



# THE NEW SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

From Facebook to Instagram, Wendy Lewis reports on what social media marketing looks like in 2017 and how it is morphing into pay for play



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**I**T WAS WAY BACK IN 2002 THAT SOCIAL media came into its own when Friendster emerged as an online community of people who had some common bonds. In 2003, LinkedIn and MySpace arrived on the scene. Facebook started up in 2004, and in 2006 it was opened to the public, which was the same year that Twitter was created. Not to be outdone, Google+ launched in 2007. Instagram entered the scene in 2010.

When I started navigating the uncharted waters of social media, Facebook and Twitter mattered the most. Although these platforms did attract businesses, they were mainly being used by people in their 20s and 30s to communicate with their friends. It was not until November of 2007 that brands and businesses were offered the opportunity to have an official Facebook presence by way of a dedicated page. And that was the beginning of how social media morphed from just a place to keep in touch with friends to a multi-dimensional B2B and DTC marketing platform.

I look back on those magical times with nostalgia for the excitement and anticipation of greater things to come. Social media as a form of communicating with customers was in its infancy, but growing exponentially. It was moving fast and furiously, and if you were actively posting and engaging, you could see your numbers climb a little bit every day.

As of 2017, for those of us who were early adopters, the landscape has certainly changed. The rapid rise of new platforms and novel ways of using them that had captured our enthusiasm now feels like we are slaves to the whims of a crop of Silicon Valley billionaires. In this overcrowded social media scene, those sensations of excitement have given way to a feeling of frustration, sleep deprivation, and burn out.

It has become increasingly harder for brands to reach their stride and stand out from the crowd online. Engaging with your audience in a meaningful way now takes a big budget and an army of talent. Many people are becoming frustrated by the daily barrage of emails and sales pitches,

random cold calls and text messages on their cell phones, targeted ads when they go online, and, most recently, ads at the top of their Gmail inbox. The level of daily intrusions on our privacy is off the charts.

Most of us feel overwhelmed with too many demands on our time and concentration, making it harder to decipher the right paths to choose. As platforms keep morphing and popularity among specific user groups shifts, social media is no longer something you can just dabble in and still be effective. It requires a 24/7 commitment to putting some skin in the game.

## Your digital footprint

All practices need to actively participate in the digital sector to stay visible and relevant to patients and colleagues. Social media is an integral part of the digital landscape and to get the most from your efforts requires a strategic approach.

The challenge social media presents to marketers demands even greater innovation and creativity. It requires teamwork and strong collaboration. We must think outside the box and utilize all our resources and team members in new and unique ways. Try to rely on your brand's authenticity to help guide tactical decisions on social platforms. Consider how you want to make people feel, who you want to reach, and why your brand matters to those audiences.

New platforms can start up any moment, but that does not mean you must be active everywhere. Even the optimum way to use established platforms is in a constant state of flux. For example, when Instagram introduced stories, it was truly a game changer. Then Facebook introduced Facebook Live Video, offering a new way to utilize this powerful platform. Snapchat is the social media darling of the day, but not every practice is comfortable with offering the public a glimpse into their practice in such an intensely personal way. You don't need to spread yourself too thin by dipping your hand into every channel, but rather you should strive to excel at the handful of platforms that are most relevant to your practice.

Being flexible, adaptable, and able to move fast is also key. Staying ahead of the curve, willing to experiment and always striving to create innovative solutions is the best strategy to tackle the myriad challenges of the social landscape.

## Shrinking organic reach

If you have noticed a decline in how many of your Facebook Page fans have been viewing and interacting with your organic posts over the past few years, you are not alone. Until around five years ago, every time you posted content on your Facebook Page, around 16% of your fans would see your update. Fast forward to 2017, and now only about 2% of your fans will ever lay eyes on your content. The updated algorithms have slashed organic reach down to single digits.

There are a few explanations for this disturbing trend. In the first place, there is just too much content being put out on Facebook, so everyone's news feeds are overcrowded which makes getting eyes on your posts more competitive. In addition, the masterminds at Facebook are deliberately trying to show users the content that is most relevant to them, so some content gets screened out by this methodology.

After Facebook purchased Instagram and then introduced an ad program in 2015, they quickly introduced the same model onto their newly acquired platform. Facebook defines organic reach as 'how many people you can reach for free on Facebook by posting to your Page.' Similarly, organic posts on Instagram have dropped to the bottom of users' feeds, which has made it next to impossible to grow followers substantially unless your brand is heavily invested in ads and offers or you engage with influencers to share your content.

