

HEALTHCARE PLAYBOOK

The 2026 reputation playbook

A practical guide to designing, launching,
and scaling a brand experience program
in healthcare.



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1. The playbook at a glance (for skimmers)



Reputation flywheel

Building, then maintaining, your organization's reputation isn't a vanity project. It determines whether people can find you, whether they choose you, and if they'd consider returning in the future. It can be linked directly to revenue, trust, and how teams work together. As the brand experience partners of **around 800** healthcare organizations, we've designed this playbook to give you the tools to build a brand experience program that drives quantifiable growth and better care.

Inside your walls, trust is earned through experience—which includes safety, communication, and teamwork. [Our most recent report](#) shows that when patients feel very safe, their "Likelihood to Recommend" (LTR) scores spike to 85.3%. When they don't, it drops all the way down to a staggering 34.6%.

This is your growth and experience machine. And just like any machine, when you maintain it properly, and keep all of its components properly maintained, it will run. Let's build your reputation machine.

What you'll get by sticking with us to the end:

- Practical steps, checklists, and workflows
- Guidance for listings management, review requesting and generation, and market research
- A framework that works, no matter where you are in your brand experience journey



Visibility



Credibility



Conversion

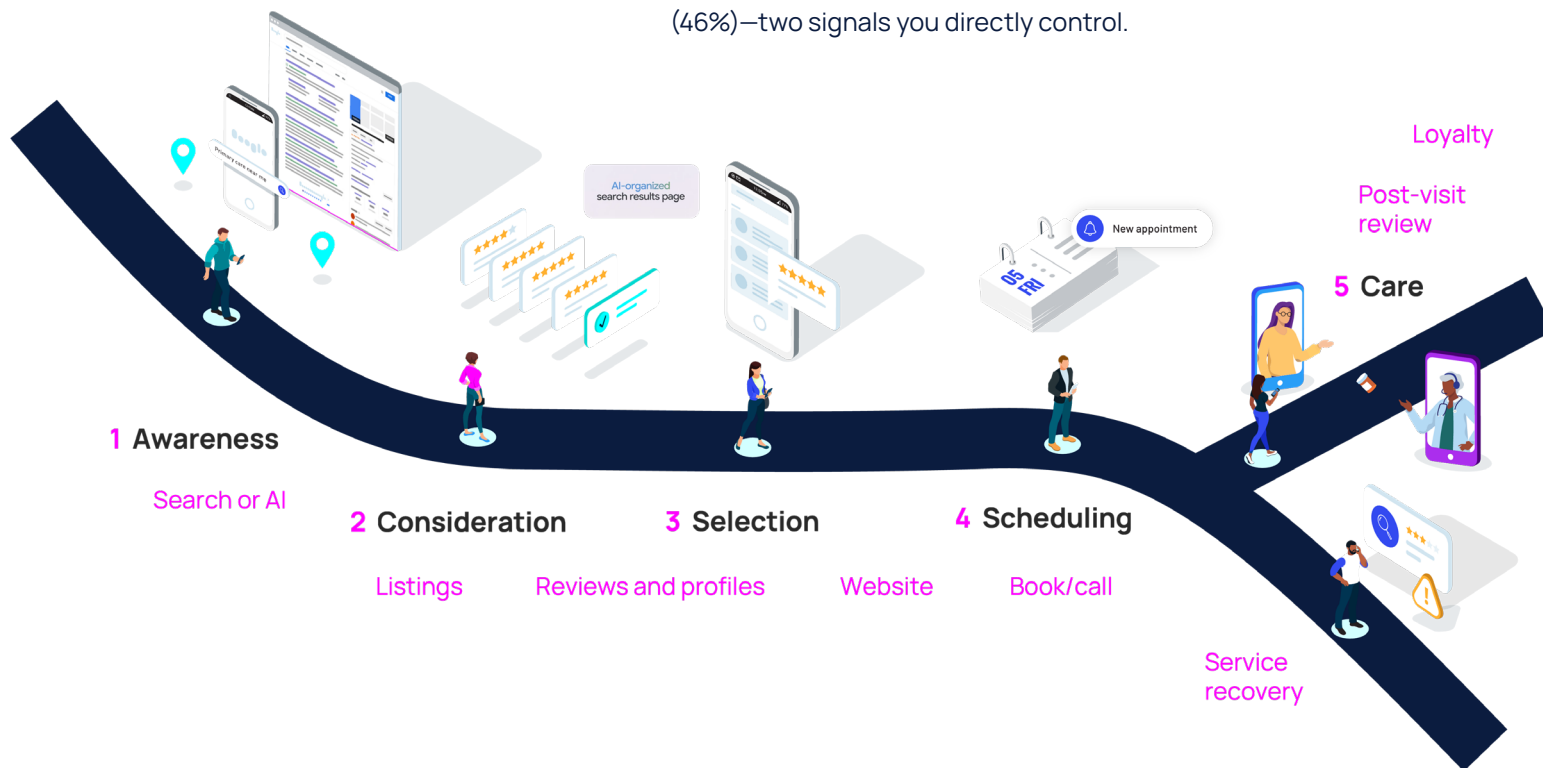


Retention

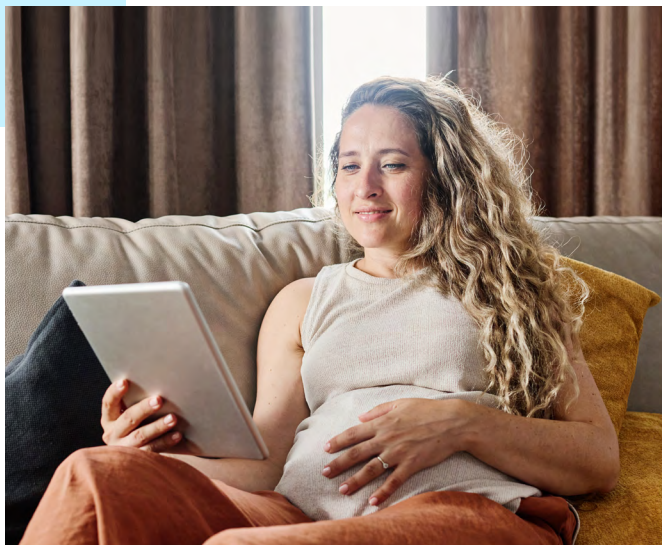
2. The journey has changed. The expectations have not.

Patient choice has changed; rebuilt, rather. Patients still want safe, coordinated care, but the path they take to get there now largely runs through AI answer engines in addition to traditional search. Tools like Google's AI Overviews and ChatGPT increasingly act as the first filter, summarizing options before a patient even reaches the results page.

Our research shows nearly 1 in 5 have already used AI to find a provider, and 81% feel comfortable doing so. Consumers also trust the outputs more when they include positive reviews (52%) and citations from provider websites (46%)—two signals you directly control.



AI also changes where information comes from. These models pull from your own provider pages, as well as third-party directories and healthcare domains. Your listings, photos, and structured data all influence the answer patients see before they click a thing. **AI engines are making provider recommendations based on specialty, proximity, credibility, and consumer feedback in the form of reviews.** In this new AI age, accurate listings and reviews are your first impression.



The most common discovery blockers are:

