

The Reviews Playbook for Dentists

The A to Z guide to earning, managing and leveraging
patient reviews

SERP Dental™ Webinar Series

4.9

★★★★★



Maria G.

★★★★★ 2 days ago

Dr. Patel and the whole team made me feel so comfortable. Best cleaning I've ever had!



James T.

★★★★★ 1 week ago

Emergency visit on a Saturday and they got me in within an hour. Pain gone. Thank you!



Priya S.

★★★★★ 3 weeks ago

My kids actually look forward to the dentist now. Gentle, patient and so friendly.

Meet Your Speaker



Sonia Hounsell

Co-CEO, AscendPoint Agency • SERP Dental

30 yrs

brand marketing &
entrepreneurship

25+

CPG products launched



Deal with Robert
Herjavec (2023)

Exit

FunkkOFF! grew, scaled
& sold to private equity

Sonia has led brands at **Pfizer, Bayer and McKinsey & Co.** and launched 25+ CPG products across healthcare and consumer goods. She co-founded and grew **FunkkOFF!®** into an internationally recognized oral care brand.

After her 2023 Shark Tank deal with Robert Herjavec, FunkkOFF! tripled in size, earned coverage in NBC, Travel & Leisure and the LA Times, and was later sold to private equity. Sonia now channels that growth expertise into scaling AscendPoint.



**Harvard
Business
School**

Executive Education



**DARDEN SCHOOL
of BUSINESS**

MBA



**BOSTON
COLLEGE**

BS, Finance

Who We Are

One growth partner, with a platform built specifically for dental



AscendPoint Agency

Healthcare marketing services & enablement



Dental marketing agency focused on business outcomes



SEO & local search visibility



Google Business Profile & review growth



Patient growth strategy & reporting

ONLY ONE BUILT FOR DENTAL



Our proprietary AI visibility tracking platform, designed specifically for dental



Tracks whether ChatGPT, Gemini & Google's AI recommend you



Benchmarks you against local competing practices



Automated content to grow your AI visibility

Today's Agenda

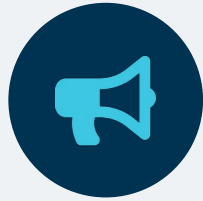
Four parts, from why it matters to what to do tomorrow morning



01

Why Reviews Matter

Your GBP, patient trust, and AI Authority



02

How to Get Reviews

Who asks, when, how, and how often



03

Managing Your Reviews

Responding, negative reviews, and KPIs



04

What You Can Do Tomorrow

Five quick actions to start building momentum

01

Why Reviews Matter

What reviews actually do for your practice — on Google, with patients, and in AI search



Reviews are your new front door

Before a patient ever calls, they've already judged your practice online



Searches

"dentist near me"



Sees the Map Pack

Your Google Business Profile



Reads your reviews

The decision point



Checks your website

Looks for reassurance



Calls or books

...or picks a competitor

97%

of consumers read reviews when choosing a local business

41%

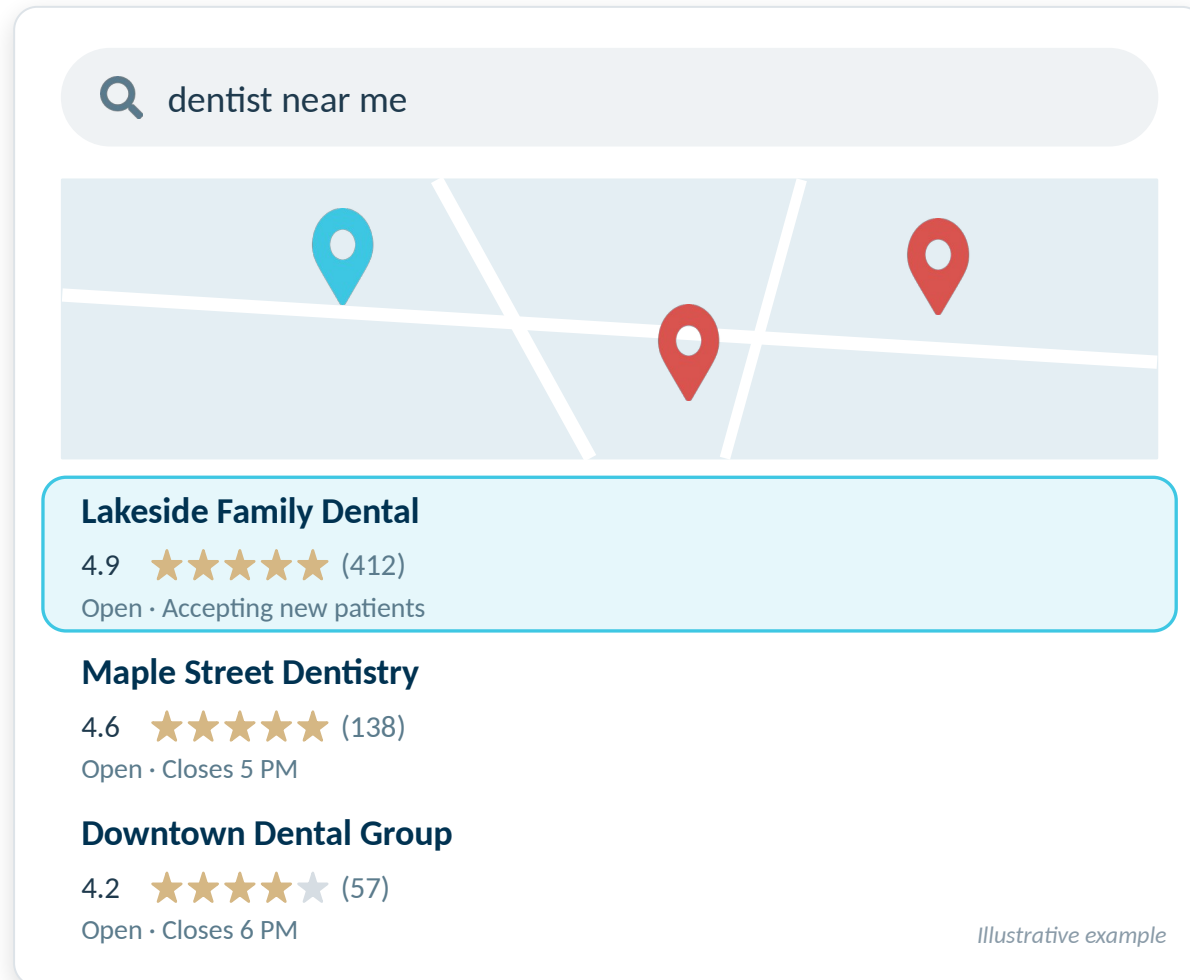
now ALWAYS read reviews — up from 29% just one year earlier

