following:

- A few pay-per-click ads.
- A local pack with star ratings based on Google reviews.
- Organic search results, which includes additional review websites.

While the PPC ads are popping up first, the local pack is the most attention-grabbing result on the page, followed by the review sites that also show star ratings. So here's the bottom line: a properly optimized website—with quality content and a good user

experience—for a business that has reviews on sites like Google and Yelp will have better visibility than a business with few or no reviews online.

### Your Reputation Relies on More Than Just Reviews

You need to control what the Internet is saying about you and your business. If you leave it up to the Internet to speak for you, you're playing with fire. The best way to do this is by branding yourself. By that, I don't mean the colors on your website—I mean identifying who you are and what you stand for. Are you a family man? Are you an avid cyclist? Are you a rock star (like me)? Share that with your audience! It will resonate with your potential clients and make them feel connected.

For example, Attorney Jim Dodson is an avid cyclist. He represents people who have been injured in bicycle accidents, and his personal affiliation forms a connection with his audience. Another example of great branding comes from Bill Turley, who has branded himself as a "No B.S." attorney. Bill works with blue-collar guys who have been injured on off-shore boats and don't want to hear legalese.

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# How to **IMPROVE CONVERSION** With Reviews

by Molly McCormick, Marketing Manager at Foster Web Marketing

*Not only do reviews play a key role in your online reputation, local visibility, and trust factor, but they also have a big impact on conversion rates. When converting readers from audience to prospects, it's not enough for you to rank higher than the competition; you need social proof that makes it clear you are the best option. And people aren't just looking at reviews when organically searching for a lawyer—they are also checking reviews when they've been referred to you.*



All that being said, generating reviews, especially positive ones, is difficult. In this article I've laid out the best review-generation strategies to start getting better, more-qualified conversions on your website.

## **Create a Diverse Review Profile**

Search engines pull reviews from popular sites, so give your clients options when requesting reviews. Not everyone relies on or trusts the same review site, and having a diverse review profile will show prospects that you really are respected, wherever they look. Your star rating may show up in search results for sites like Google+ Local, Facebook Avvo, Yelp, and a number of other review sites, which makes those links visually more appealing.

## **Identify the Best Review Sites for Your Practice**

This may seem like a no-brainer, but where you are located and the type of law you practice will make some review sites more meaningful than others. For example, divorce attorneys and criminal defense attorneys typically have a hard time getting reviews because people don't always want to admit they've had to use your services. In this case, promote review sites that allow

anonymous reviews, such as Citysearch, Avvo, or Angie's List.

## **Have a Review Strategy in Place**

In order to get a consistent stream of positive reviews, you need to have an ethical strategy in place. Use a tool, like the brand-new Reputation Management Tool in DSS™ to request feedback regularly. This particular tool will send an email asking if the client would refer your business to a friend or family member. If the client clicks the “yes” button, he is taken to a page where he can leave a review and then post it to one or more review sites. If he clicks “no,” he will be thanked for his feedback and told “someone may reach out to discuss your experience.” This provides a filter to catch possible negative reviews, and gives you a chance to communicate with unhappy clients about their issues and what you can do to improve.

## **Discourage Negative Reviews**

The easiest way to discourage negative reviews is to provide exceptional customer service from the very beginning. That being said, we all run into issues from

time to time, so you should follow up soon after the client has visited; this gives the client a chance to complain directly to you (rather than to the entire Internet) and gives you a chance to address any issues he may have had. Respond to complaints quickly and kindly—losing your cool over unfair criticism will make a bad situation worse. Don't be defensive, and apologize for the negative experience. Whatever is upsetting the client may not be your fault, but explaining how you will do better in the future can alleviate his frustrations and prevent him from leaving negative reviews.

If you do receive a negative review, you need to respond in the same manner; apologize, thank the writer for his feedback, and ask him to call your office so you can address the issue offline.

Once you have a sustainable review strategy in place, your conversion rates will begin to improve. Be sure you have polite, well-trained intake staff to keep those newly converted prospects happy. Managing your online reputation is just one of the many critical factors that will impact your online success. 🌐



Want to know what your site needs in order to improve conversion rates? Get a free snapshot analysis at [FWManalysis.com](http://FWManalysis.com) to see what needs help, and what you're doing right.



# SUCCESS STORIES

## ***How a Review Generation Strategy Helped DeLoach & Hofstra to Improve Their Online Reputation, Reach Their Perfect Clients, and Increase Staff Engagement***

*Simone DeLoach is the Internal Director of Marketing at DeLoach & Hofstra PA, and she was the driving force behind their recent review generation strategy. Simone knew DeLoach & Hofstra's clients were happy, so she wanted to use that feedback to generate reviews and improve the firm's online reputation.*

Today, DeLoach & Hofstra is seeing great reviews coming in on a wide variety of sites. Website traffic is up, and Simone was able to make the process a fun, collaborative experience for her team.

### **Outlining the Strategy**

Simone took an excellent approach to the process. First, she educated the firm on the importance of reviews in today's marketplace and outlined the review sites they wanted to focus on. By targeting popular sites like Avvo, Facebook, Google, and Yelp, the new reviews have excellent visibility, and show up for a number of search queries.

Next, the firm focused on timing. The team requested feedback as cases came to a close or when clients seemed happy. Some clients provided reviews even though they did not hire the attorney—they appreciated the attorney's honesty and the time spent with them during the free one-hour consultation.