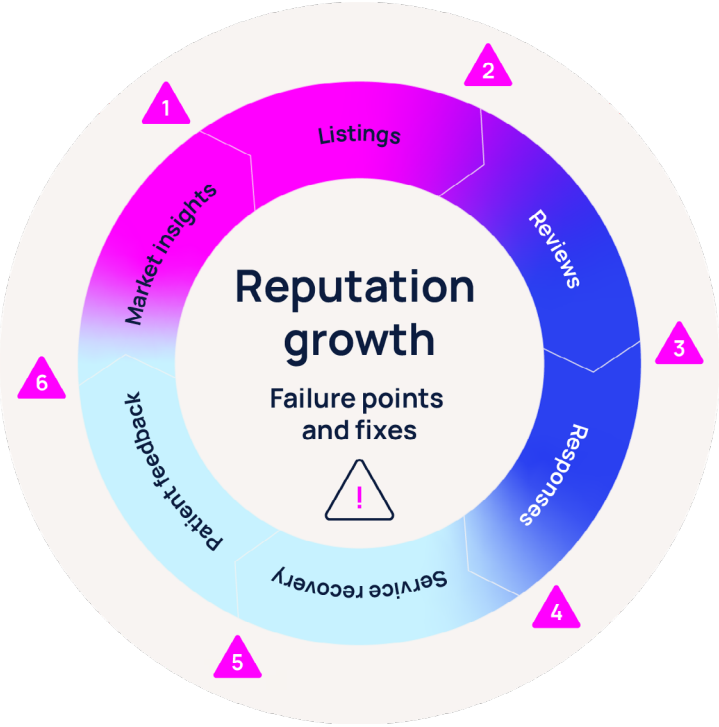
- Inconsistent directory and third-party listings data
- Unowned and inactive provider and location profiles
- Lack of automated first-party review strategy
- Disjointed patient feedback outreach
- Reputation insights stuck in separate tools
- Siloed service recovery workflows
- Physician resistance toward reputation and transparency programs
- Reputation pilots that never scale

It may seem like there are a lot of blind spots and possibilities to miss something, but there are simple ways to ensure you avoid them.

Tips for success:

- Connect review requests, patient experience surveys, and service recovery workflows
- Set the strategy first
- Phase the rollout for quick wins
- Align governance so decisions move
- Connect review requests, patient experience surveys, and service recovery workflows

Meet patients where they search. Make it simple to choose—and trust—you.



Failure point	Fix
1. Market insights not shared across teams	Use top of mind and brand awareness and perception insights to focus your reputation strategy
2. Listings not owned or inconsistent	Centralize ownership and systematize listings management across all directories
3. Reviews happen but no requests	Automate review requests and responses
4. Responses are reactive and situational	Standardize a response strategy and workflow
5. Service recovery disconnected from online feedback	Establish governance and SLAs
6. Patient feedback and insights are siloed	Make insights (and wins) available for all stakeholders in the process

3. The playbook framework

Don't start with tools. Start with a plan. Then build the program that fits the outcomes you're heading towards.

3.1 Define your strategy before you deploy tech

Pick a small set of outcomes for the next 90 days and tie each to the single lever most likely to move it. Below, the left side is the goal (visibility, volume, ratings, etc.); the right side is the strategy you'll run to achieve it. Choose two to three quick wins, then expand.

Prioritize goals

Improve visibility	→	Listings management
Increase review volume	→	Increase volume and act on themes
Lift ratings	→	Increase volume and act on themes
Strengthen brand perception	→	Publish reviews and respond publicly
Prepare for AI search	→	Maintain presence on healthcare directories and keep reviews fresh
Understand your position in the market	→	Research competitive position and share of voice

A focused strategy brings early wins, and quickly. If you want a jumpstart, an advisory partner can facilitate the goal → map and align leaders in one working session.

3.2 Audit the journey your patients actually take

Look closely at the **real** journey your patients face.



What to check

- Listings accuracy and ownership
- Review volume and site distribution
- Provider vs location reputation and consumer sentiment
- Patient experience survey feedback across providers and locations
- Competitive brand awareness and perception

Questions to guide you

- Are we actively managing listings? How about listings outside of Google?
- Are we requesting reviews from our patients consistently?
- Do providers see their own patient feedback?
- Are we responding to online reviews?
- Do the themes from patient experience survey comments align with public reviews?
- What does the market think of us today? Are there any standout service lines?

A good audit reveals where to start and what will move first.

3.3 Start smart and expand intentionally

Choose a high-visibility pilot with engaged leaders and build in waves that reinforce each step. Early proof of impact is essential for your success. You can use the momentum of initial results to scale your pilot and build your reputation engine.



Tips for success

Remember to share your results internally. Proving value quickly builds internal support for the next wave.

