

# SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

## THAT WILL IMPACT YOUR MARKETING PLAN IN 2021

**Wendy Lewis** explains what aesthetic clinics need to know for the year ahead

**E**VERY NEW YEAR BRINGS MIXED emotions of excitement and nervous anticipation, and this year it is especially true. It is challenging to predict what the biggest trends will be in social media circles because it is such a rapidly changing space, and we are at the mercy of Facebook, Twitter, Google, etc.

So, I took a deep dive into what the tech experts are saying and how these trends will impact medical aesthetics. Here are some of the highlights of where 2021 may take us.

### Hindsight is 2020

According to McKinsey, despite a resilience-testing 2020, rolling into a still-unsettling 2021, the good news is that barring any more unforeseen global catastrophes, businesses should be shaping their futures rather than just trying to survive through the present. The strongest brands and companies are reinventing themselves by embracing pandemic-driven change, which will surely continue this year. With everything disrupted, going back to the same old thing is unlikely to be a winning strategy.

The sweeping methods practices had to adopt in 2020 to keep patients and staff safe and be able to treat patients efficiently are not likely to go away any time soon. In fact, we can look forward to innovations and upgrades for

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automated systems for every aspect of running a business.

We have all had to embrace touchless technology and other innovations to address customer concerns and high expectations for a safe and sterile environment to bring them back into the clinic. Now that most or many aesthetic practices have been open reducing unnecessary face-to-face interaction and optimizing scheduling to comply with social distancing yet maintaining sufficient capacity has not gone away.

Mobile booking and intake forms that avoid patient contact and less interaction with front desk staff during check-in and check-out have become standard operating procedure. Patients can check-in electronically and proceed directly to a treatment room to reduce waiting times. Many practices have adopted two-way text messaging for confirming appointments, rescheduling, and for patients to wait in their car or outside the office until a room is ready for them to enter. This allows customers to maintain social distancing during the check-in process and optimizes staff time.

In 2021, any system or method you can automate,



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## People to people

Brands and practitioners should work to enhance their social media for 2021 by highlighting the real people behind the brand. This is a good way to humanize your brand and a good strategy to earn customers' trust. No trendy GIFs or promotions are able to camouflage an inauthentic communication strategy that doesn't instill trust. Encouraging people to speak to people in a natural, human way is crucial for meaningful engagement. Being transparent, authentic, and even a little bit vulnerable is a good idea in the current climate. People connect with people which means that your brand should be personalized in a way that reveals who you are and what you stand for.

Social engagement is getting bigger and louder. In 2021, brands are expected to experience less engagement when they are prone to just shouting their messages at their audience. Rather, it is better to focus on having two-way conversations and creating real connections. Building relationships should be your goal; sales and consultations will be the byproduct. Information, engagement and social issues are taking center stage for consumers.

## Social commerce

Brick & Mortar stores are embracing the shift to online shopping on Instagram and Facebook. Any traditional retail operation that can be converted to an online process will do so sooner or later, and in-person contact will be limited. This shift toward 'contactless shopping' will allow e-commerce to thrive even further in 2021.

Social commerce is coming alive in many new ways. More than ever before, people have adapted to the ease of digital communications, and social media is their preferred channel for interacting with brands. As social distancing extends into 2021, the demand for social commerce, shopping opportunities and customer care will continue to rise. Therefore, aesthetic clinics need >

optimize or step up, should be done. With the new strains of COVID popping up around the world, and the sluggish pace of vaccinations administered, these improvements will help to secure the future of your practice. This may include posting to your social media channels through a dashboard to save time.

Due to consumers sheltering in place at home for long periods, the world turned to mobile technologies to stay connected, entertained and informed, especially social media platforms. As physical marketing channels were rendered null and void, everything moved online. We can expect to see more Instagram posts and messenger apps connecting via hardware, such as fitness mirrors that allow you to share workout stats along with video clips.

But that was then, and this is now, and we have to change our style, tone and posting cadence to keep up with the times. In 2021, concentrate on establishing or re-establishing digital trust with your followers by understanding their needs at this moment. Consider creating softer campaigns that get your message across in a way that does not offend anyone and speaks to empathy.

