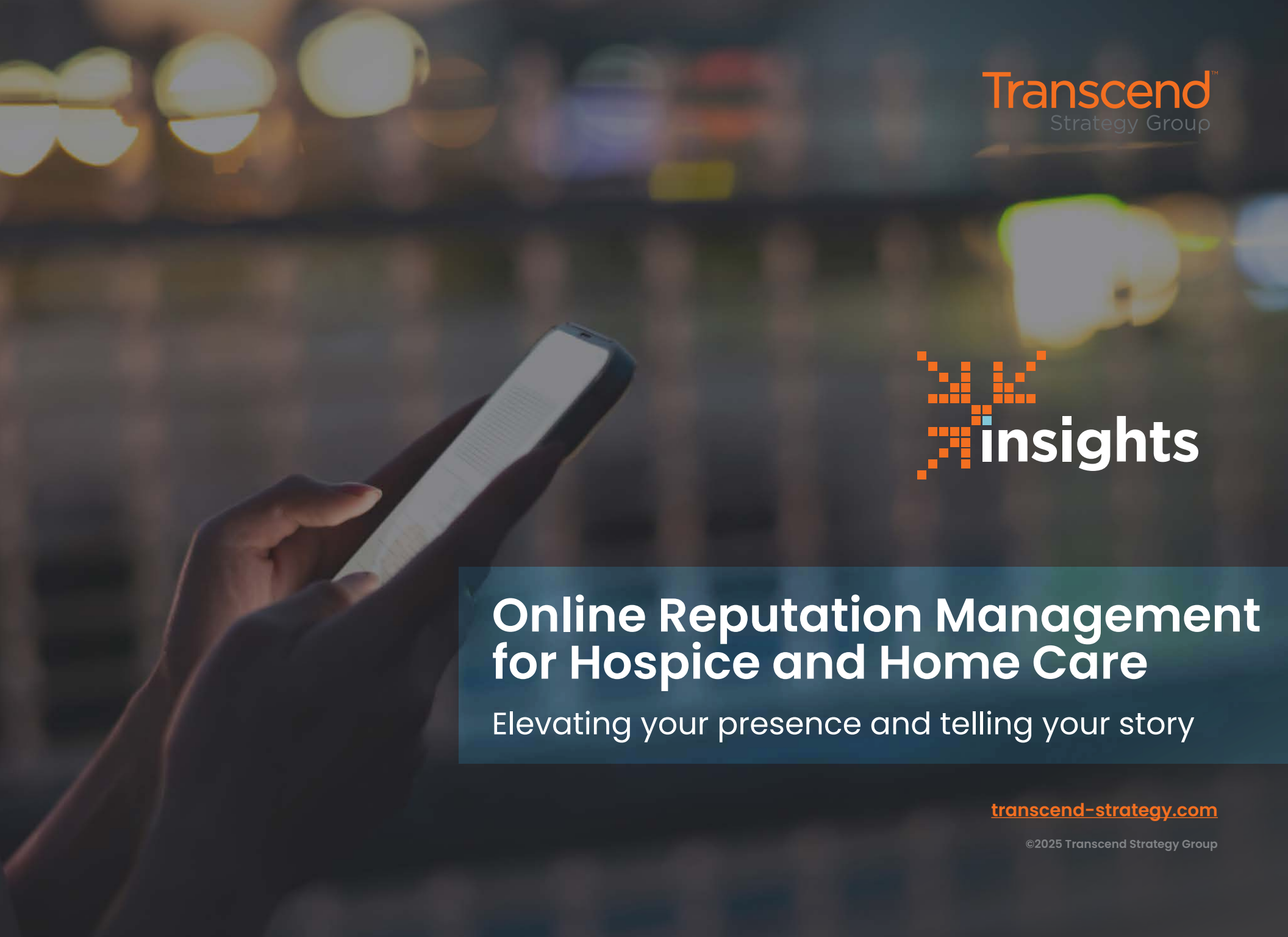

Transcend™
Strategy Group

insights

Online Reputation Management for Hospice and Home Care

Elevating your presence and telling your story

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insights

In today's digital-first world, the reputation of your organization isn't just built on word-of-mouth – it's shaped and amplified online. More than ever, families searching for hospice, home health or personal care are turning to Google reviews, social media posts and third-party referral sites to guide their decisions during moments of high emotion and urgency. This is even more true for the younger generations of family caregivers. A single negative review – or lack of positive presence – could sway a potential referral away from your organization.

At Transcend Strategy Group, we know online reputation management is no longer optional for home-based care providers – it's mission-critical. **Reputation is tightly linked to growth, trust and team morale**. Referral partners and prospective families are influenced by what they see and read online. If your digital footprint doesn't match the quality of care you provide, you're at risk of being overlooked – regardless of your clinical excellence.

