



“ When candidates interview for a company the first place they go is Glassdoor to see what other users say. ”

—Suzanne Rupert, director of recruiting, Talent Acquisition Innovation.

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# THE NEXT FRONTIER

ALREADY MASTERED SITES LIKE YELP AND HEALTHGRADES? EMPLOYEE REVIEW SITES LIKE GLASSDOOR ARE NEW TERRAIN TO TACKLE. TREAD CAREFULLY—YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION IS AT RISK.

by Alex Mangrolia

**Y**ou no doubt know that positive online reviews are a vital part of growing your practice's patient base. But do you know that potential patients aren't the only ones scoping you out online? Employees and job-seekers are, too. And when candidates want to know more about a potential employer—or when existing employees want to express their opinion—they turn to employee ratings sites like Glassdoor.

We get it. You're probably asking yourself "Can't we just get a break from all this online reputation stuff?" Unfortunately, you can't. Now more than ever, employee review sites like Glassdoor have become the most sought-after places to post and search for reviews. Ignoring or overlooking the influence of Glassdoor can hurt your practice's reputation in more ways than one, warns Suzanne Rupert, director of recruiting at Talent Acquisition Innovation.

#### A low Glassdoor rating with negative reviews could...

- **Hamper your efforts to attract and hire the best staff for your practice.** "We run into issues where candidates look at the Glassdoor profile and say "I don't want to work for this company," says Rupert. "We have definitely lost candidates because of the Glassdoor reviews." In a market where it's already tough to find and hire the number of qualified candidates you need, you can't afford a sub-par Glassdoor presence.
- **Sabotage your ability to attract physician associates and potential partners.** The market for new ophthalmologists is also tight—only 450 residents go into practice every year to replace the

estimated 550 doctors who are retiring. Poor Glassdoor reviews create negative impressions that can hurt your succession planning.

- **Limit your merger or acquisition prospects.** Mergers and acquisitions are one way for your practice to remain competitive in a healthcare market that's consolidating. You can't let negative reviews take that option off the table. "We've found that companies that are looking to potentially acquire are very concerned when they see bad Glassdoor reviews about a prospect," Rupert notes. "Because why would they want to partner with companies that have the staffing problems that led employees to post in the first place?"
- **Affect a patient's decision to visit your practice.** Glassdoor's primary audience is job-seekers, but there's a good chance your patients are reading those reviews as well. Most of the time, patients aren't searching for your practice on sites like Yelp or Healthgrades. They're searching on Google and reading whatever reviews show up, including those from Glassdoor. So "if there's a whole bunch of horrible things listed, that might change a patient's mind about going there," says Rupert.

## Knock, Knock. *Who's There?*

### *Glassdoor, who?*

If you think your practice's rating on Glassdoor does not matter, think again. Glassdoor, the brainchild of three Expedia veterans, is one of the fastest-growing employee ratings sites and the second-largest job site in the U.S. With nearly 33 million reviews for almost 700,000 companies and 45 million unique visitors each month, Glassdoor has successfully established itself as the go-to resource for job seekers looking for insider insights into a company's work culture.

What Yelp does for restaurants, Glassdoor does for potential candidates and employees. It allows existing and potential employees to post reviews about an organization, letting visitors know what to expect if they choose to work there. And Glassdoor's employer ratings and reviews consistently appear at the top of Google search results. As a result, employers that want to attract great talent have started paying attention to Glassdoor reviews. Not convinced?

### Check out these stats:

- **An estimated 48 percent of U.S. job seekers use Glassdoor** at some point in their job search.
- **The average Glassdoor user reads at least 7 reviews** before forming an opinion of a company.
- **89 percent of Glassdoor users are actively looking for a job** or would consider better opportunities.
- **74 percent of Glassdoor users are more likely to apply to a job** if the employer actively manages its brand by doing things like responding to reviews and keeping an updated profile.