▷ to embrace automated customer service to make it easier for patients and customers to access your business 24/7 through social channels and chatbots. Consumers have come to expect this level of attention from all service business, including spas, medspas, skin clinics, and surgical practices.

According to We Are Social data, 70% of internet users aged 55-64 say they have bought something online in the past month, and 37% are planning to continue doing so more frequently in 2021. With the help of Instagram 'shoppable' features, new brands can gain traction with the right look and feel and a decent advertising strategy. The accelerated growth of e-commerce during the pandemic has pushed many brands and businesses to experiment with offerings like Instagram and Facebook Shops.

### The Twitterverse

In 2020, Twitter stepped up their game and were bombarding us with their new and improved advertising platform via email and random phone calls. I had long given up on Twitter as a preferred channel for aesthetics due to the visceral nature of posts, and I considered Twitter to be more useful for B2B strategies. However, it may be worthwhile to revisit it now and give it another go. Twitter is certainly a good tool for customer service and the preferred platform to voice your issues to hotels, airlines and other service businesses and get a response in real-time. Video promotions on Twitter can improve brand awareness by 50%, according to Rafflepress.com.

Twitter released a new feature to users called Fleets, which are similar to Instagram Stories in the sense that they are temporary and disappear after 24 hours. Fleets cannot be tweeted, shared, or responded to in a comments section. People can only respond to these posts through direct messages. Fleets are intended to encourage deeper interactions with your followers. For example, you could promote a limited-time offer to your audience or host a flash sale and make the announcement with one of these messages.

### TikTok goes mainstream

According to AppAnnie.com, TikTok will exceed one billion users over the course of the next year. TikTok started up in 2016. Let that sink in.

TikTok represents a powerful opportunity for businesses to engage with a large global base of invested consumers. This app can be an effective digital strategy to connect with two of the largest consumer groups, Gen Z and ageing millennials. But their base still skews a little young for the bulk of aesthetic procedures based on their needs as well as their budgets, student debt and a lack of credit history. However, with dermal fillers and toxins now being marketed to a younger audience by major players, including Allergan, Merz Aesthetics and IBSA Pharma, we cannot rule TikTok out.

Part of TikTok's success lies in the combination

## 5 key trends

1

**Changes in how people search for information and brands**

2

**Evolving demographics of online audiences**

3

**Rapidly growing importance of e-commerce**

4

**Mobile is essential**

5

**Changing the metrics that guide our social media mix**

*Source: Digital 2021: Global Overview Report*



“Livestreaming events on social platforms offer new ways for brands, experts, influencers, and customers to connect.”

of user-generated content, short looping videos and robust video editing tools.

All the hype around TikTok has stimulated an endless stream of copycats eager to attract a piece of the channels' users.

### Video Content

HubSpot's 'Not Another State of Marketing Report' found that video was the most commonly used marketing content, and the second most engaging content type on social media. That should come as no surprise to anyone who has been paying attention. Video will continue to be a critical way to connect with your audience.

The sheer power of video content and live streaming speaks for itself. Consumers are more inclined to engage with video content, perhaps because we are lazy and don't like to read anymore. People like learning about new companies and engaging with businesses that have proven their value in the past.

To see more growth in 2021, creating more video content is a must for your marketing plan. Choose the type of videos that match your products and services, as well as the needs of your customers. For example, to promote a clinical skincare brand, you might go live to talk to consumers about how to prevent and reverse maskne, which is trending due to masking. You may also use live video to show users what a product looks like, how to use it, and what goes on first by walking them through an application. These methods are an excellent way to add value to your audience and encourage users to make a purchase or visit your website.

YouTube and Facebook are well suited towards engaging with existing subscribers. On Facebook, native video content (those created within the platform) may get the best engagement. As you post more video content, you will start to learn what your fans and followers really want to see and in what format. If you can deliver on your value proposition and keep your followers engaged, video content can help you grow your social media presence.

This trend is clearly moving towards short-form video (30-60 seconds), attributable at least in some part to the rapid growth of TikTok, and to the fact that we have very limited attention spans.

### Live Streaming Events

For 2021, going live is emerging as an essential strategy to stay on top of the trends.