54%

go to your website next after reading positive reviews

Reviews power your Google Business Profile

They are one of the strongest local ranking signals you can actually control



Google ranks local results on three factors

Relevance

Do you match the search?

Distance

How close are you?

Prominence

How well known & trusted are you?

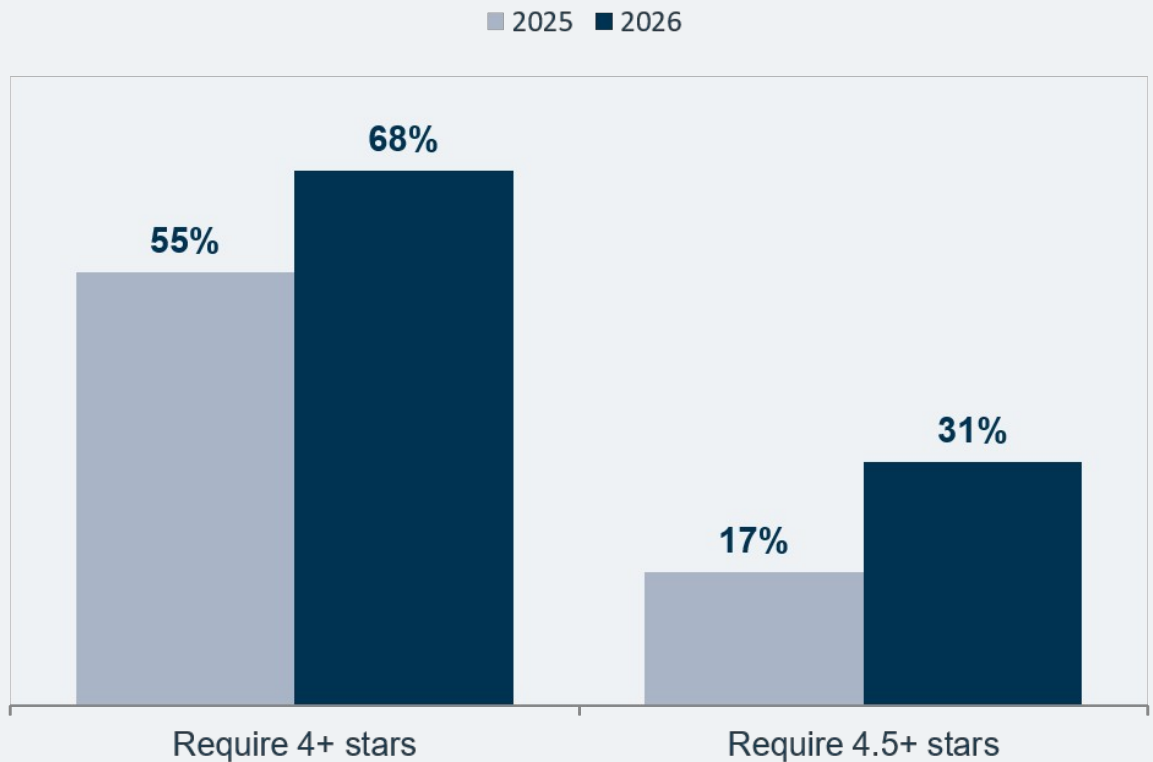
Reviews are the biggest Prominence lever you control:

- # Review count
- ★ Star rating
- 🕒 Recency & velocity (how often new ones arrive)
- 🔑 Keywords in review text (implants, Invisalign...)
- ↩️ Your owner responses

The trust bar is rising — fast

What patients now require before they'll even consider you

Minimum star rating consumers require



47%

won't use a business with fewer than 20 reviews

92%

say star ratings factor into their decision

#1

trust factor: many reviews that say the same thing (56%)

Reviews build your AI Authority (AEO)

Patients now ask AI who to trust — and AI answers with what your reviews say

**AI Assistant**

Who's the best dentist near me for dental implants?
I'm nervous about pain.

Here are a few highly rated options nearby:

1. Lakeside Family Dental 4.9★ · 412 reviews
Patients frequently mention **painless implant procedures**, a **calming, anxiety-friendly** team, and **Dr. Patel's clear explanations**. Recent reviews from this month are consistently positive.

