

# Welcome to the 'next normal'

AS THE AESTHETICS INDUSTRY SLOWLY STARTS TO GET BACK ON ITS FEET POST-COVID-19, NEW YORK MARKETING EXPERT WENDY LEWIS SAYS YOUR PATIENTS NEED EMPATHY AND NEW WAYS OF COMMUNICATION MORE THAN EVER.



Wendy Lewis is President of Wendy Lewis and CO Ltd, wendylewisco.com, Editor in Chief of beautyinthebag.com, and author of *Aesthetic Clinic Marketing in the Digital Age* (CRC Press). Her next book, *Growing an Aesthetic Surgery Practice: A Roadmap for Success*, will be published by Thieme in 2021.

We have adapted to sheltering in place, working from home, living in workout clothes rather than heels and designer outfits, home schooling one or many children, foregoing dining out or meeting for drinks, going to the gym, and having a vacation. We have also gone without manis/pedis, hair appointments, and neurotoxins for weeks to months which has left some of us unrecognisable.

Moreover, we have also become more charitable and kinder to each other. Family and friends have emerged as most important. Living in New York City, where kindness is not our strong suit, it has been a welcome change. Showing empathy for others is actually very underrated. My hope is that this change will stay with us for awhile at least.

The same is true for aesthetic practices. Your patients need to know that you genuinely care about them. Empathy should resonate throughout your patient communications, social media and all marketing, as well as the care you provide. If you think there is room for improvement in this area, now is the time to make improvements because patients need some extra TLC more than ever.

## Planning for success

Aesthetic practices need to rise to meet the challenges we are now faced with.

In my view, the best approach is to take stock of your entire business model from the ground up. Think of this period as an ideal opportunity to

As people all over the world conclude their periods of social distancing and isolation, it is clear that the coronavirus pandemic has left its mark on our physical, mental and emotional health. The so-called "new normal" or "next normal," as you prefer, has left many of us living with heightened stress levels, longer work hours, increased feelings of hopelessness, and questioning everything we once held dear.

Few to no practitioners were prepared to face the unprecedented environment brought on by COVID-19. Those who have reacted quickly and incorporated strategies

to adapt to the vast changes they are faced with will emerge successfully and be well-positioned to thrive in the future.

## The E word

As the next normal has emerged, I have been impressed that most people have shown unexpected resilience. Many of us have been willing to adopt long-term behavioural changes that will last well beyond this period. We have learned how to properly wash our hands, open doors with our elbows, and sneeze and cough into our arms.

## Future of aesthetics

Consumers are looking for critical milestones to resume their former activities with ease, such as large group gatherings, long trips and crowded recreational facilities.

The absolute fact is that many are waiting for medical authorities to signal their approval of treatments to combat the coronavirus, and a vaccine to come to market. If that happens in 2021, the long recovery we are facing now may come full circle in a much shorter timeframe. However, it's too early to hang on to the hope that a vaccine will be widely available that soon, or ever for that matter. In the meantime, try to strike a balance between what worked before and what needs to be changed now to succeed in the next normal.

One thing is certain; vanity is built into the human condition. We can count on consumers having an insatiable appetite for self-improvement, age-reversing and beautifying therapies. This will never change. Therefore, the aesthetics industry will surely come back better and stronger in the near future. We just have to make good decisions to hang on through this transition period.

I look forward to seeing you on the other side. **AMP**

develop strategies that will ultimately make your practice stronger.

COVID-19 has necessitated that all practices will need to make changes that may range from structural to reconfiguring your space. For example, waiting rooms may become obsolete in the age of social distancing.

Do some real soul searching. Do you have the right team on board? How can you tighten your belt to be more profitable? Look at your clinic objectively. Does it look like an aesthetic practice or is it outdated and showing signs of wear? Next, do a competitive analysis. Take stock of the treatments and products you have on offer. Is anything missing that you should add to be competitive in your market? Are there products or equipment that you can't sell or don't use? See if you can trade them in for something that will work better.

Now, review all of your marketing materials from your clinic website and branding (logo, colours) to social media channels and e-blasts, etc. Convert print materials to digital to meet the new patient demands.

Be mindful of the need for making your clinic more efficient through the use of technology. Add a chatbot to your website to answer patient questions 24/7, for example. Strive for a no-touch or low-touch clinic, which entails removing clutter, brochures, product testers and eliminating as many hard surfaces as possible that need to be continually disinfected after patients touch them.

**SPECIAL REPORT**



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The logo for xmedica moments features the word "xmedica" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a green background. To its right is a circular icon with a white background and a blue segment, resembling a pie chart or a clock face. Further right, the word "moments" is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a green background. The entire logo is set against a dark blue background with a subtle geometric pattern.

xmedica

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## ***How the Pandemic Brought the Future Forward*** **Wendy Lewis shares insights on how to automate your practice**

Wendy Lewis, *Founder & President, Wendy Lewis & Co Ltd.*

All businesses have been greatly affected by the current global health crisis caused by COVID-19. The changes to how we do things will be long-lasting, even as the outbreak is eventually under control and everyone can return to a more normal life.