**SOURCE:** 50 HR and Recruiting Stats, Glassdoor Inc., 2017 ([www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com))

# 5 STEPS TO *improve your* GLASSDOOR RATING

**In order to attract the best talent, it is essential to establish, repair and boost your Glassdoor ratings. With a little effort, you can use Glassdoor to support and strengthen your hiring efforts and build a promising employer brand. But before you rush out to implement these handy tips and tricks, remember: this is a strategic plan. There are no secrets or shortcuts to cover up mistakes. In order to attract outstanding reviews, you must be a superb employer.**

While there is no single, proven method for managing your brand image on Glassdoor, here are five steps to help you get started:

## 1

### CLAIM AND OPTIMIZE YOUR FREE EMPLOYER ACCOUNT.

Outdated and inaccurate information can cause as much damage as negative or so-so reviews. Claiming your account is the first step to creating and protecting your practice's image on Glassdoor. Once you do this, you can update company information, read and respond to reviews, and flag something if it seems inappropriate. You'll also gain access to the "employer center" where you can view analytics like page views and demographics of your profile visitors.

## TIP

Don't forget to sign up for alerts that let you know anytime something new is posted.

**2****ENCOURAGE CURRENT EMPLOYEES TO REVIEW YOUR COMPANY.**

We know you would never require employees to favorably review your practice or reward them for doing so—that's strictly prohibited. But you can give them the opportunity. Encouraging happy employees to review your company on sites like Glassdoor is an art:

- Select a point person to reach out to employees, letting them know of the opportunity to review your practice. But don't reach out to all of your employees at once—it will look suspicious if you have few reviews one day and a waterfall of favorable reviews the next.
- Put your long-tenured and happy employees on a review schedule. This will help to spread them out over time. Strategically schedule these posts so they seem at random.
- Ask employees who are willing to write reviews to contact your point person to be scheduled. Send each employee a reminder on the week they're teed up, then check Glassdoor to verify that their review is live.
- If employees aren't sure what to post, suggest that they "post about what it's like to work at the practice and the company culture. Things you wouldn't know unless you were an actual employee," advises Rupert. That's why job seekers visit your practice's profile on Glassdoor—they want to know what the culture is like.

**3****FREQUENTLY RESPOND TO REVIEWS.**

Nearly 62 percent of candidates say that their perception of an organization changes after seeing an employer respond respectfully to a review, according to Glassdoor internal data. Not to mention, responding promptly and professionally to reviews will make reviewers feel heard and engaged.

That's no sweat when the reviews are positive, but what about when they're not? "Even if you are totally great as an employer, you are occasionally going to make a bad hire who is going to rip you up on Glassdoor," warns Rupert. "I do think it's appropriate that employers take the time to respond, because that means they really are listening to the concerns of employees or former employees. Readers like to see that," she continues.