2. Maple Street Dentistry 4.6★ · 138 reviews

Illustrative example

 **Track this with AscendVu:** our AI visibility platform built for dental

45%
use AI tools like ChatGPT for local recommendations (up from 6%)

82%
read AI-generated review summaries

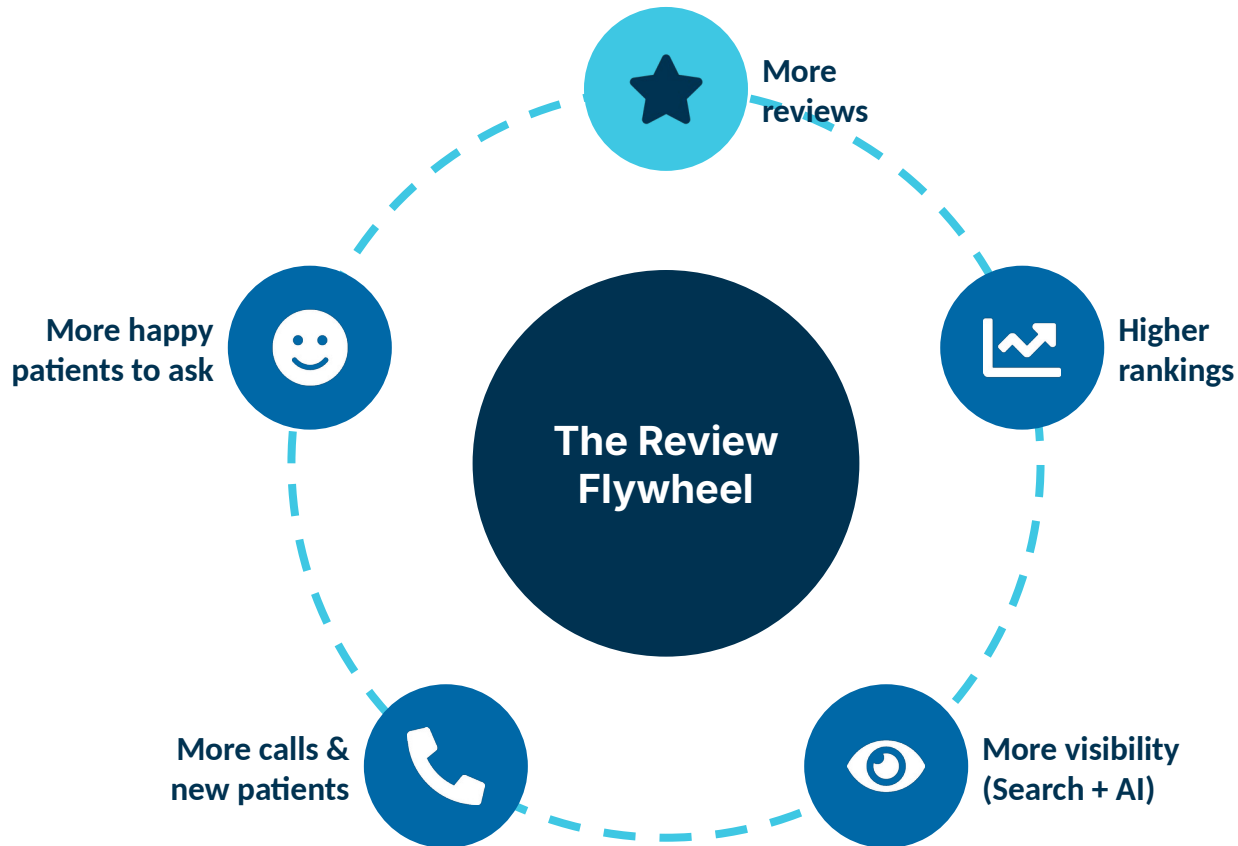
What AI learns from your reviews

- **What you're known for**
Services patients name: implants, Invisalign, kids
- **How patients feel**
Sentiment: gentle, on time, no pressure
- **Whether you're active now**
Fresh reviews = a trustworthy, current source
- **Whether the story is consistent**
Many reviews saying the same thing

Source: BrightLocal, Local Consumer Review Survey 2026

What reviews do for your practice

Reviews compound — each one makes the next new patient easier to win



Beyond rankings, strong reviews also...



Convert more searchers

85% are more likely to use a business after reading positive reviews



Ease case acceptance

New patients arrive already trusting your team and recommendations



Make ad dollars work harder

Ads that land on a 4.8★ profile convert far better than on a 3.9★



Help you hire and retain

Candidates read reviews too, and teams love seeing their names in them

02

How to Get Reviews

The rules, the people, the timing, the words, and the system



The rules of the road

Get this right first — shortcuts here can cost you your reviews, or much more



Google Policy

- ✗ No discounts, gifts or drawings in exchange for reviews
- ✗ No "review gating" — pushing unhappy ones somewhere private
- ✗ No reviews from staff, family or the owner
- ✗ No buying reviews or review swaps



FTC Rule (2024)

- ✗ Fake reviews are illegal, including AI-written ones
- ✗ No incentives tied to a positive review
- ✗ No suppressing or hiding negative reviews
- ✗ Civil penalties of \$50K+ per violation



HIPAA

- 🔒 Never confirm someone is a patient in a reply
- 🔒 Never mention treatment details — even if they did
- 🔒 Keep protected health info out of every response
- 🔒 Train everyone who replies on your behalf



The golden rule: Ask every patient. Ask the same way. Never pay, filter, or fake.

Who asks? Reviews are a team sport

Every role has a part, and one person owns the result



The Dentist

Plants the seed

Acknowledges a great result and lets the patient know the team will send a quick review link. Patients say yes to their doctor.



Hygienist / Assistant

Spots the moment

Has the most one-on-one time. Notices happy patients, makes a warm ask, and flags them for the front desk.



Front Desk

Closes the loop

Confirms the mobile number, mentions the text that's coming, and points to the QR code at checkout.