How to phase

- Define your top priority between providers or locations
- Begin with a service line that's visible and engaged
- Launch in waves that build on momentum

When in doubt, take this approach:



4. Governance: Speed, safety, and sanity



Tips for success

Secure executive sponsorship early. Show pilots, stories, and real patient impact. Good governance lowers risk and speeds results. Get the right people involved from day one.

Reputation programs in healthcare involve many stakeholders—marketing, patient experience, clinical leaders, legal, and frontline providers. Because the work is highly regulated and often sensitive, a clear governance model is a must to keep teams aligned, protect the organization, and move quickly when consumers are deciding where to go for care.

Consumers decide fast, and our research shows that star-ratings under 4.0 lose about a third of prospective patients. Publishing and responses matter, too, though, as half of consumers read reviews for referred providers, and a quarter say your response carries more influence than the negative review itself.

The right partner can help advise on a system of governance to hit the ground running, spanning everything from what reviews merit a response, to establishing realistic SLAs, to how other teams will be notified if things need to be escalated.

Here's a breakdown of key players and responsibilities

Marketing

- Strategy
- Visibility
- Amplification
- Replies
- Reporting

PX

- Surveys
- Recovery
- Internal communications

Legal/Compliance

- Cadence
- Language
- Escalations

IT and Web Development

- Integrations
- Privacy
- Security

Clinical Leadership

- Sponsorship
- Provider engagement
- Coaching

Operations

- Workflows
- Process improvement

5. Anticipation is key

You'll get praise. You'll get complaints. Plan for both. Before requesting or responding to reviews, organizations often encounter internal questions or hesitations.

Common concerns



What to say

Negative reviews will hurt providers.

Transparency builds credibility.

Legal risk of review requesting and responding is too high.

Volume normalizes outliers.

Soliciting reviews invites complaints.

Negative reviews reveal opportunities.

We don't have time to respond to the reviews we already have.

Responses show you care.



Tips for success

- Share benchmarks and real examples
- Show how volume builds trust, reveals opportunities, and gives providers visibility into what's working
- Provide simple scripts, templates, and response guidelines so they feel supported

6. Executing the right way

Execution is where the program becomes real. Start by operationalizing the basics, so every profile is accurate, complete, and appointments are easily bookable.

6.1 Listings management

Listings are your reputation foundation. When they're accurate and up-to-date, everything else improves.

Listings checklist

Claim and verify priority location and provider profiles

Ensure providers are linked to each location they practice at

Add pictures, contact information and hours to each listing

69% of consumers say photos of a facility or provider influence their decision of provider.