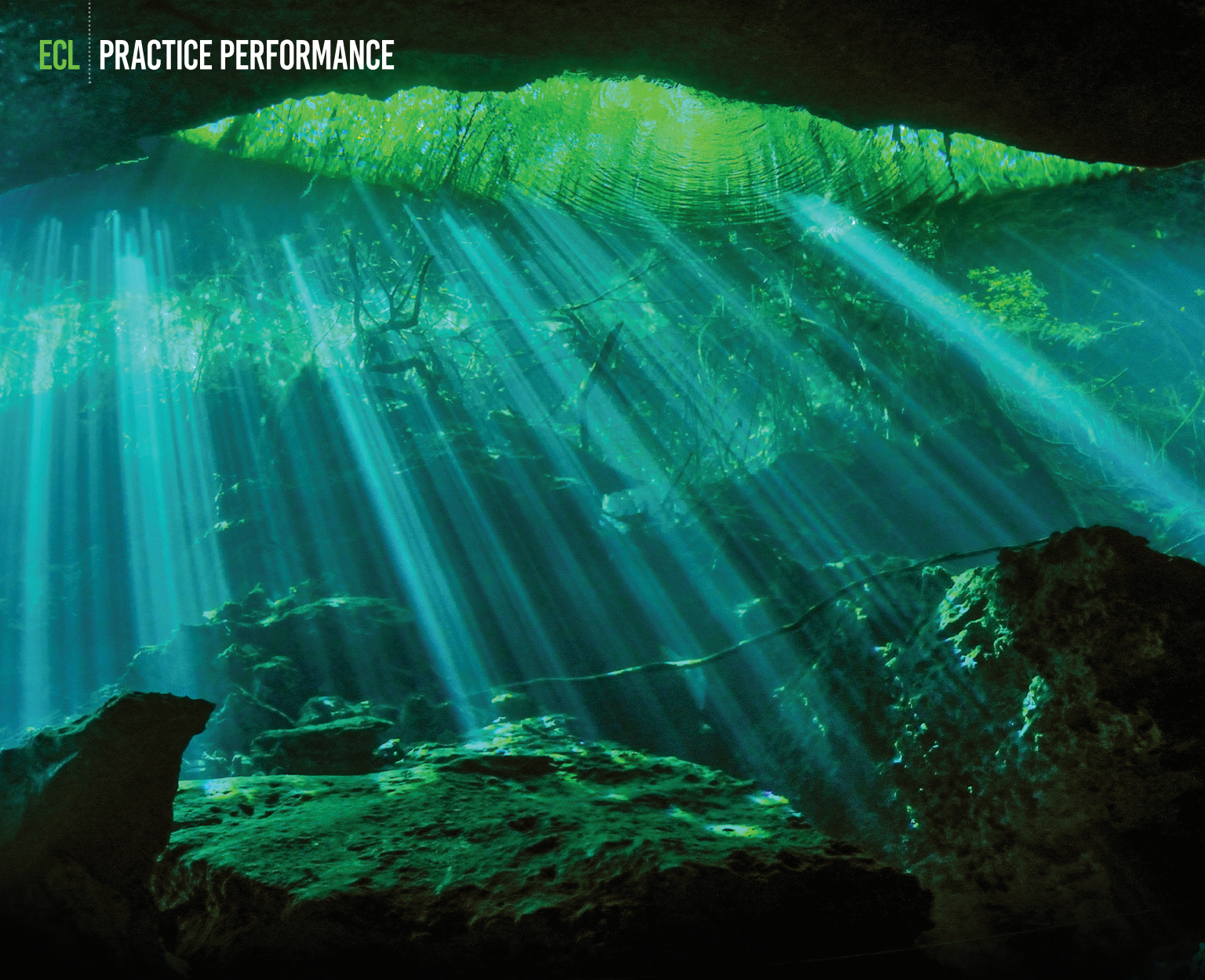
First of all, don't let a negative review get you down. "If you have a bad experience with a company, your first response is to complain," explains Heather Sullivan, a corporate recruiter also at Talent Acquisition Innovation. "That's what Glassdoor is. It's a sounding board and a lot of times people use that when they are unhappy with their experience." And if you're worried that you'll never achieve a five-star rating? Don't be. The average company rating on Glassdoor is only 3.3.

Next, respond carefully. "You can pre-draft a couple of genuine responses where you say you appreciate the feedback," advises Rupert. "If you respond with 'I'm sorry you had that experience,' sometimes even that makes a difference too." Rupert has even seen instances where upset former employees have removed a negative post after a heartfelt employer response. Sullivan also recommends giving the reviewer "a way to reach out if they want to take it to the next step, whether that's someone in HR or whoever handles those issues in your practice."

**TIP**

To stop negative reviews before they start, make sure your "open door policy" is just that. "If you don't provide employees any avenues to air their grievances, then you're going to have more of those negative reviews, but if there are other channels for people to share feedback, then reviews are going to be a lot more positive," explains Rupert.





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**USE REVIEWS TO IMPROVE YOUR PRACTICE.**

One of the most significant benefits of having a Glassdoor profile is that you receive honest feedback from your employees on a regular basis. However, these insights are useless without implementation. “Look at your reviews and assess the landscape to see if there’s a theme emerging,” advises Rupert. “If they’re all saying one thing, see if there’s a way to make improvements. It could be something that doesn’t cost anything, like improving communication.”