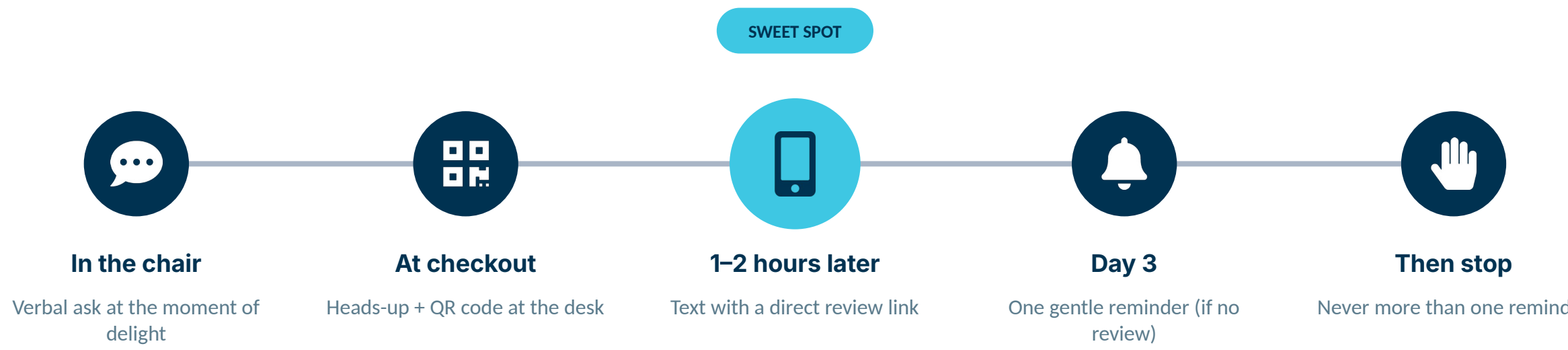


Name a Review Champion

- ✓ Owns the weekly review count
- ✓ Shares new reviews at the morning huddle
- ✓ Celebrates team members named in reviews
- ✓ Keeps the ask consistent across every role

Timing: ask at the moment of delight

The same ask lands very differently in the chair than it does three weeks later



Moments of delight in dentistry

- ✓ "No cavities" — a clean checkup
- 😊 The smile reveal: whitening, Invisalign, veneers
- 🚑 Pain relief after an emergency visit
- 💙 When a patient thanks or praises the team

94%
of consumers are open to writing a review
— if you catch them at the right moment

Source: BrightLocal, Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (94% statistic). Timing guidance reflects common industry best practice.

How to ask: say it naturally

Short, sincere and specific. Word-for-word scripts your team can use tomorrow

THE DENTIST

"I'm really happy with how this turned out. If you have a minute later, a Google review would mean a lot to our team. It helps people in town find a dentist they can trust."

THE HYGIENIST

"Your home care is really paying off! We're a local practice, so reviews help us a lot. Would you be open to sharing your experience today?"

THE FRONT DESK

"We'll text you a quick link to leave a Google review. It takes about 30 seconds. Is this still the best mobile number for you?"

Do

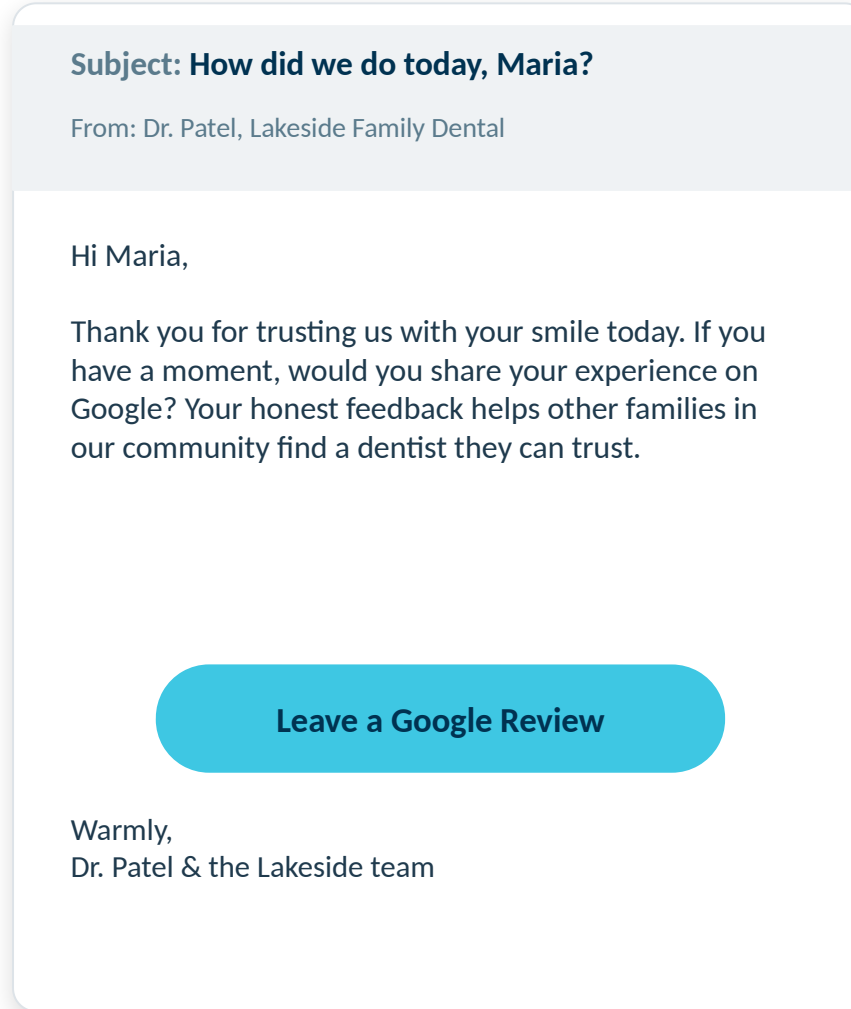
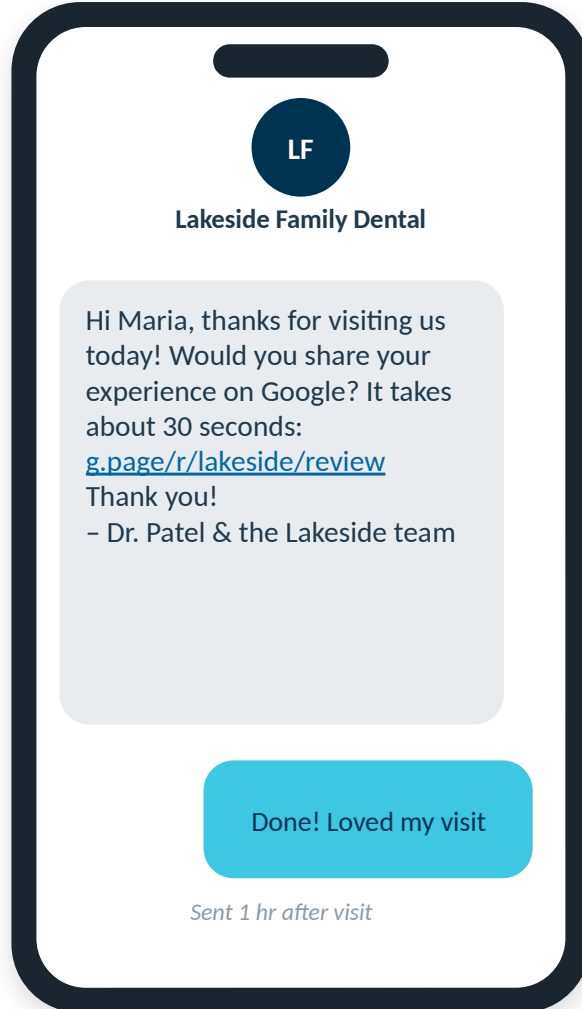
- ✓ Make it personal and sincere
- ✓ Say it helps other patients find you
- ✓ Tell them the link is coming by text

