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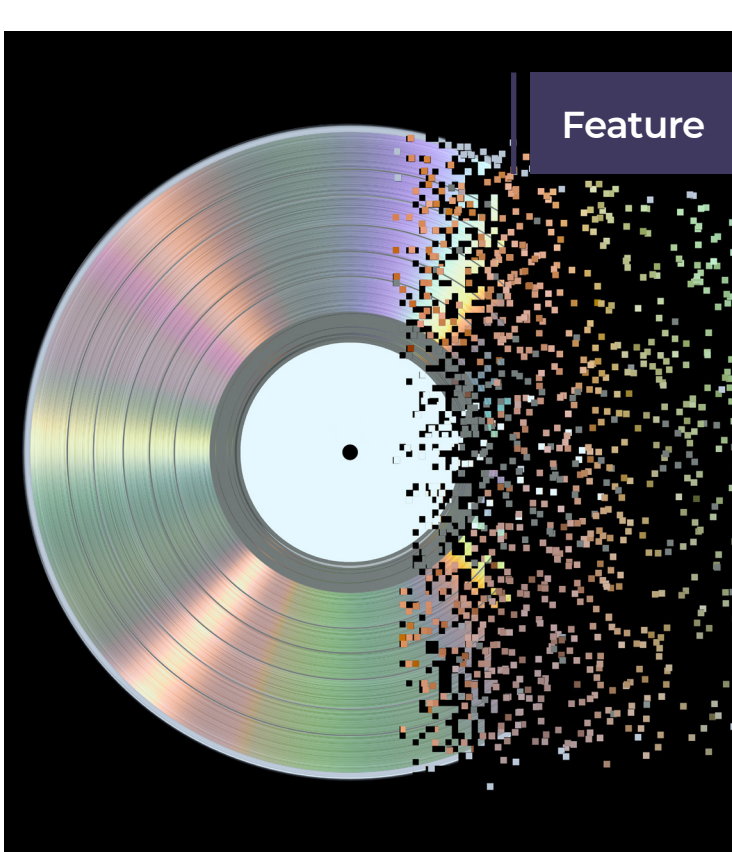


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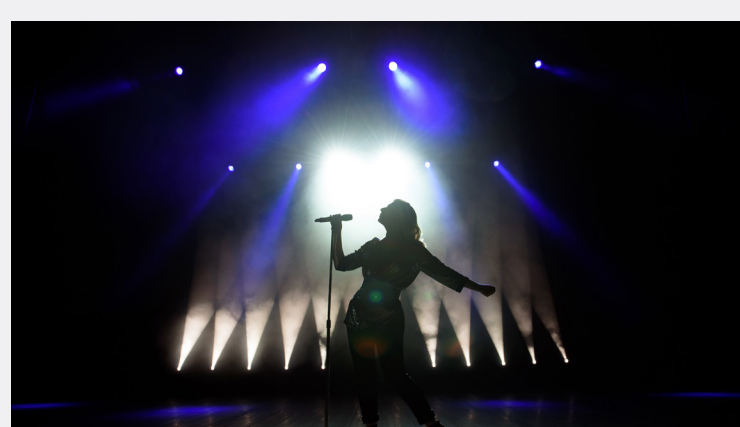
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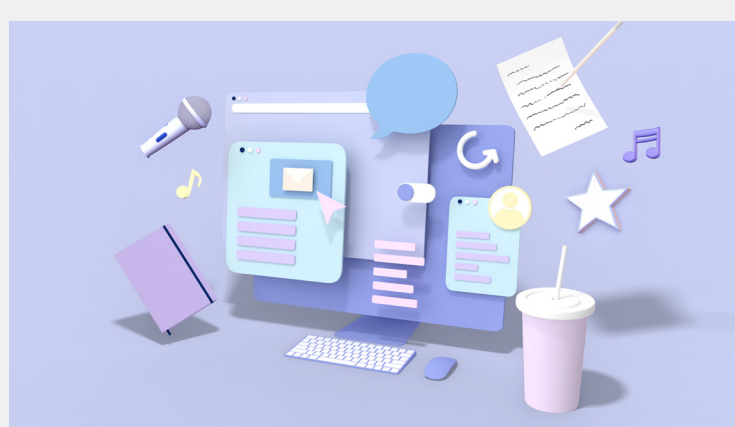
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Feature

Could Your Practice Use a Concertmaster?

The benefits of hiring a Director of Operations

BY JASON LOBB, PT

As the COO of a growing physical therapy organization, it took me a while to figure out the potential advantages of appointing a second-in-command. When I first stepped into this role, I struggled to balance strategic initiatives with the constant stream of tactical issues that pulled me into the weeds. It felt like every time I took one step forward strategically, operational challenges dragged me two steps back.

It took time, but eventually I realized that trying to handle everything myself wasn't sustainable. Scaling a business is as much about leadership structure as it is about delivering excellent patient care. That's why I made the pivotal decision to create a role specifically designed to optimize day-to-day operations and free me up to focus on the bigger picture. Enter the Director of Operations.