When you inevitably receive constructive feedback, consider conducting an internal survey to understand the extent of the problem. Then, be transparent with employees—and the reviewer—about how you are fixing it. If it’s something that you can’t address (benefits, for example), be sure to explain the factors that limit you from providing exactly what the employee wants (a tight budget, perhaps).



**EYES OPEN**

When it comes to scathing reviewers, “most of the time they just want to be heard, and some people just want to be ugly,” says Sullivan. Unfortunately, their words can haunt you. On Glassdoor, reviewers can renew their post annually, Sullivan explains. So if you have a negative post, that same person can repost it one year later, changing only a few words. It makes it look like you have multiple negative reviews, when it’s really the same person. “If you see wording that looks the same, don’t be afraid to contact Glassdoor and investigate it, recommends Sullivan. “If it’s the same person, you can try to have it removed. It will keep ding your rating over and over,” she notes.

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## HIRE AN AGENCY TO MANAGE YOUR GLASSDOOR PROFILE.

User-generated content on review sites like Glassdoor and others strengthens your SEO, improves online reputation, and helps attract the brightest job candidates. Because these sites are so critical to your practice's overall success, it may make sense to have experts managing your Glassdoor profile. "My advice would be to either hire somebody or be proactive and at least respond to the good and the bad reviews" says Sullivan. "It shows that you are paying attention and are concerned and that you care about people's feedback," she adds. If you don't have time to do that on your own, and can't identify a competent person on your staff to do so, hire someone.

If you decide to outsource online reputation management (ORM), beware: these companies charge vastly different rates, says Joanne Mansour, practice administrator at The Virginia Retina Center and member of AAOE's Board of Directors. One vendor she considered wanted to charge \$600 per doctor per month, while another proposed to handle the entire practice's ORM for \$249 annually. The lesson? Before you sign on with an ORM vendor, get detailed estimates of rates and the specific services included.

# Where have all the applicants gone?

*"She came to the interview with wet hair."*

*"We hired him and he didn't even show up on the first day."*

*"We get so few resumes that we can't afford to be too picky."*


If any of these sentiments sound sadly familiar, you're not alone. Physician-owners and administrators routinely say that finding and hiring the right employees is one of the biggest challenges their eye care practices face today. There are a few reasons why:

- **For certain positions, like techs, "the market is wide open for people looking for jobs,"** says Natalie Loyacano, COMT, ROUB, OCS, who spoke about recruiting roadblocks at AAO 2017. A large pool of applicants just doesn't exist. "The techs know that and that's how they play one practice against another," she explains.
- **For other positions, there's no shortage of applicants, but they just don't have the right soft skills.** This is common in entry-level positions where the applicants skew younger, and the hiring manager is more experienced. They just can't wrap their heads around why someone applying for the front desk doesn't know how to answer the phone properly. It seems so basic, but for many of today's job seekers, it's not.
- **Candidates tend to bounce around.** Rather than work on a problem, unhappy employees just go out and find a new job. Administrators say "they get resumes from lots of people who have worked at every practice in town for five or six months," Loyacano relates.

It's reasons like this that Loyacano advocates hiring professionals who are a cultural fit, but inexperienced in eye care. "Women or men who decide to change careers is where [practices] have good luck. That's instead of just waiting for that skilled [employee] to come to your doorstep," she notes.

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

So what if a job candidate brings up your less-than-stellar Glassdoor reviews during an interview? Don't get defensive, but on the other hand, don't be dismissive either. Think about it this way: it's like the tables are turned, and the employer is trying to explain away something negative, whereas usually it would be the candidate who's trying to address say, an employment gap on their resume. And employers aren't used to that.

"Share your own experience. Be genuine and let them know what you've encountered at your practice," advises Rupert. Sullivan agrees. "I try to ask people to have an open mind and continue with the hiring process. Take our own conversations and how I treated them into account. See if that reflects the Glassdoor reviews. Give us a chance to prove this is not who we are," she says. 

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