This new world order is presenting a long list of challenges for marketers. As our ability to reach audiences organically has plummeted, the power of social media in influencing purchasing decisions is surging. Although navigating the social media landscape has become more daunting, practices and brands that want to survive in the competitive landscape today must be active on social.

With 113 billion daily active users on

Facebook, you cannot overlook the power of this platform for marketing your practice. An optimized Facebook Page allows you to build a community around your brand, where you can respond to customer inquiries, share information with your audience, and utilize Page Insights to learn more about your followers. Choose a search-friendly page name that makes it easy to find you. Don't deviate from your official practice name or logo, which can make it more difficult for customers to recognize you. You also

facebook.com

facebook for business

Get Started Solutions Success Stories Get Help News

Meet the people who'll love your business

Find new customers. Boost sales.

Facebook can help you meet your business goals.

All the right people

Over a billion people use Facebook to connect. Based on their location, age and more, we can introduce you to the people who'll love your business.

On desktop and mobile

Reach people where they're engaged. Facebook is on three of every four smartphones, and more than half people on Facebook visit every

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do not need to include every relevant keyword in your Facebook Page name, which can look like spam. Keep your Facebook Page name clear and simple.

Make your Facebook Page more discoverable with a vanity URL. Once your page has 25 Likes, you can set a custom URL (or page 'username') to better reflect your business. This custom page username can only be set once, so choose wisely. Each username can only be claimed by one person or business, so the earlier you set yours the better. Check the availability of your vanity URL at: <http://www.facebook.com/username>. ▷



## 5 TIPS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR AD CAMPAIGNS

### 1 Keep your audience targeting narrow

Develop your audience by adding one interest category at a time. For example, start with 'Minneapolis body shaping', and then broaden it after you have run your campaigns for a few weeks by adding 'cosmetic surgery' or 'health and fitness'. This will give you a clear idea of what is working best.

### 2 Target by zip code or region

Since most practices are local, you can target your audience by their zip or postal code. This is also helpful if you know a particular city (such as New York or LA) converts well. You can find which cities convert best in your Google Analytics in the 'Audience Insights' section.

### 3 Test images first

Images count for the lion's share of how an ad performs. Copy also matters, but if your conversion rates are low, try testing new images first. Avoid anything that could be misconstrued as remotely sexual or inappropriate. Facebook also does not take kindly to body shaming or calling out a perfect physique or any kind of nudity.

### 4 Tell people what you want them to do

Keep your call to action simple. Tell users what to do next, such as 'Download the eBook', 'Call to make an appointment', or 'Give us your email'.

### 5 Trial different types of targeting

To find the best audience for your products and services, experiment with interest categories, friends of followers, and website audience lookalikes. Run them in separate ad sets to determine which are perform best.

“Engaging with your audience in a meaningful way now takes a big budget and an army of talent.”

▷ Your Facebook Page is a powerful tool for your business. With some strategic changes, you can make your Facebook Page work even better for your brand.

## Pay to play

In 2017, paid advertising is the basis of most companies' social strategy. Although paying to get your content seen is clearly a way to reach more people, it is not a fool-proof solution. You can pay as little as \$5 or \$10 to boost an individual post on Facebook, but sustaining that ad spend twelve months per year may not be a practical investment for most practices.

Much like an ad on any other channel—traditional or digital—Facebook Ads are basically content that you pay to share with a specific, targeted audience. The more targeted the audience, the further your ad spend can stretch. It's about getting your brand in front of the right audience to achieve your marketing goals.

In addition, even paid ads that are not targeted in the right way to the right people will not move the needle for your brand. Being strategic and staying on message and on brand are key. Using paid and organic advertising and finding the right balance takes planning, research, and experimentation. You need to determine specifically who you are trying to reach, the best way to reach that audience, and the best ways to do it.

For instance, running an inexpensive ad may not help you reach a large audience, but it can reveal a lot about who that audience is. You can uncover who is liking, sharing, and engaging with your brand and how. It is not just about posting, but more so about looking at how each post performs so you will thrive when social media changes course.

Since a balance of organic and paid ads is a reasonably affordable tactic, consider spending some of your budget experimenting and testing several strategies. For example, social is a good way to try out two new campaigns for promoting a new laser or branded treatment. You will be able to judge responses and see what images your audiences engages with most. Being able to absorb the kind of engagements that are happening digitally and adapt accordingly is a way to position your brand for success in such a competitive field.