Livestreaming is expected to gain momentum, especially in light of the surge in e-commerce as lockdowns shut off many shops, restaurants and events. Livestreaming events on social platforms offer new ways for brands, experts, influencers, and customers to connect. For example, Peloton's live-streamed classes have flourished through this mobile video streaming market trend. Consumers around the world sought out video streaming providers for content and entertainment. Video streaming is poised to play an even bigger role in 2021, as

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consumers are spending more time streaming on mobile devices and working from home is now a regular thing.

### The meme mystique

Memes are here to stay and will continue to be an essential mirror of social culture, often adding some much-needed humour to our daily lives. Take, for example, the meme explosion about Bernie Sanders' woolen mittens that went viral globally. Bernie's mittens were popping up everywhere from the Lincoln Memorial to the opening shot of Friends in front of the fountain. Jen Ellis, a Vermont elementary school teacher who has a side business making mittens out of recycled wool, gave Sanders a pair as a gift and he wore them to President Biden's inauguration.

### Less is more

Brands are expected to continue to take a 'less is more' posting approach. In 2020 many brands spent less time cranking up social media posts and more time producing better quality content to strike a more empathetic and valuable tone to stay in-touch with the status of the world.

We saw a lot of discounting, deals, and specials in 2020, mainly out of necessity during slow periods and lockdowns. While past marketing tactics centered around promotions and making quick sales, it is predicted that 2021's conversations should be more focused on helping users with something, educating them about a product, service or treatment, or nurturing them to conversion with a more gentle and thoughtful tone. Try to start a real conversation before you bang them over the head with a promo.

### Instagram for the win

If you're ready to gear up your Instagram marketing for 2021, digital experts seem to agree that the two things to take advantage of are SEO and Reels.

To compete with the rise in popularity of TikTok, Instagram launched Reels, a new form of video content delivered in 15-30 seconds to create quick, attention-grabbing moments in a creative and entertaining way. Instagram's new user interface update put Instagram Reels front and center as a key addition, which points to their keen interest in growing that feature in 2021.

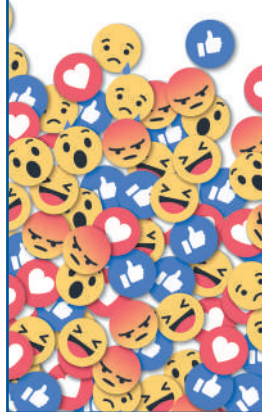
In November 2020, Instagram announced that it would become more search-friendly. Thus, without the use of hashtags, if you search for a keyword in the search bar, relevant videos, profiles, and posts will populate, which could increase opportunities for greater reach of your posts. The good news is that many of the techniques you use to optimize your SEO online can be applied to improve your content and profile's visibility on Instagram. While you could only search for Instagram profiles based on keywords that were used in their Instagram name, username, or bio, now Instagram will allow you to use keywords to search for individual posts also.

In 2021, features like Instagram Reels that lives within the Instagram platform may force us to evaluate which platforms are going to be the most beneficial to our target audiences. For example, Reels is certainly more

### Social media worldwide

There are now 4.20 billion social media users around the world which has grown by 490 million over the past 12 months, delivering year-on-year growth of more than 13%. The number of social media users is now equivalent to more than 53% of the world's total population. 98.8% access social media on mobile phones.

Source: <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2021/01/digital-2021-the-latest-insights-into-the-state-of-digital>



convenient to use, but it attracts a different audience from TikTok, which is growing exponentially. You can use both, but if you are only able to use one of these, Reels probably makes the most sense.

If part of your Instagram strategy does not include Stories, you are missing out on a key feature that helps to build engagement with your audience. Some users pay much more attention to Stories and tend not to flip through their feeds, to contain a lot of promotions and ads. Stories should be lighter, more fun and clever with the addition of emojis and stickers, and more entertaining as they may be set to music. Stories will be visible to your Instagram followers and to any specific users you want to send these to. Like in Snapchat, Instagram Stories are fleeting and disappear after 24 hours. However, you can save your stories to the highlights on your Instagram channel, the buttons that you create under your bio, where they can live forever.

