



## DEVELOPING DATA

# The Anatomy of a 1-Star vs 5-Star Google Review

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### TOP THEMES AMONG 1-STAR AND 5-STAR REVIEWS

Theme	% of 1-Star Reviews	% of 5-Star Reviews	Percentage-Point Gap Between 1-Star and 5-Star Reviews
Staff friendliness	25.60%	73.80%	48.2
Doctor/provider	49.70%	45.10%	-4.6
Wait time	49.50%	41.10%	-8.4
Recommends to others	14.70%	36.20%	21.5
Front desk/check-in	34.80%	34.10%	-0.7
Children/pediatric	21.10%	13.80%	-7.3
Prescription issues	18.30%	9.20%	-9.2
Billing/cost	30.10%	7.30%	-22.7
“Never returning”	26.90%	1.80%	-25.1
Staff rudeness	33.30%	1.80%	-31.5

*Source: Analysis of 3.1 million Google reviews across 3,665 urgent care centers*

While many urgent care operators measure their overall Google ratings—focusing staff on capturing as many “5-stars” as possible—few understand the specific staff behaviors and patient experience that drive positive and negative reviews. To identify the differences, Urgent Care Consultants analyzed the content of 3.1 million Google reviews across 3,665 urgent care centers.

The table breaks down the specific themes driving positive and negative experiences. A positive gap indicates a theme more prevalent in 5-star reviews, while a negative gap indicates a theme more prevalent in 1-star reviews. Additionally, themes like “recommends to others” (appearing in 14.7% of 1-star reviews) may reflect natural language patterns among reviewers.

The key differentiator for earning 5 stars is not surprising: “friendly” staff. In fact, about 75% of 5-star reviewers describe the “warmth” of staff. In contrast, about one-third of

1-star reviewers describe the staff—even naming a specific staff member—in terms of “rudeness.”

Reviews also demonstrate that patients become fans or foes at the front desk, which is typically their first and last interaction with the clinic. Specific mentions of the front desk appear in a third of both 5-star and 1-star reviews, meaning the receptionist can swing the visit either way.

While providers were heavily scrutinized—appearing in nearly half of both negative (49.7%) and positive (45.1%) reviews—patients may use provider engagement as a proxy for the quality of medical decision-making.

After provider and staff interaction, the second major factor is familiar to urgent care operators. Wait times cluster in the positive (41.1%) but more so in the negative (49.5%) reviews.

Billing issues, including transactional errors and unexpected balances, may drag down an otherwise positive visit weeks after the fact. Billing complaints appear 4 times more often in 1-star than 5-star reviews (30.1% vs 7.3%). Clearly explaining financial policies and expected patient responsibility at check-in may be helpful.

In summary, 5-star reviews are won through a combination of friendliness, speed, competence, and financial transparency. ■



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