Don't

- ✗ Ask for "5 stars"
- ✗ Offer a discount, gift or drawing
- ✗ Only ask the patients who seem happy

How to ask: text & email templates

Same day, short, personal, and one tap straight to the review form

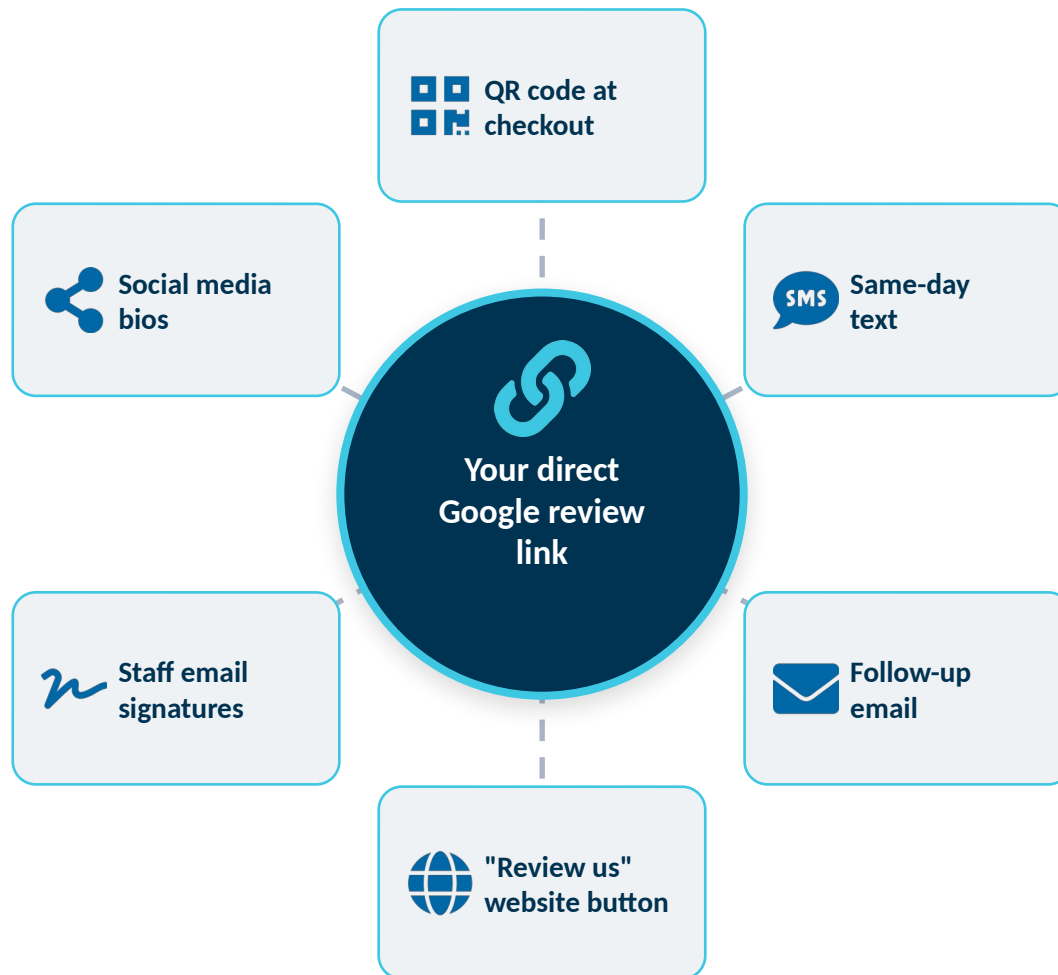


Template rules

- ✓ Send the same day, 1–2 hours after the visit
- ✓ Keep texts short: two or three sentences
- ✓ Use their first name and the doctor's name
- ✓ One link, straight to the Google review form
- ✓ Ask for honest feedback — never "5 stars"
- ✓ Text first; use email as a backup channel