Hiring a Director of Operations can be a game-changer for your practice. This individual will:

• Drive Organizational Efficiency

Growth inevitably brings complexity. Processes that worked for a handful of clinics can become bottlenecks as the organization expands. The Director of Operations—with an in-depth knowledge of clinical operations and organizational interconnections—is the linchpin for ensuring that operational processes run smoothly and align with company goals. By managing integration tasks, optimizing strategies, and overseeing operational KPIs, they create a seamless framework for success.

For instance, research shows that effective integration management significantly reduces disruptions during mergers and acquisitions.¹ Our Director of Operations takes full ownership of overseeing the integration plan with our incoming partners. This involves developing and executing comprehensive integration plans while maintaining regular communication across departments. Such efforts allow new clinics to transition smoothly, minimizing disruptions and accelerating their path to productivity.



• Empower the Leadership Team

By delegating to my Director of Operations, I ensure that, as part of the leadership team, I can dedicate the necessary energy to the company vision. Leadership studies emphasize the importance of delegation in enhancing executive productivity.² Our Director of Operations oversees the recruitment, hiring, and professional development of critical operations team members such as the Director of Front Office Operations, Director of Clinical Excellence, and Operations Manager. Their leadership not only ensures that these departments thrive but fosters a collaborative and productive work environment across the organization.

• Strategize for Scalability

As organizations grow, so does the need for strategic vision and planning. The Director of Operations plays a pivotal role in developing and implementing strategies that improve efficiency across the company. By maintaining a deep understanding of people, processes, and technology, they identify opportunities for innovation and improvement that might otherwise go unnoticed.

For instance, scaling existing models like the PRN system can improve operational efficiency and adaptability.³ Our Director of Operations is also instrumental in launching new initiatives, such as our recently launched AI documentation pilot program. They're not just focused on current operations but are always planning for what's next, ensuring that our systems and processes can support and optimize the future success of our teams.

Coda: A Duet for Growth

In many ways, the Director of Operations is more than just a second-in-command; they are a partner in growth. By executing wide-ranging projects, managing teams, and streamlining operations, they pave the way for our clinical teams to thrive and for the company to scale effectively.

For leaders of growing physical therapy organizations, the role of a second-in-command is indispensable for operational success. Focus on hiring someone with the right blend of leadership, strategic thinking, and operational expertise. Their contributions will empower you and your organization to stay agile, efficient, and aligned with your vision and mission.



ACTION ITEM

Evaluate your current leadership structure to identify gaps in operational management, and consider hiring or developing a second-in-command who can optimize day-to-day processes and drive strategic growth initiatives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jason Lobb, PT

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Jason Lobb, PT PT is the Chief Operating Officer at Mountain Land Physical Therapy Partners in Salt Lake City, Utah. He can be reached at jason@mlpt.com.

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Marketing

When Your Show Gets a Bad Review

Slammed on Google? Here's how to respond.

BY PAUL GOUGH, BSc (Hons), MCSP



Let's be honest: Nothing stings quite like a one-star Google review.

You can have 100 glowing testimonials, patient success stories pouring in, and a wall full of thank-you cards from grateful clients... but one bad review? That's the one you lose sleep over. It feels like an attack on your business, your team, your reputation, and even your character.

But here's the deal: If you're growing a business in the real world — where real people live — you will get a negative review. It's not if; it's when. So the question isn't "How do I avoid them?" but rather...

How do I respond in a way that actually helps my business?

Because here's the secret most practice owners don't realize: Your response to a bad review is a marketing opportunity. Let me show you how to flip the script.

If you're growing a business in the real world — where real people live — you *will* get a negative review. It's not *if*, it's *when*.