Standardize names, classifications, and specialties

Add links for online booking where available

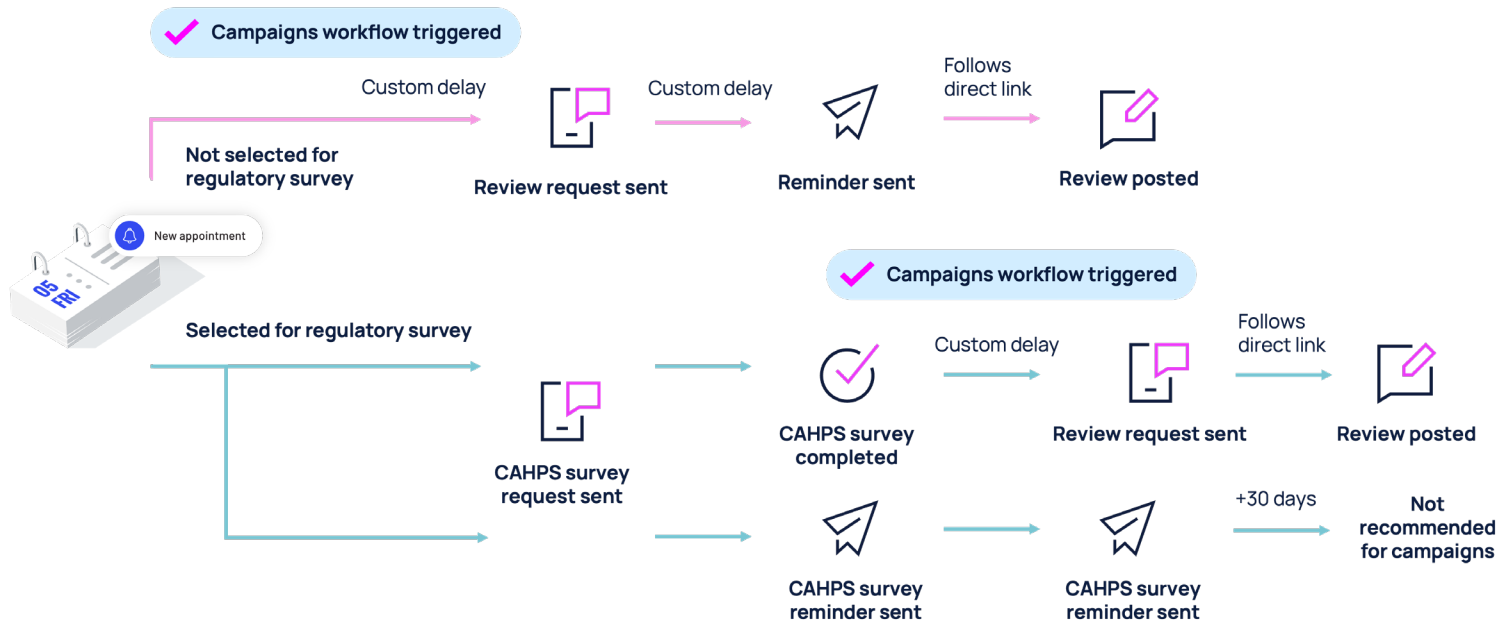
37% Millennials and **36%** Gen Z would reportedly consider another provider if online scheduling wasn't offered.

6.2 Review requesting and generation

- Target volume gaps: Start with providers or locations
- Use an automated solution to send timely requests after every appointment
- Coordinate outreach with patient experience surveys to remain compliant with regulatory requirements
- Refine text and email messages to improve conversion rates
- Use customizations to add personalization and improve conversion
- Don't overlook healthcare-specific sites essential to AI engine visibility

A steady stream builds consumer trust without overwhelming patients.

Coordinated PX survey and review outreach



6.3 Publishing reviews

- Define and share publishing guidelines with internal leadership
- Review and approve all relevant reviews
- Redact PHI with clear criteria
- Create an appeals path and educate providers on criteria for appeals
- Begin sharing published ratings and recent reviews with providers
- Establish an ongoing moderation workflow

Publishing turns patient feedback into public proof.

Use a managed services partner to handle first-line moderation. Vendor partners can shoulder the day-to-day review burden—like pre-screening reviews and making light edits for clarity before anything goes live. They work under your governance and are coached on criteria to meet your organization's requirements, helping you keep reviews publishing in a timely manner.

6.4 Responding to reviews

- Draft and secure approval for templates
- Define responding criteria and reputation priorities
- Focus on negative reviews, specifically 3-stars and below
- Define SLAs for speed and coverage
- Use automation or AI features for ratings without comments to save time
- Route sensitive feedback to defined teams for recovery
- Share positive feedback with patient experience team or directly to clinical teams
- Track any improvement in ratings, including reviews that were changed or edited

Expect a few speed bumps—but you can use them to your advantage. Early on, you'll hit the usual snags: manual setup that takes longer than planned, unclear ownership across teams, PHI reviews that slow publishing, and a few legal iterations while everyone aligns on the rubric. That's normal. The key is to anticipate them, name who owns what, and set simple guardrails so issues flow to the right place—and quickly.



Tips for success

- Lean on your implementation and advisory partners for best practices
- Leverage managed services to help shoulder the burden where resources are tight
- Take advantage of templates and AI features where your legal team and compliance requirements allow



7. Service recovery prep

A strong action management plan turns feedback—especially sensitive complaints—clear, actionable next steps. In healthcare, this requires coordination across all stakeholders—patient experience, clinical leaders, frontline providers, and in some cases legal.