In many ways, aesthetics practices are forced to operate a “virtual practice” for at least some of the traditional systems that were formerly in place. You are likely scrambling to get up to speed with the new regulations, social distancing constraints and protocols that have impacted doctor-patient face time and traffic in your practice. As such, you are left to adopt a more technologically advanced practice model or risk a healthy future for your business.

As practices are open in all or most states, the coronavirus is still out there, so all precautions must be taken to ensure the safety of your patients and staff. Since this requires reducing the number of people around you, your capacity may be impacted by as much as one third to one half. It may also be imperative to reconfigure your space and the schedule for staff hours by staggering shifts. Each room will need to be sanitized in between patients which can take up valuable time. Your days will be longer (or seem longer) to maximize the number of patients and treatments in a given period. Visitors will be prohibited except in the case of minors. The waiting areas in smaller facilities may be converted to treatment areas or storage space.

If you are accustomed to seeing 30 patients per day, you may only be able to see 15 with social distancing. Therefore, you will need to make the most of each patient visit and treatment time for maximum efficiency. For example, lingering around numbing before an injectable treatment may need to be cut down by offering a nitrous oxide system. Many office visits can be accomplished virtually through one of the many encrypted programs available. In addition, doing several treatments at the same day, even at a reduced fee to the patient, will be more efficient for you and the patient than bringing them back again.

Think of it this way; technology is your BFF. By revamping your practice to streamline systems and patient interactions quickly, you will be well positioned to thrive now and for the future. It is not as hard as it appears and will prove to be a critical success factor. Start by reviewing all the systems in the practice to determine which can be automated, including scheduling, consults, follow-ups, confirmations, payments, medical records, receipts, chart notes, prescriptions, pre and post procedure instructions, etc. Anything you can do remotely will save time, enhance efficiency, and ultimately reduce costs.

Lastly, be careful to implement the necessary changes in how you practice without losing the personal connection with patients. Aesthetic patients are not medical patients; they want to hang onto that warm and fuzzy feeling that instills loyalty. The winners will be the practitioners who can offer both; the Apple style efficiency they need with the human touch they crave.

**The aesthetics industry has faced crises before, and we have weathered those storms. There will be life after this one too.**

# WHAT I DID DURING MY COVID-19 QUARANTINE

Experts learned lessons you can apply in practice.

WENDY LEWIS

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Shelter-in-place orders are being lifted in many states, and while the coronavirus pandemic is far from behind us, we asked experts to share what they learned or did during the mandatory shutdown and how or if it will change their practice management advice, style, or strategies going forward. Here's what they had to say.



## ZOOMING IN

I have had a virtual team for almost a decade, with occasional meetings and events. It has enabled me to keep our expenses reasonable, which allowed us to work with

many innovative start-ups as well as doctors early in practice. But it can be isolating at times, and I miss my domestic and international travel. We recently converted our weekly touch-base calls to Zoom calls so we can actually see each other, and it has been great. I think this has brought us even

closer together and has enhanced our interpersonal relationships. Texts and calls can't replace the ability to look in someone's eyes and have a more meaningful conversation. It has also been good practice for me to get the hang of Zoom as I have been doing so many webinars. We are all in on Zoom calls and will continue to do them even when we're able to travel freely again. I do think a lot of us have learned to do things differently during this period of social distancing that will stick.

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## WENDY LEWIS

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# HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR A SURGE?

WENDY LEWIS

The first wave of COVID-19 came in like a lion, took more than 140,000 lives and counting in the US, and forced many businesses to shutter for months. Now as the process of reopening begins, fears of a second wave or even a continuation of the first wave are forcing many practices to develop contingency plans. Our practice management pros share their tips for what to do now to best prepare for what's to come.



## LIVE IN THE NOW

This summer your best strategy is to get back to work and make back some of the money you lost while your practice was closed. See patients and do as many proce-

dures and surgeries as you can while you can. Hold on to your cash due to the possibility of a second or third wave. The situation is so volatile that it is hard to predict what the rest of 2020 is going to look like on your balance sheet.

I still hear some aesthetic patients make comments like, "I am trying to cut back on every activity that is non-essential, and having my lips injected right now falls into that category." Some people are still not even comfortable leaving their homes for routine tasks. It will take time, and the daily threat of more infections is unnerving.

Taking the stance of minimizing the impact of COVID-19 may backfire, as it has affected so many people's livelihoods, loved ones, and lifestyle.

Demonstrate to patients that you are taking COVID-19 seriously and are committed to protecting them. Instead of manually cleaning surfaces and spending extra time cleaning after every patient, look into automated systems that can be moved easily from room to room to keep costs down.

While we are still in this crisis, it may be harder to get more leads and bring in new patients. Focus on maximizing your bread and butter patients by delivering the information, reassurance, and quality care they need to move forward with coming back.

