



# WHAT'S TRENDING IN DIGITAL MARKETING FOR 2018

Is Snap on life support? What's up with the 280-character Twitter trial? Where is live streaming going next? **Wendy Lewis** takes a deep dive into what you need to know to promote your practice this year



## WE CAN ALL AGREE ON ONE MAIN THEME – 2018 is going to be driven by data, data, and more data.

Now, more than ever, aesthetic practice marketers need to get educated and pay attention to the sweeping changes coming that will impact their current promotional strategies. If you want to win against your competition, you cannot afford to lag behind in terms of technology and digital.

According to Louis Scafuri, co-founder of ZALEA.com, 'Our research reinforces the extensive use of the Internet and social channels as key information sources among consumers interested in aesthetic procedures. Prospective patients check at least six sources for information before they choose a practice. Furthermore, their 'go-to' way to review practitioners' websites and reviews is on their mobile devices.'

Here are seven key trends to follow for upping your digital marketing game now.

### Authority marketing

2018 should be the year of increased focus on creating your personal authority brand. Having a personalized online footprint is a key differentiator that is an essential element of a smart business strategy. Think of it this way. You have established yourself as an authority in the field of aesthetic medicine and have gone to great lengths to ensure that this is known to potential patients. Establishing yourself as the authority in your field is how you can dominate your competition. It positions you above others and opens doors to acquire and retain customers. Your

personal authority brand must be protected at all costs. The more content you put out online, the more it will help your good content rise above any negative content that may be out there. When consumers are searching for topics related to the products, services, and treatments your practice offers, and they find high-quality content, they will be more likely to turn to you as an expert over one of your competitors.

So, write a book, create e-books, start a blog, get quoted in relevant media outlets, get more active on more social channels like Quora, LinkedIn, and YouTube, and take advantage of new features on channels you are already active on such as Instagram Stories and Facebook Live to put a face to a name for consumers seeking aesthetic practitioners. Keep your brand top of mind for your target audience, so when they are ready to have a treatment, they will come to you.

### Get real – transparency rules

With the rise of social media, your audience is looking for you to be genuine. They want to get to know you before they ever get ready to make a move; either by sending an email, calling the clinic, visiting your website, connecting with you on Facebook or following you on Instagram. Real people want to engage with real people, which is why marketing should be more transparent than ever before. Think authenticity. Relax a little. You don't need to come across as perfectly stodgy and professional 100% of the time. That is not a license to get sloppy and take risks with your license, but being human and showing that you have a personal side can help make practitioners more relatable to patients.

Consider the content you are putting out into the universe to promote your practice. Not every practitioner has time to tweet or blog, so take an objective look at the content that is being created for you. Does it measure up to what your competitors are doing? Does it sound like someone else wrote it for you? Are you a victim of cheap social that is being duplicated for multiple practices? Does it have an identity and a point of view or is it just white noise, generic themes, and strings of meaningless adjectives thrown together? Is it likeable? For 2018, your followers want to connect with you as your authentic self. ▶



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drive engagement. To make it more valuable, the CTA or call to action can be for the quiz taker to fork over his or her email address plus other useful data (age, sex, location, etc.) in exchange for education from an expert.

### Is visual search the new SEO?

For years, we have been obsessed with building sophisticated websites with pages of keyword-rich content that often rendered them to be bordering on unreadable. This was primarily due to the impact it had on search and getting found. The new boom in visual search that allows users to seek out products using mobile devices and images is poised to change all that. Utilizing strong visual content has allowed small businesses to stay visible affordably in a world dominated by big-budget global brands. In addition to grabbing your audience's attention, high-quality visuals can improve engagement and lead to more shares on social media.

