



Take steps to manage your cyber reputation

Consider these tips after the deal closes and during practice integration

- **Track and analyze online data at least twice a week.** Use analytical tools (for example, Google Alerts) to monitor what is being said online about individual physicians, staff and the medical group as a whole.
- **Encourage patients to review their experience before they leave the office.** The review is an opportunity to build patient trust, confidence and loyalty.¹⁴ Patients who are given the chance to express their opinions directly to the physician or medical group before they leave the office are less likely to post negative comments online. Such comments can be addressed out of the public eye, thereby greatly reducing negative reputational impacts¹⁵ and malpractice suits.¹⁶
- **Use search engine optimization techniques to address negative comments.** The effect of negative comments posted online can be blunted through social media output that highlights positive comments.
- **Establish rules for employee use of the Internet.** Develop a social media usage policy for physicians and staff. Restrict discussion about confidential matters, patient privacy issues, or ongoing litigation. Access to certain sites (for example, Facebook) might be discouraged or prohibited during work hours.
- **Harmonize the social media policies of the parties.** Proper due diligence will make this process smoother and faster.
- **Educate employees about your organization's social media policies.** After the social media policy is established, educate employees about the policy to promote conformity. It is likely that the new policy will be different from the previous policies, if any, of the two organizations.
- **Keep the board of directors informed.** The board's role does not end when the deal closes. During and after integration, the board should continue to receive regular updates about cyber reputation issues so that it can fulfill its risk oversight responsibilities. 



Notes:

14. Shaw Resources [Internet]. [Issaquah, WA]. Shaw Resources, c2008 [cited 2011 Aug 27]. Available from: shawresources.com/artcomplaintprescription.html.
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16. Medscape [Internet]. [New York, NY]. WebMD LLC, c2011 [cited 2011 Aug 28]. Available from: medscape.com/viewarticle/725001

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