Be understanding and caring with patients to overcome their concerns about having aesthetic treatments done by giving them more for their money. Resist the temptation to slash prices; rather keep your fees stable and offer patients add-ons instead so they can try a new treatment or product.

If you have old devices and equipment gathering dust and taking up valuable space in your practice, trade up for something new and fresh that patients want now. Take advantage

of the great offers in the marketplace from medical device companies, software vendors, and equipment manufacturers for deferred payment. Now is the best time to get a favorable deal and upgrade your technology. If you are not yet dispensing skincare and other products, get on it. For many practices, the only revenue they had coming in for three months while they were shut down was from online skincare sales.

Lastly, get the whole staff up to speed on telemedicine so your practice can thrive moving forward. Virtual consults, follow ups, and check-ins are the new normal, and patients have grown accustomed to this. The more office procedures that can be converted to digital platforms, the more staff time will be freed up to take care of patients and sell more services and products.

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Modern  
Aesthetics™

**By Denise Mann, MS and Steve Dayan, MD**

You just finished your fellowship and are ready to join a dermatology practice, or maybe you're starting to really consider that highly lucrative offer from the private equity firm that bought up your colleague's practice, or perhaps your practice is growing and it feels like the right time to bring on another physician.

No matter what the business scenario, *The Business of Dermatology*, 1st Edition, written by Drs. Jeffrey S. Dover and Kavita Mariwalla, meets you where you are and helps you get to the next level with ease by providing actionable advice from experts and those who have "been there, done that."

# The Business of Dermatology

Jeffrey S. Dover  
Kavita Mariwalla



The new textbook walks readers through every aspect of running a practice from the pros and cons of renting or buying office space and how to write a rock-solid business plan to evaluating a laser for purchase and stocking up on curettes, scalpel holders, blades, and skin hooks (with sterilization tips).

“Business acumen is not taught in residency and is the most overlooked aspect of any given practice,” says Dr. Dover, co-director at SkinCare Physicians in Chestnut Hill, MA.

Dr. Mariwalla, a dermatologist in West Islip, NY, tapped experts in every aspect of managing a dermatology practice to share tips and pearls in their new textbook.

“The chapter about design of the office space is so helpful because it actually has architectural plan drawings in it and written from the perspective of a busy dermatologist and his architect wife,” she says. “Some of my other faves are the chapter by [former Human Resources Business Partner at SkinCare Physicians, Inc.] Cynthia Forbush on employee manuals, because that is truly out of my doctor’s wheelhouse and that chapter gives some nice practical tips.”

Industry vet Wendy Lewis, Founder/President of Wendy Lewis & Co. Ltd., a marketing communication boutique in New York City and author of 12 books including *Aesthetic Clinic Marketing in the Digital Age*, discusses the importance of managing your online reputation in the new textbook. “This textbook is the new definitive guide for residents, fellows and practicing dermatologists to learn how to navigate the changes in practice management and promotion, and flourish in the current environment,” says Lewis. “It’s a keeper!”

This book includes complimentary access to a digital copy on [thieme.com/books-main/category/dermatology](https://www.thieme.com/books-main/category/dermatology)

**Use the Derm15 code for a 15% discount.**



# The Godfather Of Aesthetics



*We chat to aesthetics figurehead and Chairman of Wigmore Medical, David Hicks*



## **Q: How did you get into the aesthetics industry?**

I was there right at the start of the aesthetics revolution 30 years ago. I'm a pharmacist by profession and Wigmore's CEO Bedo Eghiayan and I were in the shop one day and someone came in and asked for botulinum toxin—we didn't know what it was but that was how it all started. We also launched the FACE conference because we felt it was wrong that UK doctors had to travel abroad for high quality training. We started going down the educational route with training meetings and developed a one-stop shop; rather than going to suppliers for one thing you could come to Wigmore and get everything. This was our philosophy and we now supply everything a doctor needs in their practice.

## **Q: What do you think are Wigmore's strengths?**

Our biggest single strength is that we are a family business and we care. Our customer services is second to none, the staff are extremely well trained and have a working knowledge of everything we stock—they are the jewel in the crown.

## **Q: How do you think the industry will bounce back from the Covid pandemic?**

This industry is the closest there could be to recession proof—once a patient has got used to age maintenance, they are not going to give that up easily; they will choose beans over steak if they have to. However, I think we will lose a percentage of valued businesses who unfortunately didn't have the resources to weather the storm. There will be casualties.

**Q: What is the biggest challenge facing Wigmore and the industry as a whole?**

Increasing competition—we have to prove ourselves to be the gold standard. The training landscape will change, there will be a need for face-to-face training but a lot more will be conducted online. It may be that our training room is used more for webinars.

**Q: What are your thoughts on the lack of industry regulation?**

I am a member of the JCCP advisory committee, and to me it is a mistake to let us self-regulate—for the safety of the public I would like to see mandatory regulation. Fillers should definitely be regulated. I'm not happy about the level 7 qualification; it isn't in the interest of the general public.