Finally, the firm employed a very good strategy—the team reached out to clients they enjoyed working with and who enjoyed working with them. Because of this particular strategy, DeLoach & Hofstra is now targeting more of the clients they want to work with! By generating reviews from some of their best cases and clients, they may

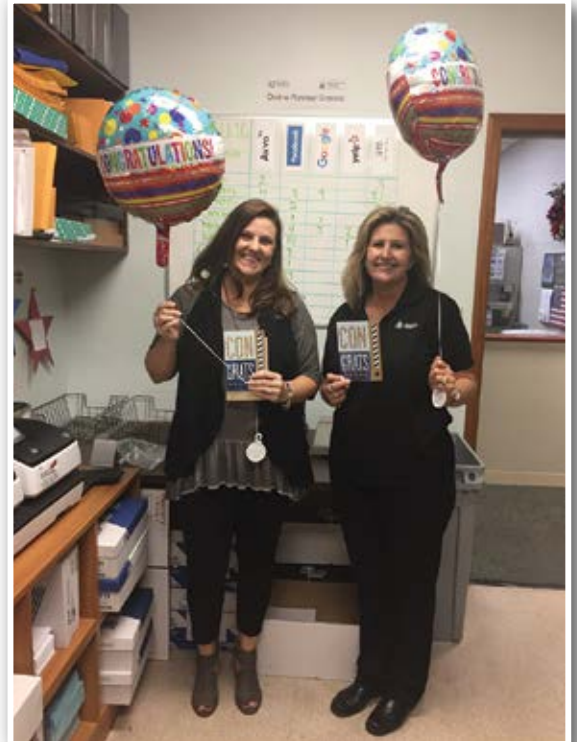
rank better in searches related to those practice areas.

### **How They Got Reviews**

Once the strategy was outlined, the firm got to work. They set up a review email template with custom links to the review sites they were targeting. The emails were then sent to the clients from the firm member who worked with them directly. Requesting feedback and explaining that it would be helpful to others facing a similar situation made current and former clients feel valued. As reviews rolled in, the team used Foster Web Marketing's Reputation Management tool to receive alerts, manage, and respond to them. But the team did not stop there: they also took a more direct approach, asking clients for reviews in person.

### **How the Firm Tracked Their Success and Made it Fun**

To be sure everyone understood the strategy and took the right approach, Simone held three online review workshops to answer any questions the staff had. Then, they turned review generation into a fun and friendly competition.



*Simone DeLoach, internal marketing director at DeLoach & Hofstra PA, says, "The online review contest has been a win-win scenario on so many levels."*

The staff member with the most reviews over a one-month period received a \$25 gift card, and the staff member with the greatest number of reviews in the quarter received a \$50 gift card. Simone announced the winner in an

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## First Impressions Are Critical to Your Online Success

These guys are controlling their online reputation by branding themselves, rather than letting the audience try to figure out who they are. People work with people they like, and positive reviews coupled with excellent branding is the key to a

stellar online reputation.

### How to Manage Your Reputation

We have a process to do this the RIGHT way and you can start with the article Molly wrote (see page 2).

Stay away from “review farms” or peer groups that try to get you to swap and trade reviews, and instead focus on creating great client experiences based on what makes your brand unique. 🌐



Managing your reputation can be tough, but once you have a system in place you will start to reap the benefits. Want to know how you can improve? Register for a snapshot analysis at [FWManalysis.com](http://FWManalysis.com).



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## Success Stories

all-staff email and decorated the winning staff members’ work stations. Gift cards came with congratulatory cards signed by all of the DeLoach & Hofstra attorneys, and they were presented to recipients by their direct-report attorneys. This added recognition and gravitas to the occasion. Of course, the attorneys also participated in the contest, but they decided not to compete for the prizes—they really wanted to celebrate the efforts of the staff.

The firm also used a scoreboard to gamify and track their reviews. They posted the reviews in shared office spaces so the team could see them. This was not only a great way to celebrate their successes, but it was also a good reminder to keep seeking new reviews. If a staff member was mentioned by name on Facebook, they were encouraged to comment from their personal account, if they felt comfortable doing so.

Even better than the organic traffic, however, has been the direct response to these positive reviews. The firm has received calls in which a potential client specifically said they were looking around online and decided to call after seeing the great reviews. One of the firm’s attorneys received an email complimenting him on his reviews—that client ended up choosing DeLoach & Hofstra because of those reviews and the firm’s reputation.

When we asked Simone about the benefits of this review generation campaign, she couldn’t say enough good things!

*“So many people say they do not know what they would have done without us or that we provided them with peace of mind. They always want to know how they can thank us, aside from the payment. Providing reviews helps the clients feel good too—it can even bring closure to some very heart-wrenching cases.”*

*All of our staff members are phenomenal, and we compliment them often. But again, those compliments mean so much more coming from the clients. Everyone on our staff is here because they want to help people; the public recognition they receive is priceless.”*

### What Were the Results?

	BEFORE	AFTER
Google	0	19 - 5 Stars
Avvo	7	52 - 5 Stars
facebook	1	36 - 5 Stars
yelp	0	2 recommended reviews - 5 Stars

**DeLoach & Hofstra’s site has seen 19.23% growth in organic traffic since October 1, 2016, when the campaign started.**

There were a number of positive changes happening at this time, but it’s pretty safe to say the new reviews have definitely contributed to this significant growth!

Simone and the rest of the firm are so pleased with the results. “We have been getting great responses, and people are telling us that they hired us because we had such great reviews! The online review contest has been a win-win scenario on so many levels.” 🌐