What to define

- Action management triggers and owners (who moves first, and when)
- Routing paths for provider concerns, clinical questions, and sensitive feedback
- Service recovery workflows that align with existing patient experience or CRM systems
- Reporting loops and lessons learned to prevent repeat issues

How advisors support this work

- Help design governance for service recovery
- Build workflows that fit your existing systems or establish new ones where gaps exist
- Ensure teams are prepared before feedback arrives so responses are timely and consistent
- Create clarity for providers and staff so they know exactly how to act—and when

When people know the plan, they act faster and with less risk.

8. Measuring impact

What you measure guides what you improve. Make results visible and useful.



Tips for success

You've heard it before but close the loop. Use the data to celebrate progress that fuels the next phase from day one.

Core KPIs

- Listings accuracy
- Review volume and distribution
- Ratings trends
- Response rate and time
- Sentiment themes
- Recovery closure rates
- Referral sources and time on site
- Impressions on directories
- Increase in bookings (pre- and post-implementation)

Share the wins

- Summarize high level KPIs and progress with executive leadership
- Give providers access to personalized dashboards that show patient feedback
- Communicate service line performance with clinical leadership
- Share stellar experience stories publicly in marketing campaigns

9. Scaling and sustaining

Once the system's running, grow with intent and keep educating your teams.

Where to expand

- New service lines, locations, markets
- Deeper market research
- Ongoing provider education
- Transparent publishing norms
- Accountability loops

Evolve with consumers

- Prepare for AI search
- Check visibility in AI engines like ChatGPT and Gemini
- Use research to address brand awareness and perception gaps

Make reputation part of **who** your organization **is** and how it operates.



Tips for success

- Let data guide your expansion to new service lines, markets, and publishing channels.
- Keep providers informed with regular insight-sharing and clear expectations as the program grows.
- Audit discoverability across AI search, local search, and emerging consumer entry points.
- Maintain consistent transparency standards as you scale publishing across more locations.

10. Checklists

Here are quick-start tools you can lift as-is or adapt. Use these to move from **intent** to **action** this month.

Kickoff checklist

- Pick your top three goals
- Choose a pilot
- Confirm governance
- Map outreach cadence
- Approve templates
- Set KPI targets
- Complete your journey audit
- Align with advisory partner or initial workflows and governance
- Finalize escalation workflows

Listings starter tasks

- Inventory entities
- Claim and verify
- Standardize fields
- Resolve duplicates

Review generation tasks

- Trigger timely requests
- Balance volume
- Monitor fatigue
- Coordinate with PX
- Refine messaging
- Personalize where possible
- Account for healthcare-specific review sites essential for AI-visibility

Publishing tasks

- Establish publishing guidelines
- Define redaction criteria and PHI workflow
- Set appeals criteria
- Establish moderation workflow
- Begin sharing ratings + recent reviews with providers

Response tasks

- Approve templates
- Define response criteria
- Prioritize negative reviews (3-star and below)
- Set SLAs for speed and coverage
- Automate responses for no-comment ratings where allowed
- Route sensitive feedback for service recovery
- Track improvements and edits over time

11. Partner and platform considerations

Choosing the right partner and platform makes the work lighter and the results faster.



What to look for

- One place for listings, patient feedback and reviews, review responding, service recovery, and market research
- Healthcare-ready privacy and legal compliance
- Implementation, advisory, and technical support
- Expertise on reaching and building trust with healthcare consumers
- Managed services for adding bandwidth when teams are stretched
- Safe, AI-enabled features to help your teams do more with less

Why it matters

- Less manual work
- Fewer gaps
- Faster time to value

A unified approach helps you get better outcomes with less friction.

12. A final word

Reputation shapes growth, trust, and care. When you manage it well, patients feel the difference and teams do too.

Start with a plan. Connect listings, feedback, reviews, and recovery. Educate and collaborate with your internal partners, and measure and share success as you go.

If you want a partner with deep healthcare expertise and a consolidated brand and consumer experience platform, **we can help you get there—and faster.**



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