According to Tom Seery, CEO of RealSelf.com, 'Amazon's Alexa-based devices and the new Apple iPhone were the hottest gifts this past holiday. The speed of the new iPhone X has radically improved the utility of using Siri. SEO is getting more complicated because, when it comes to search, consumers with voice devices tend to use full sentences to launch an online query. For instance, "best Botox clinic near me" may be the way a prospective patient performs a search from their laptop. But the same person with a voice search could be much more verbose in their search. "Hey Siri, what is the best place to get Botox for the first time near me?" Voice agents like Alexa are still in their infancy, and the impact is yet to be fully felt by marketers.'

Visual search will undoubtedly become a very powerful driver of key traffic, which necessitates that websites remain relevant to voice-driven search.

### Micro-influencers will make a big impact

Influencer marketing is a way to promote services and products through people with a large number of followers who can have an impact on their purchasing behaviour. Influencers do not come cheap. Those with a cool million followers or more may ask for a 5 or 6-figure payment for a single post that goes live for

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#### ▷ Podcasts are back

The podcast is back and bigger than ever. No longer a niche corner of the content market; having a podcast and starting an interview series allows you to interact with and build relationships with people you want to know better, without putting you in the position of asking them for something. Michigan-based plastic surgeon and best-selling author Anthony Youn, MD, is a stellar example of how to do podcasts right. His popular consumer-driven podcast combines lively interviews with his smart commentary and helps build his personal authority as well as that of his guests. Having a podcast has been a great way for me to connect with my followers and other innovators in the plastic surgery and healthcare space. The long-form interviews allow me to share a lot of content and information, as well as support and promote my colleagues. However, there is a steep learning curve to it! Dealing with hiccups

in technology, complicated schedules, and producing engaging content takes a lot of time and patience,' says Dr. Youn.

#### Quiz marketing

At the risk of dating myself, remember the old quizzes that ran in Cosmopolitan (Hearst) back in the days when Helen Gurley Brown was Editor-in-Chief circa the 1980s? If you're too young to recall this most popular feature, every girl under 21 years of age made a mad dash to the newsstand every month to get her copy and take the quiz. These quizzes spoke to an entire generation. Few among us can resist the temptation of a captivating quiz or survey. Testing our knowledge and answering questions is a compelling vehicle. People seem to love quizzes and surveys because they are fun and a welcome distraction from the serious side of our daily lives. Therefore, quiz marketing is emerging as a smart and simple way to use interactive content to

24 hours. But consumers have shown a growing scepticism for paid endorsements, so relying solely on 'influencers' to casually mention how much they like what you do may not have the best ROI (return on investment).

'We have found that there is still a need for greater transparency in all facets of digital media being driven by the growing awareness of the advertorial nature of most product information out there. Despite the FTC's (Federal Trade Commission) latest crackdown on regulations for paid content by recommending the hashtags #ad and #sponsored for labelling posts, many bloggers and Instagrammers do not make it clear that they are working with the brands they promote,' says Mr. Scafuri. In fact, 2018 may end up being the year that ends the long-standing tradition of freebies from brands to media and influencers without clear disclosures.

Today's influencers are not just reality stars, celebs, and sports figures. You may do better stimulating authentic and honest commentary in the form of ratings, reviews, endorsements, testimonials, and videos from real patients who know and like your work. Enter the new crop of micro-influencers. These are people who have clout among the audiences that matter to your practice. They are in front of your target audiences regularly and have serious sway within your local community. Although they may have a more modest fan base, they can generate great engagement from people who are more likely to become clients, customers, and patients. The content they post will be more authentic, and they are more likely to reply to comments and answer followers' questions. Recommendations from relevant micro-influencers can be an important source of new business. For 2018, commit to investigating who they are, get to know them, and make an impact on them to encourage referrals. These potential brand advocates can move the needle in a big way.