Make it easy: remove every extra tap

One direct review link, everywhere your patients already are



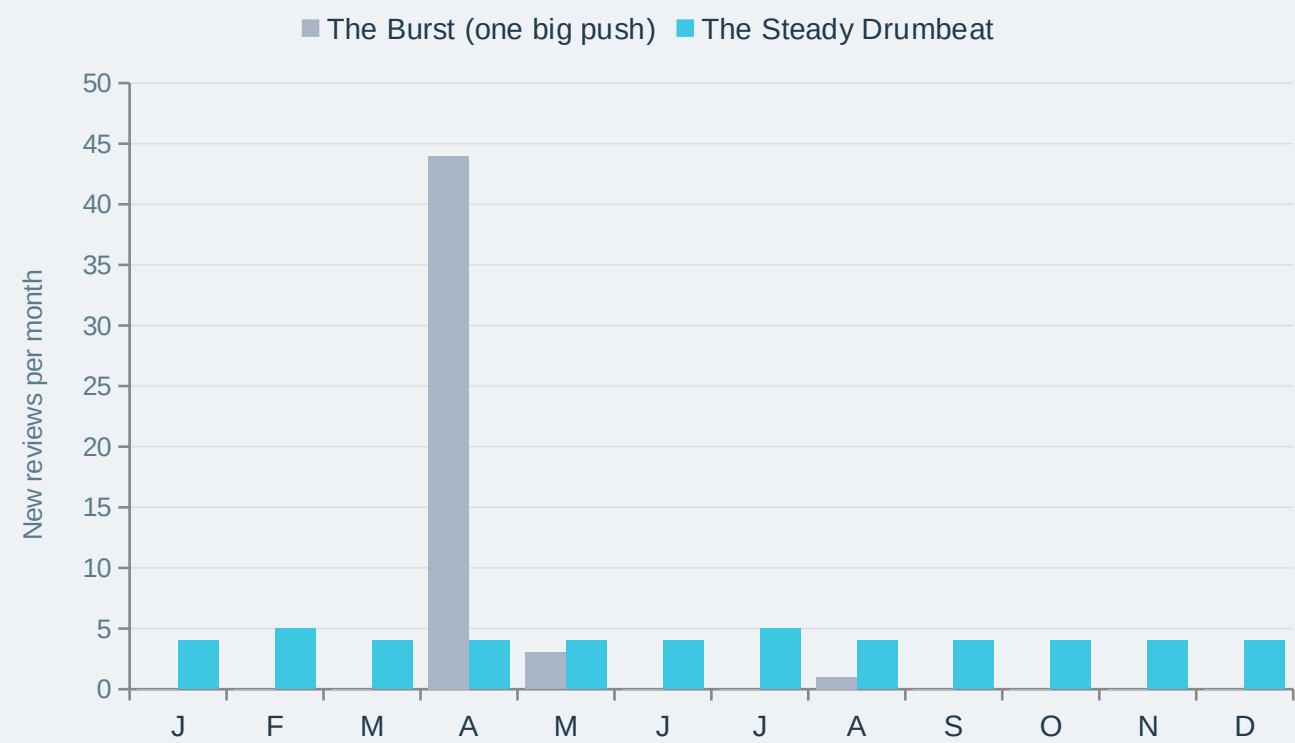
Get your link in 2 minutes

- 1 Sign in to your Google Business Profile (search your practice name while logged in)
- 2 Click "Ask for reviews" (sometimes labeled "Get more reviews")
- 3 Copy the short link, or download the QR code Google provides
- 4 Test it on your phone, then share it with every team member

Consistency beats bursts

Google and patients both reward a steady drumbeat of new reviews

Two practices, ~50 reviews each in a year



Same total. The steady practice always has fresh reviews; the burst practice looks dormant for 8 months.

Your review velocity math

20 patients per day

× 20 working days

= 400 visits per month

× 10% who leave a review when asked

≈ 40 new reviews every month

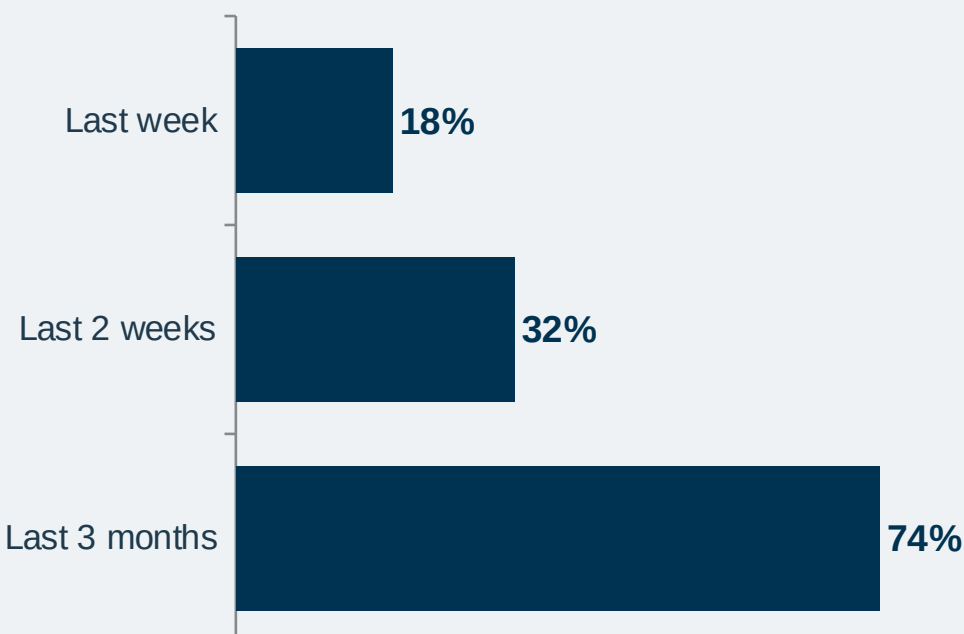
Even at 5%, that's 20 a month — 240 a year.