**Q: How do you think things are going to change when life is back to normal?**

It will continue to grow. The UK model is only about 50-60 per cent behind the US model per capita; I think we will narrow the gap. When we started the botulinum toxin revolution nobody would admit to having the treatment but it's now an accepted part of grooming. This is a positive thing because someone who has spent money on aesthetics will most likely look after their holistic wellbeing, too.

**Q: If you didn't work in the industry, what would you do?**

I'd be teaching ice skating. It's fairly well known in the industry that I am a British, European and World Championships medal holder, so I would probably go back to coaching.

# Social Media Best Practices

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*Wendy Lewis discusses standout tips and tricks from her latest ZO webinar, hosted by Wigmore*



**W**e are currently faced with challenges that we need to meet head on. No one expected this to happen in 2020, so there was no advance notice to adequately prepare for something that has never happened before globally.

Setting yourself up for success during this period may entail pivoting your practice so your business will be poised for growth. It will be hard, in fact it may be the hardest thing you've ever faced, but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Consumers have an insatiable appetite for all things aesthetics and that's never going to change, in fact it's only going to get bigger. Sure, you may lose some patients in this period, but you will also gain new ones who are entering the aesthetics space for the first time.

## **Educate**

**1.** Stop selling for the moment or convert to a soft sell approach. Education is a better sales tool than overtly throwing stuff at customers. What are your patients interested in most right now? How can you keep them in the loop as in the next normal? From Zoom to WhatsApp and Google Hangouts, there are lots of different op-tions for communications.

## **Spend wisely**

**2.** Don't spend money on social platforms where your target audiences are not active. Facebook and Instagram are still the most effective and cast the widest net in terms of attracting aesthetic patients. Think about the tone you want to set which should be positive and inspirational. Don't lose sight of who you are and what your brand represents.

## **Tell your story**

**3.** Storytelling and Instagram Stories are still hot. Connect your Instagram and Facebook Stories together to save time and give you dual exposure. Your audience wants to see who you are as a person as well as a practitioner, and they want to know enough about you to decide why they should go to you versus 50 others.

## Video content

4. Video is an important tool to tap into now, if you haven't done so already. Do not overlook YouTube—it's not just for millennials. Educational videos and personal experiences do well, as do treatment demos. Talk into the camera and don't use a script, it should be authentic. Invest in an inexpensive editing app. Get a selfie stick 7

and set up a place to record video in your home or office. Video clips can be used on every platform, including your website, blog and a monitor in your waiting room and treatment rooms.

## Frequency

5. Posting consistently is important but be strategic. Once a day may be fine, but don't post if your content is not interesting and engaging. Post your best content when you have time to respond to comments. If you're looking for different responses, consider a poll, or repost content from ZO—it's a beautiful range and the images are stunning.

## Remote appointments

6. Virtual consultations are in demand, and both consumers and practitioners are on board with this model. Patients want this service and it saves valuable face time in the clinic. You can use virtual platforms for consults, follow-ups, skin care evaluations, product education, pre and post-procedure instructions, etc. Some practices charge their standard fee for a virtual consult, whereas others may waive the fee. If you do charge a fee, it can also be collected and then applied to a treatment or product sale. Look for a GDPR compliant platform to play it safe.

## Photography

7. I'm a big believer in building up a robust portfolio of your own before and after photos. Patients who let you take proper photos and sign off that you can use them, help you demonstrate the results you can deliver. Refine your photography skills; if it is not a good set of before/after photos that clearly show a result, it's best not to post it. Use photo editing apps to keep photos looking consistent and branded with your watermark to prevent photos from getting lifted, which happens all the time. You must also get a signed consent from the patient to post or share any photos.

## Hashtags

8. A good hashtag strategy will get your content found—you can use up to 30 on Instagram. Find a few and stick with them, e.g. treatment related, branded ones specific to your practice, and general—#ZOpeel; #DrObagiSays, #BestSkinEver.

## Interaction

9. Get friends, family and colleagues commenting on Instagram posts—this helps you outsmart the algorithm, so Instagram sees that your content is getting attention. Try to use at least three words and emojis so Instagram does not think you are a 'bot' when posting comments; when there is engagement, Instagram will tend to promote your content more without you having to pay to boost it.

## Testimonials

10. When it comes to brand advocates, happy patients are the best endorsements you can get. If they mention you on their own channels, this allows you to reach a whole new audience.

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# THE MARRIAGE OF AESTHETICS AND WELLNESS POST COVID-19

How to incorporate wellness services into an aesthetics practice



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**T**HINK ABOUT IT; WE WERE GOING about our daily lives doing normal things like working out, trying to eat healthy food, avoid smoking, sun exposure, over-indulging in alcohol and other life-shortening habits, and along came the **Coronavirus**.

Post-pandemic, most of us have gained a heightened sense of our health, lifestyle, and longevity. 2020 has undoubtedly shed new light on what it means to be well. It has also revealed the many fissures in healthcare systems around the world and shed new light on the underlying conditions that make some of us more at risk for getting sick and having the most severe symptoms.