Take advantage of following the analytics behind your social spend. The

more information you have about your audience, the more content you can create to satisfy their needs. Facebook's Page Insights tools make it easy to gather data about how your fans are interacting with your page and the content you share.

Insights offers detailed information about your page's overall performance, including data on audience demographics and engagement. It lets you see metrics on each of your posts so you can understand how many people you are actually reaching. You will also see how many comments and reactions are gained from specific posts, and you should use this data to help plan future content.

A key feature of Insights is the ability to see how many people have clicked on your call-to-action button, website, phone number, and address. This data is divided by demographics, such as age, gender, country, city, and device, which simplifies the process of creating future content.

## Best ad strategies

Facebook and Instagram have evolved into more like a paid marketing platform than an organic one. Not surprisingly, Facebook recommends running your ads on both Facebook and Instagram!

Here are the reasons cited for why:

- **Simplicity:** It's easy. When you choose an objective that supports Instagram ads, the Instagram placement will automatically be selected for you. Create your ad as usual and place your order.
- **Optimization:** Your ad will be optimized based on the objective you choose. For example, if you choose 'Send people to your website', your ad will be optimized to get more clicks to your website. By running your ad on both, your ad will be optimized to show on the placement that gets you the most clicks to your website at the lowest cost.
- **No Instagram account needed:** If you don't have an Instagram business account, you can still run ads on Instagram. You just need a Facebook Page to serve as the voice of your ad on Instagram.

You can also run the same creative on both Facebook and Instagram. When you upload your creative, you can crop the image for both placements. When you choose this option, your ads will be optimized to deliver across both platforms based on the objective you chose. Or you can run ads with different images on Facebook and Instagram. But you can only create ads in stories on Instagram.

## Facebook ad targeting options

**Connections:** You can target people who are either connected or not connected to your Facebook Page. If you want to reach a new audience, select 'not connected to your Facebook Page.' If you have a special offer or new product, select 'connected to your Facebook Page' to reach people who already know your brand.

**Custom audiences:** Facebook lets you upload customer email addresses or other identifiers to build your own audience targeting. This practice may require using your web team or a programmer to get it right.

**Lookalike audiences:** This lets you target people based on data from your Facebook Pixel, mobile app data, or from fans of your page. For example, find your top 10 clients and search their emails or names on Facebook. Look at their Likes and create a spreadsheet of common interests. Search for a handful of similar Likes across these top clients to find out who you should be targeting.

## FACEBOOK ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

Follow these rules to avoid getting your ad rejected or taken down:

- **Don't have more than 20 percent of text on your images.** Facebook doesn't want people's newsfeeds to be filled with text-heavy images screaming for attention. Keep your text overlays to less than 20 percent of your image (and this may include a text logo).
- **Don't use Facebook or Instagram logos or icons in your ads.** This is against Facebook's brand rules. Using another company's logo in your ad implies a partnership.
- **Don't ask for sensitive personal information in lead forms.** This includes questions about debt levels, ethnicity, and personal identification such as passwords or social insurance numbers.

**Email collection:** For products and services offered in an aesthetics clinic, emails may be a very effective strategy. Facebook makes it easy to collect new email leads. With software such as MailChimp and others, you can send out a series of automatic emails, which helps you build trust and introduces fans to your brand before you pitch your products and services. To capitalize on this option, open your Facebook Ads Manager or Power Editor. In the campaign objective section, select 'collect leads for your business.' Create your form in Facebook to align with the fields on your email list, such as first name, last name, and email address, etc. Once again, this should probably be done by your web team or a programmer.

## Drive traffic to your best content

Think about the best content you have to offer. It may be a

few select blog posts, dramatic patient before and after images, or compelling videos that resonate with your target audience.

If you are not sure what to choose, use Google Analytics to get a list of your most popular pieces of content that gain the most visitors from search and social. Choose one to promote with a Facebook ad campaign. Video can perform very well on Facebook. Consider turning one of your best performing blog posts into a short video aimed at Facebook audiences. Create a slideshow video ad in Facebook's Ads Manager. If you are going to use video on Facebook, most users tend to watch without audio. Videos on Facebook are more likely to catch fans' attention, especially those with captions. Make sure these videos can communicate your

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message without requiring the viewer to turn up the volume on their mobile device. Another great addition for aesthetic practices is the advent of Facebook Live Video. Try experimenting with live video content which can greatly expand your organic reach.

## Reference

1. <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/1603906456518352> [Last accessed 5 May]