More than that, reputation management is about owning your narrative. Many providers feel at the mercy of online comments, but in our experience proactive strategies – like appropriately cultivating positive reviews, responding with empathy and urgency to concerns, and showcasing powerful stories – can help home-based care organizations control their public image and build meaningful trust.

In this insights report, we explore why online reputation is so influential in today's competitive landscape, how it affects your census and bottom line, and what actionable steps your organization can take to strengthen its digital presence. Because when families are deciding who to trust when it matters most, your online reputation might be the loudest voice in the room.

Threats to Online Image Are Everywhere, Even for Compliant Providers

Providing care in the home is complex, and even for providers with an exceptionally high quality of service, it can be difficult to avoid mishaps.

When healthcare consumers and employees get frustrated, they can feel a need to escalate their concerns. If they don't find satisfaction directly with an organization (even if those feedback channels are available), they may turn to other public ways to voice their concerns.

Of course, the reverse is also true. If a client or patient is thrilled with the care they are receiving, hopefully they feel a desire to share their satisfaction publicly and to recommend care from the agency that took such good care of them and their loved ones. These personal endorsements can be worth as much if not more as the promises your organization makes on your website or a recommendation from a trusted clinician.

Consumers Are Increasingly Turning to Online Sites and Social Media to Inform Healthcare Decisions

While the recommendations of trusted clinicians and community leaders still hold weight with consumers, Transcend research shows that consumers are also looking at other sources for information when making these healthcare decisions.

According to Transcend's TRi™ Research Platform:

65%

of online adults aged 18+ leverage online research when getting information for medical conditions.

62%

use healthcare professionals as one of their trusted sources.

15%

turn to social media as well when seeking out information about these medical conditions.

In Transcend's March 2025 study on these family caregivers, our research found that 28% of those surveyed would prefer to receive information about healthcare choices via social media methods.

It's also clear that consumers can be skeptical of what businesses say about themselves. Recent research by the firm Edelman showed that as many as 59% of respondents believe that corporate leaders deliberately mislead them on health information. Consumers may be turning to other sources for their information when it comes to exploring healthcare options *besides* your company's website.

How to Think About Your Social and Reputation Management Framework

With the stakes now appropriately framed, providers need to develop a holistic philosophy for how they approach building an appropriate presence and system for monitoring and responding to online reviews.

Transcend counsels clients to consider what we call the R.E.D. method: Focus on Responsiveness, Empathy and De-escalation.

Responsiveness

Empathy

De-escalation

Responsiveness: Social media and review sites empower consumers in part because they are immediate and real-time. They can express their frustrations or praises, and that feedback is publicly reflected for all to see directly after they post or tag a company. Additionally, they expect a response quickly from the organization once they've initiated a review or tagged the organization. While most home-based care agencies may not have the ability to respond in real-time, best practice in this area is to aim for publicly responding and acknowledging concerns or praises within 24 hours.

A simple social media auto-response might say:

> "Thanks for reaching out to our organization! Our team is currently focused on providing exceptional care to our patients, so there may be a delay in responding to social media messages. For immediate assistance, please call us at (phone number) or email us at (email). We actively monitor these channels and are happy to help!"

How to Think About Your Social and Reputation Management Framework (cont.)

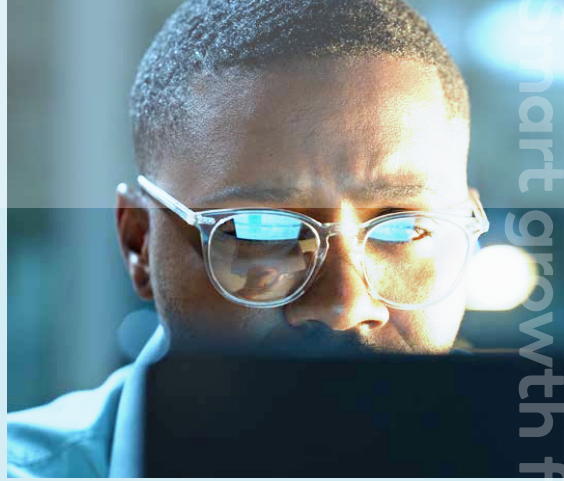
TIP:

Not every organization has the bandwidth to actively monitor social media in real time. If your team doesn't have the capacity for ongoing social media management, consider disabling direct messaging on your business profiles or setting up an automated reply. This helps manage expectations while still guiding people to the right place for help.

Empathy: Many providers grapple with exactly what to say or how to respond to a negative review or comment online. This feeling can be compounded when an agency feels as though the complaint may not be giving the entire story or picture of how a particular incident unfolded. As tempting as it may be to try to defend your company in an online setting, this tactic rarely works, as anyone who has tried to debate politics on social media can attest. Additionally, if the incident in question was covered under federal health privacy laws, your organization may not even be allowed to reveal details in a public forum. **Online reputation management is not about being right**, it's about presenting an understanding and compassionate presence that reflects your mission and the care you provide every day.