## Wellness redefined

The Global Wellness Institute (GWI) that is widely considered the premier organization in the category, defines wellness as: 'the active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health

“ Wellness is considered an active process of taking steps that lead to the desired outcome of optimal holistic health and wellbeing. In short, we are responsible for our own state of wellness or lack thereof. ”

# What Do I Do Now?



## **PAY FOR PLAY**

**By Wendy Lewis**

In my view, every aesthetics or medical practice needs a strong digital presence. This includes a modern, updated, and visually appealing website with all the bells and whistles in terms of optimization, updated educational content, and a reasonable Google ad strategy to keep your rankings high. Links to all active social channels should live at the top of the landing page. (My preference is top right but that is a personal choice.) Don't fall into the trap of placing anything important at the bottom of your home page, which is akin to the graveyard of a website.

Creating an effective homepage goes far beyond just designing something that looks good. It should be targeted to your specific audience(s) to give those visitors what they are looking for and enough information about your practice and services to make a decision to spend more time on the site and book an appointment. For example, one all too common occurrence is purchasing a new piece of capital equipment and failing to create a dedicated landing page to drive prospective patients to where they can learn more, and hopefully book.

Keep up with trends and new features on social media that change frequently. Instagram, for example, tends to announce tweaks to their platform often. We have grown frustrated with clients who don't understand why their fans and followers are not growing fast enough when they have not set aside any budget for ads and promotions.

Facebook and Instagram are essentially ad platforms. Instagram operates like its own search engine, so SEO counts. Well-optimized pages will rank higher, which attracts more followers and drives engagement. Your channels may not be growing because "Zuck" doesn't want them to grow organically; their model is to charge you for the privilege of getting your content seen by more users. All digital marketing platforms are pay for play, so if you are serious about becoming an Insta star, it will require some external assistance from pros for video and photography plus an ad strategy. Buying followers is still rampant, especially on Instagram, but that strategy is frowned upon.

Another critical success factor for digital marketing is video content. Short-form video for social media is now essential and generates better engagement than still images. Think TikTok and now Reels. Long-form video, which is defined as minutes rather than seconds, works brilliantly for your website and YouTube channel.

Next up is to get your site ready for virtual search. It seems like the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed this further into the public domain. More people are using voice search and wifi-enabled marketing, so don't get left behind. Your desired patients are going to be searching for you by asking Siri (or Alexa or Cortana) to find "Botox near me." Make sure your site will come up strong with local searches.

Finally, customer retention is king. Segment your patient data-base, so you will be better positioned to market more effectively and save on costs to stretch your 2021 marketing budget.

# I just hired a new associate. Now what?

Bringing on a new employee may be the best decision you ever made or s/he could become your biggest cause for reflection. If only you'd been more upfront about your expectations or had done a thorough background check. *Modern*

## PERFECT MATCH

By Wendy Lewis

Solo practice is a concept that has a short lifespan in the current state of medicine in general. The costs of running a thriving practice are too high to bear the whole burden on one physicians back alone. It is not a scalable model anymore when a laser can cost \$200,000, and you may need to build and run your own accredited operating suite. We see more and more solo practices across specialties selling to or joining group practices, private equity-backed chains, or hospitals. Group practices are flourishing, and more doctors who have been on their own are looking to join a group to avoid the excruciating overhead.

Bringing on a new associate can be a cause for celebration, or it could turn out to be your worst nightmare. The secret to success often lies in choosing the right culture fit for the practice on both sides and then setting honest expectations from the outset to avoid misunderstandings. This is particularly important when the new associate is just starting out in practice and has limited experience of what a "partnership" will look like.

It is critical to be direct and candid about your expectations from the first conversation. Think of this as a business relationship as well as a personal relationship. You need to trust the associate's medical judgment and skills, but you may be spending eight to 10 hours a day with this person, so it's also important that you like each other.

Both parties need to do a deep dive into the others' expertise, reputation, and skills and check each other out with industry colleagues. Make sure the candidate has a chance to meet all the staff in the practice, too.

The most common complaint I hear from senior doctors is that their junior associates are not doing enough to market themselves, expect the practice to drive patients to them, and are unwilling to go the extra mile, such as taking call. These misunderstandings can break up the relationship quickly and are rooted in poor communications from the outset. Joining a practice does not mean that the new associate will be handed patients as soon as he or she walks in the door. On the contrary, most practice managers or owners have high expectations that associates will bring their own patients to the practice and be proactive in drawing new patients.

Starting early, young surgeons and dermatologists need to grow their professional brand on social media, which is the least expensive way to gain an audience. Residents know how to use Instagram already and are fluent in other channels, making this a natural medium to start with. I would also recommend that they build a website and own the URL, such as "JohnJSmithMD.com" or "JSmithAesthetics.com." Reserving a URL costs pennies. When they find a home, they will be able to drive some fans and followers to their practice. It is their primary responsibility to get their name out in the market and build their own referral sources. Carrying business cards or having a digital card on their phone is helpful. As they grow with the practice, new associates will have opportunities to expand their reach as their peers refer patients to them as well.