Illustrative example. Plug in your own daily patient count.

Recency: fresh reviews win

A great review from 2021 isn't doing much for you in 2026

Consumers only pay attention to reviews written in the...



Wanting reviews from the last 2 weeks jumped from 20% to 32% in one year.

Which practice would you call?

Practice A

4.8 ★★★★★ 312 reviews

⚠ Most recent review: 7 months ago

Practice B

4.8 ★★★★★ 148 reviews

✓ Most recent review: 2 days ago

Goal: never go more than 7 to 14 days without a new review

Get richer reviews (without scripting them)

Detailed reviews help patients, Google and AI understand what you're great at

HELPS A LITTLE



Kevin R.



1 week ago

Great dentist!

HELPS A LOT: patients, Google and AI



Linda M.



3 days ago

I was terrified of getting a **dental implant**, but **Dr. Patel** explained every step and I honestly felt nothing. The team offered **sedation** options, and the front desk handled all my **insurance** paperwork. Best **dentist in Lakeside** for anyone with dental anxiety!

Gentle prompts you CAN use

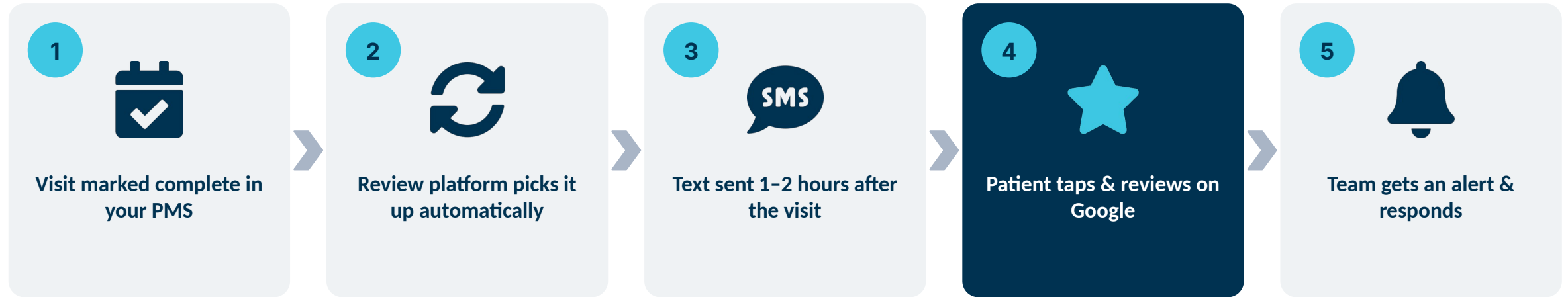
- ✓ "It would be great if you mention what you came in for."
- ✓ "If someone on the team stood out, mention them by name."
- ✓ "A photo of your new smile is always welcome."

Never

- ✗ Write the review for them or hand them keywords
- ✗ Tell them which words or phrases to include
- ✗ Edit, "approve," or post reviews on their behalf

Automate the ask

Build it once, and every patient gets asked, even on your busiest day



Connect the tools you likely already have

Practice management

Dentrix • Eaglesoft • Open Dental • Curve • Denticon

Patient communication / review platforms

Weave • RevenueWell • NexHealth • Birdeye • Podium

Examples only, not endorsements.

Settings that matter

- ✓ Every completed visit, no filtering by satisfaction
- ✓ One reminder maximum
- ✓ Don't re-ask the same patient more than every few months
- ✓ Route new-review alerts to your Review Champion

03

Managing Your Reviews

Respond to every review, handle the tough ones calmly, and track what matters



Respond to every review

Patients read your replies, and so does Google

89%

expect businesses to respond to reviews

80%

are more likely to choose a business that responds to ALL reviews

50%

are put off by generic, copy-paste replies



Maria G.



Yesterday

Dr. Patel fixed my cracked tooth the same day and the whole team was so kind!



Safe reply

"Thank you so much for taking the time to share this! Our whole team works hard to make every visit comfortable and stress-free. We're grateful for your kind words. – Lakeside Family Dental"



HIPAA risk

"Thanks Maria! So glad the crown on #14 is feeling better. See you at your 6-month cleaning in March!"

Confirms she's a patient and discloses treatment and appointment details.

The HIPAA-safe reply formula

1

Thank

Thank them for taking the time to share.

2

Reinforce

Restate your values, not their treatment.

3

Invite

Welcome everyone. Sign with the practice name.

Handling negative reviews

A calm, professional reply can win over the next patient who reads it



Pause

Don't reply angry. Take a breath, but reply within 24–48 hrs.



Investigate

Find out what happened internally, with the team.



Reply publicly

Short, calm, HIPAA-safe. No details, no arguing.



Take it offline

Invite them to call your office manager directly.



Flag if it breaks policy

Fake, spam, off-topic, conflict of interest, or offensive.



Anonymous

★☆☆☆☆ 2 days ago

Waited 40 minutes past my appointment time and nobody told me why. Not coming back.



Calm, HIPAA-safe reply

"We're sorry to hear this. We work hard to respect everyone's time and take feedback like this seriously. Please call our office manager, Jen, at (555) 555-0123 so we can learn more and make it right."