Another Instagram trend to watch is the concept of putting text in your brand's font, preferably on a multi-slide post. You can actually post written messages right on your Instagram feeds, which makes this content easy to read and share. Although Instagram has been considered more of a visual platform, explainer videos with text are an increasingly helpful way to showcase a product or procedures.

Aesthetic practices have limited bandwidth and most do not have enough hours in the day to figure out how to use each platform they are active on to their fullest extent, let alone expand into every new one that pops up. Conserve your energy and your resources for the platforms and content that performs best for your business. You will only know what that is if you monitor how you are doing along the way which is essential as social media marketing expands.

### Snackable content

Snackable content is basically short-form, easily digestible content that gets shared on social media. It should be visually engaging, can be posted consistently, and used to support your most valuable campaigns. You can use a GIF to show a short-form video with visually rich images to convey a story in an impactful way. GIFs, like memes, are ideal for communicating jokes, emotions, expressions or ideas. Sites like GIPHY (<https://giphy.com/>) or Gfycat (<https://gfycat.com/>) make it easy to create ▷

“If part of your Instagram strategy does not include Stories, you are missing out on a key feature that helps to build engagement with your audience.”

### TikTok wannabees

- Clash: <https://www.clashapp.co>
- Triller: <https://www.triller.co>
- Kuaishou: <https://www.kuaishou.com/>
- Dubsplash: <https://dubsplash.com>
- Byte: <https://byte.co>
- Funimate: <https://funimate.com>
- Lomotif: <https://lomotif.com>
- Cheez: <https://www.cheez.com/#/>
- KWAI: <https://www.kwai.com>
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- Firework: <https://www.fireworktv.com/>

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## Using SEO on Instagram

- Search for 'Lip Filler' for example, no hashtag needed.
- Instagram will show you alternative searches, such as 'lips filler Miami', 'lips fillers' or 'lips filler London', etc.
- Instagram will then populate recommendations in the search results that contain that keyword or phrase, including users with 'lip filler' or a variation in their name or bio.
- You can also search for Accounts, Tags ('lipfiller') and Places ('lipfillerskent')
- So, if you want to get found in searches for 'lip filler', you need to use that term or a hashtag and cover all your bases.

▷ and share GIFs, and these sites are integrated into Facebook, Twitter, or your iPhone, similar to emojis.

The objective for creating snackable content is to offer immediate entertainment or enrichment, prompt social sharing, and attract new followers. These are some of the simplest, most straightforward snackable content formats that can be very effective:

- Quote Graphics
- Memes
- Infographics
- GIFs.

TikTok and Instagram Reels have redefined the way many consumers are digesting content. For 2021, test some new ways to generate content that may be indirectly associated with you or your practice, but are still captivating enough to provide the entertainment that users are looking for.

## Social advertising

According to Hootsuite's 2021 Social Trends survey, 73% of all marketers ranked "increased acquisition of new customers" as their top outcome for social in 2021, compared to only 46% last year, marking a 58% year-over-year increase that is significant.

SmashBalloon.com estimates that 60% of Instagram users have discovered a new brand on the app. More than half of all businesses (60%) are planning to increase their Instagram budget, and almost half are planning to increase their budget for Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn as well. Instagram's advertising reach grew by 71% in the most recent quarter—more than three times Facebook at 2.2%. By all accounts, useful and entertaining ads are most likely to drive purchases in 2021, as consumers are seeking some version of a return to normalcy.

Advertising on Facebook and Instagram is expected to get more creative and targeted in 2021. Facebook ad creative themes that are trending include:

- GIFs
- User Generated Content (content from real people)
- Collages
- More text-heavy ads.

Dynamic ads on Facebook and Instagram can be an effective way to reach new customers while keeping existing users engaged with your content. Basically, dynamic ads allow you to upload a range of text, images, and special offers. The software then arranges the various pieces into highly-personalized ads for you. Facebook or Instagram will then use this information to compile offers from similar businesses and share them with consumers based on their profile interests. Done well, this could increase new customer sales for skincare and treatment packages.

This format can also work well for retargeting users that visited your website or Shopify but didn't complete a purchase. The program that serves up the ads can gather



more data on consumer buying habits and behaviors to encourage the user to go back and buy.