De-escalation: Trying to provide service recovery or addressing a complaint online is difficult and should be handled delicately given HIPAA regulations. The best practice is to take the discussion offline or to a direct message environment (though almost no social direct message platforms are HIPAA-compliant either). Leaving the discussion in a public forum can also expose your organization to the phenomenon of "piling on," where other commenters begin to add their frustrations, which are rarely level-headed in nature. Providing an email address or a phone number where a concern can be quickly addressed by a leader is almost always the best way to lower the stakes and get the conversation out of the public view.

Online Listing and Review Sites:
Where You Should Be and How to Set Them Up



Online listings are often the first digital impression families and caregivers have of your organization. While you may think of them as secondary to your website, listings frequently appear high in search results for home care, home health and hospice-related queries, which make them a vital part of your online presence. At a minimum, home-based care organizations should claim and fully complete profiles on at least one review site or listing platform:

- **Google Business Profile:** This is the most essential listing for visibility in local search results and map directions. Make sure your profile categories are accurate (e.g., "Hospice," "Home Health Care Service") and that your contact information and service areas are kept up to date.
- **Provider Directories:** A simple search for "hospice near me" often returns a list of directories like Caring.com, AgingCare.com, HomeInstead.com, or APlaceForMom.com. These caregiver forums and provider directories help families quickly compare local services. Some require a paid partnership for enhanced visibility, but even a basic (free) listing can be valuable for expanding your digital footprint. ***Tip***: *Do some simple Google searches to see which directories come up in your search results.*
- **Yelp:** While not a top priority for many healthcare providers, Yelp reviews still rank highly in online search results. Claiming a Yelp listing, even if you aren't actively asking for reviews on the platform, can help get your organization moved to the front of online searches, as well as helping you monitor reviews and concerns.
- **Better Business Bureau (BBB):** BBB isn't a primary source for caregiver decision-making, so it's usually not a must-have for reputation management and one we don't often recommend starting with. That said, your organization may already have an auto-generated BBB listing sourced from public data. Review BBB to see if you're included in their directory and then claim or establish your profile to allow you to correct inaccuracies and further control how your organization appears online.

Once your listings are claimed and set up, conduct regular audits of pages to maintain accuracy and trust. Small inconsistencies, like a mismatched phone number or outdated service area, can confuse families searching for support during their critical moments.

Building a Framework for Online Reputation Management

Managing your online reputation is more than just checking comments on your social posts. It requires having an internal system in place to monitor, escalate and respond appropriately to feedback regarding your organization. The key is to build an internal structure that gives the right people the tools to act timely and with confidence.

Among home care providers, an internal reputation management team may include:

- **A communications or marketing leader to monitor incoming messages, manage social profiles, and actively check for new reviews on online listings**
- **A clinical or operations leader who can assist in resolving care-related concerns directly**
- **An HR contact or leadership representative for employee-related feedback**

The internal team should be aligned on tone, process and escalation paths. For large scale providers, maintaining a shared spreadsheet escalation chart can allow the individual responsible for managing reviews to quickly escalate negative reviews or patient care complaints to the right leaders and teams within an organization.

Building an Intentional Social Media Presence:

Where to Focus and Why

TikTok, BlueSky, Threads, Twitter is now X – what's next? For providers of all sizes, choosing the right platforms and strategy for social media can feel overwhelming among today's online noise. And that's before you factor in constantly shifting algorithms and the pressure to create eye-catching content.

Here's the good news. *You don't need to be on every platform.* A strong social strategy isn't about going viral or keeping up with the latest trending site; it's about showing up intentionally, in the places your intended audience is spending their time scrolling.

Start with your audience. Before selecting platforms for your organization, identify who you're trying to reach. Most home-based care providers are speaking to a mix of:

- Family caregivers
- Potential patients
- Referral partners
- Potential employees

Once you've defined your audience, determine which platforms will help you connect with them. Select one to three platforms that are right sized for your team to manage. While not an exhaustive list, three of the common social media sites home-based care providers select are:

- **Facebook:** Essential for caregiver engagement, especially caregivers within the sandwich generation, and local community outreach. As of January 2025, 78% of U.S. social media users aged 40–49 and 75% of those aged 30–39 are active on Facebook, making it the most critical platform for reaching family decision-makers. (Dixon, 2025)
- **Instagram:** Ideal for visual storytelling, staff highlights and showing the heart of your care. It's especially relevant for reaching Millennial and Gen Z caregivers as 66% of U.S. users aged 18–29 are active on Instagram. (Dixon, 2025)
- **LinkedIn:** Useful platform for building credibility with referral partners and attracting qualified professionals to your team. It's especially valuable for reaching adults aged 30–49, 40% of whom actively use this platform. (Gottfried, 2024)

With platform selection out of the way, it's time to build a content strategy that balances organic content and paid social campaigns.