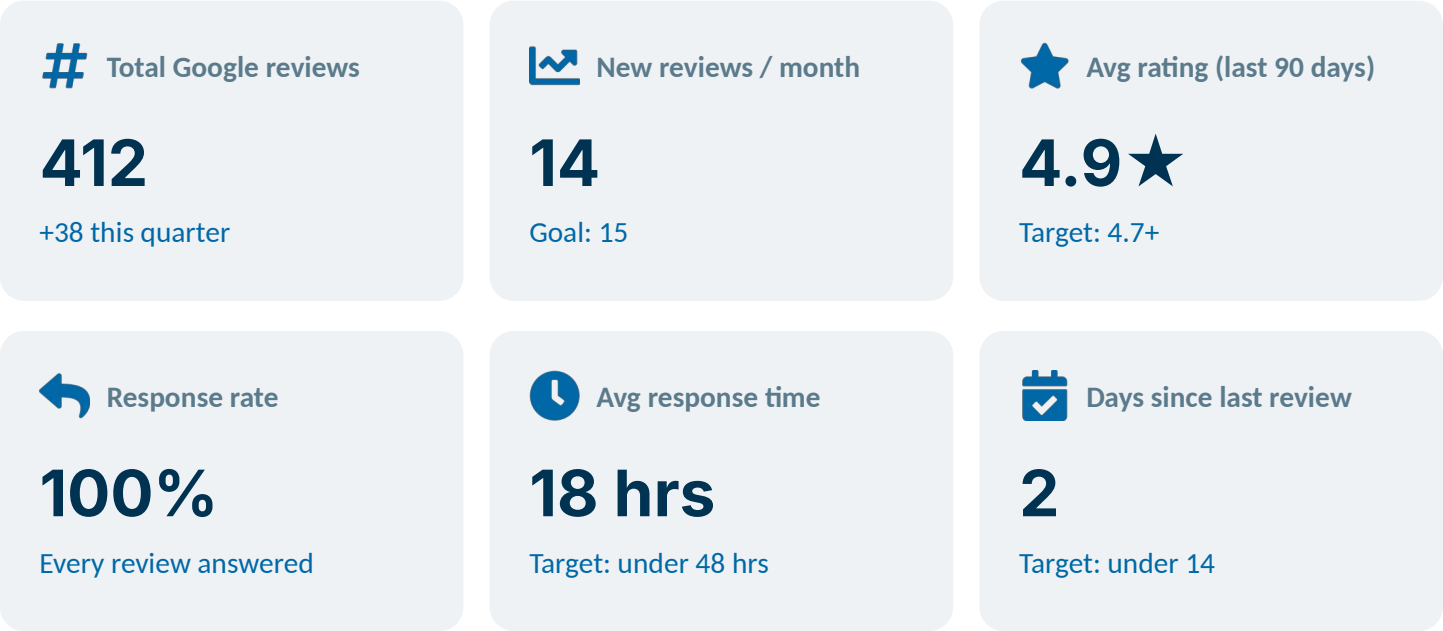


Real cost of getting it wrong

HHS fined dental practices \$10,000 (2019) and \$23,000 (2022) for disclosing patient information in replies to online reviews.

Measure what matters

Six numbers to review once a month, at your team meeting



Sample dashboard with illustrative numbers

Also track

Your top 3 competitors

Their review count, rating and monthly velocity. Are you gaining or falling behind?

Team mentions

Which team members are named in reviews? Celebrate them at the huddle.

Themes in feedback

Repeated praise to promote, and repeated complaints to fix.

AI visibility, with AscendVu

Is ChatGPT or Google's AI recommending you? Our dental-specific platform tracks it.

What you can do tomorrow

Five actions. About an hour, total. No new software required.

1



Grab your direct Google review link

From your Google Business Profile dashboard. Test it, then share it with every team member.

5 min

2



Name your Review Champion

One person who owns the weekly count and shares new reviews at the morning huddle.

5 min

3



Turn on same-day review texts

In your PMS or patient communication platform: every completed visit, one reminder max.

20 min

4



Put a QR code at checkout

A simple stand: "Loved your visit? Scan to share your experience on Google."

10 min

5



Reply to your last 10 unanswered reviews

Use the Thank • Reinforce • Invite formula. Keep every reply HIPAA-safe.

20 min

Questions? Let's talk.

Free Gift: Your Practice Growth Package

Three free reports, built for your practice. No strings attached.



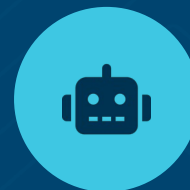
Ranking Report & SEO Review

Where you rank, where you leak,
and what to fix first



SEO/AI Visibility Scan

Your visibility score across listings,
directories & local search



GBP Audit & Analysis

How ChatGPT and Google's AI see
your practice, powered by
AscendVu

BOOK A CALL WITH SONIA



sonia@serpdental.com

Claimed on your free Patient Growth Strategy Session. Scan to book, or email Sonia directly.

Sources

Research and guidance referenced in this presentation

BrightLocal

Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (n = 1,002 U.S. adults, published Feb 2026). brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey

Whitespark

Local Search Ranking Factors 2026. whitespark.ca/local-search-ranking-factors

Google

Business Profile Help: "Tips to improve your local ranking on Google"; Maps User Contributed Content Policy (fake engagement, incentives, conflicts of interest)

Federal Trade Commission

Trade Regulation Rule on the Use of Consumer Reviews and Testimonials, 16 CFR Part 465 (effective Oct 2024)

HHS Office for Civil Rights

HIPAA enforcement actions: Elite Dental Associates (\$10,000, 2019); New Vision Dental (\$23,000, 2022)

This presentation is general education, not legal advice. Consult your own counsel about HIPAA and FTC compliance.