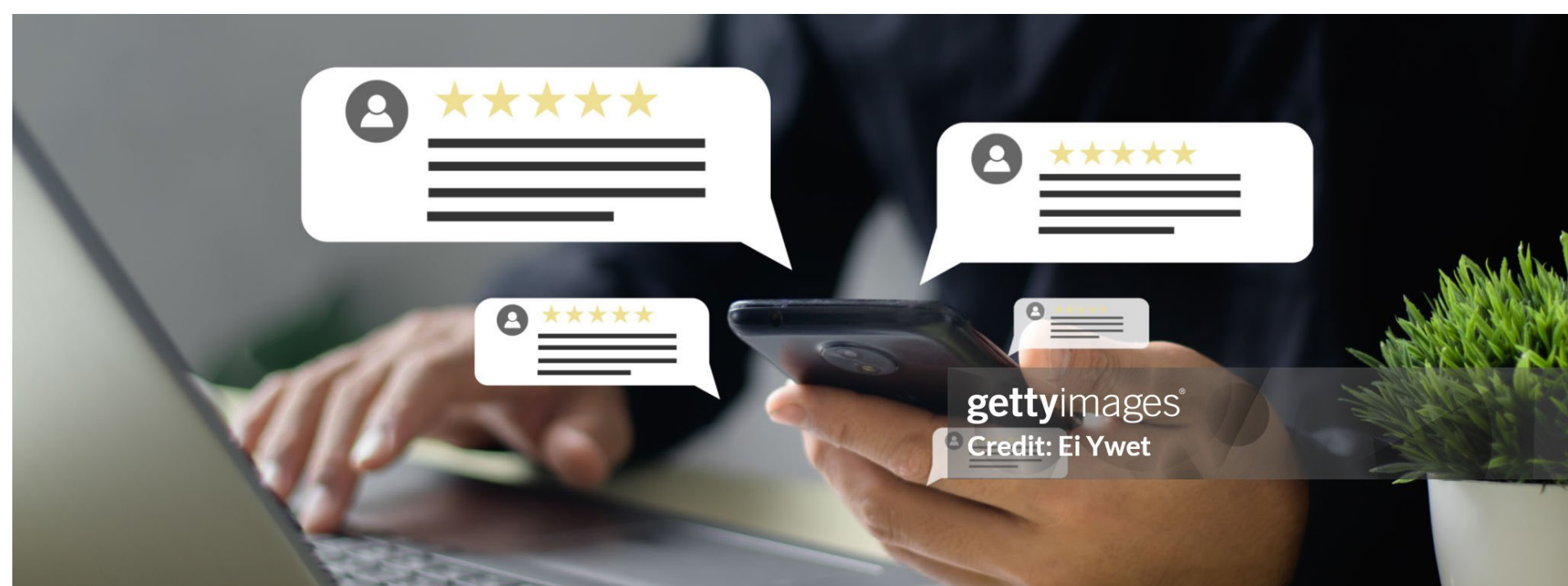
Step 1: Rally Your Raving Fans

Before you respond to the bad review, take action. Call ten of your best clients immediately. Not text. Not email. Call them.

Say something like:

"Hey, I just wanted to reach out. We had a bit of a negative experience posted online, and I'm working hard to protect the reputation of the clinic that you helped build. If you're open to it, I'd be grateful if you could share a quick Google review about your experience with us. It really helps us stand strong against moments like this."

Your best clients want to help. They know the truth. Give them a chance to tell it. Within 48 hours, you'll have eight to ten new five-star reviews pushing that one bad review so far down the page it'll need a flashlight and a shovel to be seen. And now, with reinforcements on the field, it's time to respond.



Step 2: Write for the Next Reader, Not the Reviewer (possibly the most important thing to remember)

Here's the number one mistake I see clinic owners make: They start defending themselves to the person who left the review. Don't.

She's made up her mind. You're not winning her back; not today. But the person reading your response? The one who just searched "physical therapy near me" and is now deciding whether to give your clinic a shot? That's who you're talking to.

So instead of defending your actions, your staff, or your version of events, try this:

"Hi, this is Paul, owner of [Clinic Name]. If you're reading this review and are feeling unsure about whether we're not winning her back; not today. But the person reading your response? The one who just searched 'physical therapy near me' and is now deciding whether to give your clinic a shot? That's who you're talking to."

What did you do there? You stayed calm. You showed empathy. You reasserted your authority, track record, and values. And most importantly, you made a compelling, low-risk offer to the person reading. That's called controlling the narrative. And it works.

Here's the number one mistake I see clinic owners make: They start defending themselves to the person who left the review. Don't.

Step 3: Be Gracious, Not Defensive

I get it. You want to say what really happened. Maybe she didn't show up for appointments. Maybe she demanded a refund halfway through her plan of care. Maybe she was rude to your staff. And maybe you handled it as well as anyone could.

But the truth is, the more you say, the more you look guilty. The reader doesn't need the full story. What they need is to know you're professional, you're composed under pressure, and you care deeply about your clients.

So you say:

"Unfortunately, we've agreed to disagree, and I truly wish her well. But for anyone reading this who's considering our clinic, I hope you'll allow us the opportunity to earn your trust like we have for so many others."

You're not arguing. You're leading. You're inviting. And that's attractive.

Make Your Own Kind of Music

As physical therapy practice owners, we wear a lot of hats: clinician, CEO, team leader, marketer. But perhaps the most important hat we wear in this digital age? Storyteller. You don't get to control what people say about you. But you do get to control what story potential clients hear next.

So the next time a one-star review shows up and your stomach drops? Don't panic. Pick up the phone. Rally your community. Then tell a better story, for the people who are still listening. -

That's how leaders respond. That's how great clinics grow. That's how you win in this game we call private practice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Paul Gough, BSc (Hons), MCSP, is the owner and CEO of the Paul Gough Physio Rooms, Paul Gough Media, and PhysioFunnels, helping private practice owners run successful, profitable businesses. He can be reached at paul@paulgough.com.

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