Building an Intentional Social Media Presence: Where to Focus and Why (cont.)

Organic content is the foundation of your online presence.

These are the posts you publish without ad spend and they're essential for building long-term credibility and supporting your organization's reputation. Organic content might include posts such as patient stories that highlight your mission and values, employee highlights, educational resources that showcase your services, and community involvement. When sharing patient stories or photos, ensure you have a signed media release form. If you don't have a media release form, contact your compliance or legal team for support in creating one prior to sharing patient testimonials.

Remember, consistency beats frequency. When it comes to posting organically, you don't need to post daily to stay top of mind. Aim for one to two thoughtful, high-quality posts a week that reinforce your brand voice and values.

TIP:

Not every organization is ready for a full-scale paid campaign. If you're new to paid social, you can start small. Try boosting a high-performing organic post and track the results (impressions, clicks, website visits). This can give you valuable insights into how customized paid campaigns might support future marketing goals.

If organic content builds trust, paid content drives action. Paid social campaigns help amplify your message, ensuring that your most important content reaches the right audience with the right call to action. Paid social media allows you to spread your content to an audience using age, geographic and campaign goals.

To build an effective paid strategy, align paid content campaigns with your broader organizational goals. For example, are you looking to strengthen awareness among decision-makers? Consider building a campaign to **target family caregivers** who are actively searching for services and use strong calls to action that link to landing pages or contact forms. Looking to recruit new team members? **Target prospective employees** with clear messaging around open positions, benefits, workplace culture and a link to apply.

Your Online Reputation Is Too Important to Ignore

In home-based care, trust is everything – and today, that trust is increasingly built and tested online. Families and referral sources alike are researching providers through Google reviews, social media and directory listings. Even the best clinical care can be overlooked if your digital footprint doesn't reflect your quality. Managing your online presence isn't just about damage control – it's about proactively shaping your story, building credibility, and engaging the audiences who matter most.

At Transcend Strategy Group, we help home-based care providers take control of their online narrative through smart strategies grounded in storytelling, empathy and de-escalation. Whether you need help building a review framework, creating compelling content strategy, or implementing a full-scale reputation management system, we're here to help you protect and grow your brand.

Let's talk about how your organization can strengthen its online reputation and drive growth.

To start a conversation, email
hello@transcend-strategy.com

Email Us

Transcend™
Strategy Group

Smart growth for home care.

General Guidelines for Responding to Reviews

Transcend Strategy Group

Tone and Approach

- ☐ Use a compassionate tone, even when addressing criticism
- ☐ Avoid defensiveness; do not debate claims online
- ☐ Protect participant privacy (never confirm or deny participant or employee status)
- ☐ Escalate concerns involving care or compliance to internal leadership
- ☐ Log adverse events according to organizational policy

Timing

- ☐ Respond to all public-facing reviews within 24 hours whenever possible
- ☐ Regularly monitor review platforms and social media channels

Response Structure

- ☐ Thank the reviewer; acknowledge their feedback (positive or negative)
- ☐ Show empathy; reflect understanding of their experience
- ☐ Offer next steps; direct them to a private channel if needed

Handling Social Media Comments

ENGAGING WITH COMMENTS

- ☐ Positive comments: Like, share or respond with gratitude
- ☐ Acknowledge the concern, remain calm and avoid assigning blame
- ☐ Politely request to move the conversation offline, and explain the limits of what you can discuss publicly due to health privacy laws

WHEN TO ESCALATE INTERNALLY

- ☐ If the individual continues aggressive or defamatory engagement publicly
- ☐ If protected health information is shared in a review or comment
- ☐ If the concern relates to patient/client safety, serious allegations or regulatory compliance

In these cases, consult your compliance or leadership teams before responding further.

HIPAA COMPLIANCE AND EMPLOYEE ANONYMITY IN RESPONSES

- ☐ Never disclose protected health information publicly
- ☐ Never confirm or deny whether someone is a patient/client
- ☐ Never confirm or deny employee status
- ☐ Use general, non-specific language in public replies

Your online reputation is a reflection of your organizational values. Remember the R.E.D method and focus on Responsiveness, Empathy and De-escalation with every response.

NOT SURE WHERE TO START? TRANSCEND CAN HELP.

If you need support in building out your online reputation management and social strategy playbook, Transcend can help. Our experts have helped industry-leading home-based care organizations take their social and reputation management presences to the next level, so that they can focus on what matters most – delivering high-quality care where patients want it the most: their homes.

Reach out to **hello@transcend-strategy.com** to start polishing your online presence today.