For well-heeled physicians who are joining a group or becoming a partner in a solo practice, there are usually expectations set for them to bring at least some of those patients with them to the new practice. One way to prepare for this eventuality is to make sure your patient database is solid and up-to-date. Your email list is gold.

Finding a viable partnership situation takes time and investment. It's not like going on Bumble to get a match; it's more akin to the courtship leading to marriage. Both parties should spend some time bonding within the practice and seeing patients together before anyone signs on the dotted line.

# I just hired a new associate. Now what?

Bringing on a new employee may be the best decision you ever made or s/he could become your biggest cause for reflection. If only you'd been more upfront about your expectations or had done a thorough background check. *Modern Aesthetics*® magazine's pros offer advice on what to do to make sure your next hire is a keeper.

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## News and Trends: January/February 2021

# “NEW FRONTIERS IN COSMETIC MEDICINE AND MEDICAL DERMATOLOGY SYMPOSIUM” TURNS 10

By Wendy Lewis

The 10th Annual New Frontiers in Cosmetic Medicine & Medical Dermatology Symposium (NFCMMD) went virtual in 2020, but that didn't stop the organizers from condensing two days of the latest developments, procedures, and techniques in cosmetic and medical dermatology into a one-day format with top-tier speakers.

"I'm very proud to have watched this meeting grow and reach this milestone of 10 years. Although we couldn't meet in person for our most recent symposium, our team worked very hard to provide an interactive educational environment with roundtable discussions, question and answer panels, and innovative live patient demonstrations. Attendees were able to access the NFCMMD virtual platform for 30 days after the conference, which added value for our sponsors," says David J. Goldberg, MD, JD, Founding Director of NFCMMD. "We guaranteed that attendees would leave with a new skill, technique, or strategy that they could put into practice on Monday morning, and from all accounts we succeeded."

Medical dermatology topics included new twists on treatment options for acne, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis,

### NEW FRONTIERS IN COSMETIC MEDICINE & MEDICAL DERMATOLOGY

scars, and wounds. The live patient workshops and video demonstrations were a big draw for attendees to pick up pearls about minimally invasive treatments for facial rejuvenation combining neurotoxins, fillers, and energy-based devices.

Among the highlights of this virtual event, New York City dermatologist Bradley S. Bloom, MD educated the audience on what millennials really want and how to satisfy this emerging demographic in the aesthetics market. His lecture, entitled "Aesthetics in the Era of Millennials," covered millennial behaviors, demands, and spending habits, with tips for providing treatments for what he referred to as "Generation Botox."

"New Frontiers is one of my favorite meetings in dermatology that has grown in shape and stature over 10 years. Expert faculty can dive deeply into their selected topics to share in-depth knowledge and experience with the audience," says Nashville dermatologist Michael Gold, MD, whose

comprehensive lecture, "Update on Fillers and Neuromodulators" covered the scope of products on the market and the next generation coming in 2021 and beyond.

Live chats were implemented for select lectures where attendees could ask questions throughout the sessions, which served as the next best thing to being there. New York Dermatologist Bruce Katz, MD presented about the emergence of PRP in dermatology and shared his experience using novel techniques for body contouring, including threads, magnets, and lasers.

Two important sessions focused on updates on cosmeceuticals were presented by New York dermatologists Kseniya Kobets, MD and Noelani Gonzalez, MD. Especially during COVID-19, when many practices were operating at a lower capacity, the ability to sell physician-dispensed skincare was a good source of revenue as many practices implemented free shipping, curbside pickup, and upped their digital marketing presence.

"This year's virtual platform was seamless and easy to use. We will all look forward to being back 'live' in 2021," says Dr. Gold. The 2021 meeting will be held in November: [cosmeticfrontiers.com](http://cosmeticfrontiers.com).



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# New Tool Helps Patients Select Safe Skincare

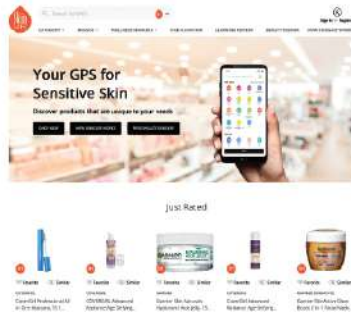


SkinSAFE cuts through the phenomenon of sensitive skin for consumers and dermatologists.

BY WENDY LEWIS

>> How many times every day do patients tell you they have sensitive skin? Do you roll your eyes when they're not looking or crack a slight smile in a way only your assistant knows what you're thinking? The phenomenon of self-declared sensitive skin is pervasive. This common condition affects many people, yet the exact prevalence of sensitive skin remains unknown.<sup>1</sup> (According to the National Eczema Society, 31.6 million people (10.1 percent) in the US have some form of eczema, and one in 10 individuals will develop eczema during their lifetime.)<sup>2</sup> The most common skincare-related triggers for irritation and sensitivity tend to be using the wrong skincare product for the individual's skin, over-using skincare products, and excessively harsh cleansing regimens involving scrubs, brushing, and exfoliation.<sup>3</sup> By most accounts, women tend to report more skin sensitivity than men do, and it most frequently refers to the face. It's also worth noting that after aesthetic procedures, approximately 25 percent of patients develop skin sensitivities.