Online business is exploding across the most popular channels, and from many reports, even the newcomers are experiencing high growth rates. If you have been on the fence about selling products online, now is a good time to revisit your options. With the rise of drop shipping and curbside pickup in 2020, aesthetic patients have become accustomed to this way of shopping, especially for skincare replenishment.

## LinkedIn updates

According to Chris J. Reed, CEO & Founder of Black Marketing and a LinkedIn expert,

'If you only post once a week or once a month, you stand little chance of being seen by the people you want to influence. So, by posting daily or more, you can experiment with more content while building your chances of your content being picked up by someone who might help your business.'

Reed suggests posting content daily and to post content that is all about you, which would not be best practice on any other social channel. However, if you unveil a little more about yourself on this platform, you may certainly resonate with other users who are likeminded and interested in what you are interested in. To build your platform, don't be shy to ask for recommendations from people you actually know. I get a steady stream of requests from people I don't know or barely know or never worked with and tend to ignore those, but I am willing to make a recommendation for someone I know who deserves it. Just recently, I reached 13,000 connection

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on LinkedIn having started on the platform way back in 2009. It is by far my favorite social network to spend time on.

Think of LinkedIn as a stepsister to Google in terms of using keywords that speak to who you are and what you want to be found for, including your location, business, services, and expertise. LinkedIn allows you to use hashtags to highlight what your posts are about and what you do, but you should also create keyword-rich copy for your posts and bio so your profile will appear in more search results.

LinkedIn released a slew of new features that are good for brands and businesses eager to grow online. The platform rolled out LinkedIn Live, Events, Polls, and Stories. In 2021, embrace not only these new features and content formats, but also the shift in culture created by the rise in remote working from home.

For small businesses, we can expect 2021 to be a game-changer for those who are hyper-focused on their LinkedIn pages. Their team is trying to appeal to small businesses like aesthetic clinics and will be rolling out new features that will help to build a community of fans and followers around products or services.

## Less is more

Brands will continue to take a "less is more" posting approach. This year, many of us spent less time churning out social media posts and more time producing better content that felt thoughtful, valuable, and in-touch with the state of the world.

While past conversational marketing tactics centered around promotions and making sales as quickly as

possible, in 2021, you may want to be more focused on helping a user with something, educating them about a product, and nurturing them to conversion with a more thoughtful tone.

Being transparent, authentic, and even vulnerable is a smart marketing approach for 2021. You can never go wrong showing more of your human side in a way that reveals something about you that users can connect with.

## Social conscience

The rules of engagement for social media marketing shifted dramatically. Being silent on social issues is no longer an option. Develop a consistent voice across internal and external social channels to address current issues such as diversity, women's rights, racial injustice, climate change, the environment, voting rights, and other topics that matter to your target audiences. Tread lightly into this arena as it can backfire on you if you don't choose the right tone and words to get your point across in a positive way. It may require some sensitivity training to get it right. Transparency will be key, so stick with causes that you genuinely care about or your audience will see right through your attempt to use a social cause as a PR ploy.

In conclusion, 2021 is poised to be a blowout year for social media marketing. However, as you can plainly see, social has become a much more complex and fast-moving category for marketing aesthetic practices. It is no longer reasonable to try to do everything on your own because you would never have time to treat a patient or run your business. It takes a village in the practice along with external support to get it right.

Finally, if you expect to go viral or grow by 10,000 Instagram followers overnight, you are simply delusional and need to revisit your expectations.

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## Connecting on Facebook

If your practice is keen to attract Gen X baby boomers who have a plethora of lines, wrinkles and sagging skin that need your help and an Amex card, Facebook is the place you want to be to connect with them. Facebook is considered the most effective platform and remains the preferred platform of this generation by far.



## Snapchat in the Spotlight

If you are a Snapchat user, and I am not, Snapchat Spotlight is another feature to check out. (<https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/a/spotlight>). Snaps should be vertical videos with sound to be accepted into Spotlight. Still-image photos, horizontal Snaps, blurry Snaps, and text-only Snaps won't show up in Spotlight. It is considered mainly an entertainment platform that attracts a wide audience. Snaps submitted to Spotlight are public content and can be shared.