Practitioners can also become their own micro-influencers. According to Mr. Seery, 'For many years we have observed how a small

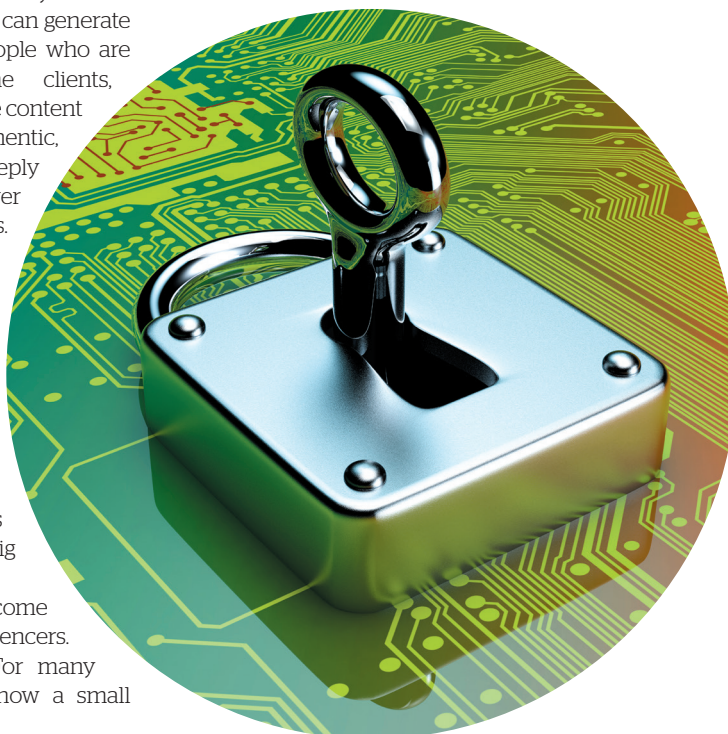
number of doctors and injectors have built up large followings on channels like Snap Chat, YouTube, and Instagram. In 2018, more aesthetic experts will jump into social media with the spirit of engaging audiences, rather than as a way to advertise on the cheap. Expect to see a lot more doctors and nurses emerging as influencers, which will encourage others to adopt influence marketing to promote their practices.'

## Data Protection

If 2017 was the year of the data breach, then 2018 is poised to drive data protection to the top of the list of concerns shared by doctors, hospitals, institutions, and patients alike. What five little letters instil fear in the hearts and minds of healthcare professionals? At least in the USA, that would be HIPAA.

The Internet has exposed previously inaccessible vulnerabilities in medical records and hackers are having a field day gaining access in bold new ways. According to HealthcareITNews.com, aesthetic practices and women's health

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centres are prime targets for cyber attacks. Among the top breaches of 2017, Plastic Surgical Associates of South Dakota, and La Quinta Center for Cosmetic Dentistry made the list'. No one is immune from the imminent dangers malware, phishing, and ransomware present when this practice is proving to have lucrative outcomes for predators.

The NHS ransomware debacle in England and Scotland proved to be one of the biggest breaches of the past year, affecting 150 countries. Today, more patients are concerned about the privacy of their records and what happens to the information exchanged with medical aesthetic practices, Mr. Seery explains. 'While the US is relaxing some digital privacy-oriented rules on media companies, Europe is going solidly in the other direction. Digital media companies are scrambling to decide how best to meet new EU consumer data protection rules called the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Inside of these regulations are requirements that consumers have the right to be forgotten; that is, if requested, all digital records of the individual must be completely deleted from the company's systems. Think this is irrelevant to your practice? Just consider whether patients come to your website and post requests from any country in the EU,' says Mr. Seery.

So, what's the answer to this looming global threat? Prevention is clearly the way forward. More vendors are jumping on the bandwagon to offer practitioners new security programmes to keep patient data safely encrypted to avoid potential disasters.

► Read up on aesthetic clinic marketing in a new book by PRIME Editorial Board member WENDY LEWIS – *Aesthetic Clinic Marketing in the Digital Age* (CRC Press). Order your copy today at [crcpress.com](http://crcpress.com) – use **PR15** to get a special 15% discount.

## Reference

1. Healthcare IT News. The biggest healthcare breaches of 2017. HIMSS Media: Dec 2017. Available at: <http://www.healthcareitnews.com/slideshow/biggest-healthcare-breaches-2017-so-far?page=1>