With so many people experiencing the symptoms of skin sensitivity, there is a clear need for better consumer education. Even if consumers do read product labels, the language on the label may



not be a 100 percent accurate description of what is inside the bottle or its potential effects on their skin.

Enter SkinSAFE, a unique collaboration of experts in their respective fields whose mission is to help people with sensitive skin find best-in-class products by tapping into their unique, AI-powered science and patch testing data developed in partnership with Mayo Clinic. SkinSAFE's data-driven platform can identify what is in a product and if it is safe for the patient, based on personal standards, specific allergens, and physician recommendations.

The brain trust behind SkinSAFE is Jimmy Yiannias, MD, Professor of Dermatology at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine in Phoenix. Dr. Yiannias explains that his father had eczema and was patch tested at the Mayo Clinic in

Rochester as being allergic to lanolin. So, he check all the skincare products in his dad's bathroom to see if they were lanolin-free, and many of them did not make the cut. His father was the one who actually suggested that he go back to his team at Mayo Clinic and build a program that would tell patients what they could safely use.

"I returned to Phoenix to discuss it with my colleagues who loved the idea and told me to come back when we built it. So, we worked with Microsoft Access and our nurses built in the ingredients so the program would spit out a list of products for each patient. SkinSAFE was 20 years in the making and involved dermatologists and pharmacists who established the relationships between all of these ingredients," says Dr. Yiannias.

"We learned early on that the chemicals, preservatives, and fragrances patients were shown to be allergic to were long and complicated," he continues. "If a patient is allergic to one ingredient, we wanted to uncover what SkinSAFE should tell them to avoid, such as orange oil. We are always going to err on the side of caution. Our vision was for it to be both provider-facing as well as consumer-facing."

Currently 750 physician groups are using the platform. In 2017, there were 2,000 products on the site. Fast forward to 2021, and over 54,000 products are featured, including 19,000 skincare

products. Products are listed in six categories: Bath and Body, Fragrance, Hair Care, Makeup, Manicure and Pedicure, and Skin Care. The SkinSAFE site has had its highest growth over the past eight months during COVID.

According to Dr. Yiannias, more than 45 percent of common contact skin allergies can be avoided simply by using the SkinSAFE Top Free rated products. Thus, consumers can break the cycle of using the wrong skincare and learn how to avoid the most common causes of allergy, such as fragrances; he says that many brands do not live up to the "fragrance-free" label.

The site has a user-friendly interface. Patients can ask their dermatologist to generate a "Personal Code" (PC) to be uploaded to their SkinSAFE account, which is free. The platform's proprietary algorithm is able to exclude products that contain ingredients associated with their known list of allergens. Users who do not have a dermatologist can use the directory on the site to find one in their area. Alternatively, the user can request a Personal Code with their unique allergens so they can easily identify "Safe for Me" products on the site.

This personalized approach goes one step further. The user can access a "Safe for Me" list on their phone while shopping to rule out any product their skin may not tolerate and vet products on the site to avoid making mistakes. The algorithm breaks down the markers into several wellness categories, including Sensitive Skin, Safe for, Free from, and Allergy free. For extremely sensitive skin, consumers can add the "irritant-free marker" to be 100 percent SkinSAFE. The SkinSAFE app bar code scanning function allows the user to determine how the product scores based on what they're trying to avoid.

According to Aki Hashmi, CEO and one of the founders of SkinSAFE, what is most unique about the platform is that it works in three distinct ways; skincare brands can partner

with the site, consumers can buy the safe products they want directly from the site or in store, and it facilitates awareness of whether specific products contain allergens or not.

Michele Robson, the Founder of HER Inc. an online social health community for women (and men, too) launched in 2008, is a patient of Dr. Yiannias. She went to see him to recommend a moisturizer to hydrate her irritated skin. When he examined her, he determined that she had eczema, not just rough skin, and recommended patch testing. Ms. Robson chuckled at the thought of finding five consecutive days for patch testing in her schedule and asked if there was an alternative approach. He then gave her a shopping list based on the most common allergens from Mayo Clinic's database. This helped her so much that she wanted to share the knowledge with others who were also suffering from skin allergies, sensitive skin, and more. So, she partnered with Dr. Yiannias and Mr. Hashmi to create SkinSAFE to help people with sensitive skin.

"If we could share this science-based information with consumers and patients, it could truly be a game changer. Our philosophy is very simple: we want people to live happier, healthier lives. If we can help accomplish those goals through tools like SkinSAFE, we're all in!" says Ms. Robson. ■

Find out more at [skinsafeproducts.com](https://skinsafeproducts.com)

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# 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.



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In 2021, any system or method you can automate,

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 other campaigns that get your message across in a way that does not offend anyone and speaks to empathy.



WENDY LEWIS is President of Wendy Lewis & Co. LLC, Global Aesthetics Consultancy since 1997, author of 12 books, and Editor-in-Chief of www.beautyinthebag.com. Her book Aesthetic Clinic Marketing in the Digital Age (CRC Press), will launch a Second Edition in 2021. contact: w@wendylewis.com

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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 businesses, 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 App Annie.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 aging millennials. But their base still leans 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 tints 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

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

HubsSpot'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 wrinkles, 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.

Live streaming is expected to gain momentum, especially in light of the surge in e-commerce as lockdowns shut off many shops, restaurants and events. Live streaming 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

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 humor to our daily lives. Take, for example, the meme explosion about Bernie Sanders' wooten 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

## 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 animations are able to communicate 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 to

## 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 procedure.

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/>
- Dubsmash: <https://dubsmash.com>
- Byte: <https://byte.co>
- Funimate: <https://funimate.com>
- Lomott: <https://lomott.com>
- Cheez: <https://www.cheez.com/#>
- KWAH: <https://www.kwah.com/>
- Likee: <https://likee.video>
- Firework: <https://www.fireworktv.com/>



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



**Using SEO on Instagram**

- Search for 'Tip 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.

to 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.

- Quicks 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.

Smashbalcon.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 73% in the most recent quarter—more than three times Facebook at 22%. 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 Shopfy 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 like-minded 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 connections

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 step-sister 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 conversation 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 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/#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.

“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.”

TAKE A LONG, HARD LOOK AT EACH OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS TO DETERMINE WHAT'S WORKING, WHAT'S NOT, AND WHY. BEFORE DITCHING THE

PLATFORM, SET UP A MEETING WITH THE COMPANY'S REP TO DETERMINE IF YOU'RE FULLY UTILIZING THE SOFTWARE. IF NOT, PICK A TEAM CAPTAIN TO GET THE PRACTICE UPDATED."



## DECLUTTER YOUR PRACTICE

If COVID-19 taught us anything, it's that we need a lot less stuff to

bog us down in all aspects of our lives. So, keep your practice nimble, efficient, and updated to focus on what really matters: taking great care of patients, delivering superior outcomes, avoiding staff turnover, and preventing physician burnout.

Getting rid of clutter can be a cathartic experience.

Start by going through your file drawers to transition everything possible from paper to digital. Paper takes up room, ink fades, and pages can get misplaced. Download a scanner app and take a picture of the documents you need and save them indefinitely as a PDF, JPEG, or image. Try AdobeScan or Swiftscan. Ask your accountant how far back you still need to keep your tax returns and receipts. Save your digital documents and files in a universal file format, such as PDF, to be consistent and maximize usability.

Take a look through your office. Is there a stack of journals from the last decade piling up in the corner by your desk? Get rid of them and subscribe to the online version of the journals you still

want to read instead. Ditto for newspapers and magazines. Are you still hanging on to slides from the year of the flood? These can also be converted into digital files by using a slide-scanning service.

In the age of COVID-19, it's time to dump your clipboards, lose the copies of copies, and wave farewell to glossy handouts. File these under the things you will never need again, too: printed brochures, sign-in sheets, embossed folders and business cards that are missing your email, URL, and social handles.

Patient forms should be digitized and updated frequently to stay current with your practice, as well as the laws and regulations pertaining to your specialty and geography. This may include pre/post procedure instructions, consents, fee quotes, patient intake forms, teleconsult instructions, etc. Making sure that your practice is up to date on all things HIPAA will be a lot simpler this

Patient Portal on your website landing page is another huge time and clutter saver. Patients can access the forms and information they may need 24/7 by using their own personalized code.

Take a deep dive into what is happening (or not happening) in your treatment rooms. If you're hanging on to lackluster energy-based devices, a clunker facial machine, or skincare products patients aren't buying anymore, turn them over STAT! Anything that doesn't generate revenue or add value to your practice should be on the chopping block. ■



# UP YOUR 'APP'TITUDE

BY WENDY LEWIS

**T**hinking of downloading a new app to help manage or market your practice or even creating one so patients can shop your skincare store with greater ease? Either way, our practice management pros can help you cut through the noise and focus on what matters most.



## APP CHECKLIST

Most people are moving away from working exclusively from a laptop or desktop

computer to a tablet plus iPhone or Android. Thus, apps are becoming far more important to running a small business than they were five years ago. Technology-savvy doctors can now manage their entire practice, as well as their lives, from their phones. So, selecting one essential app is a head-banging task.

Instagram is an app, so I would have to choose that as my number

one must-have. Instagram is widely considered the most valuable social media channel or app for aesthetic practices. We have witnessed many practices survive and thrive by building up a robust and loyal Instagram following.

However, Instagram cannot exist alone. There are literally hundreds of other apps intended to help step up your game on Instagram. For example, Snapseed is one of many super apps that help you make your photos look more professional. When it comes to video editing, VSCO gets rave reviews. Want to make your graphics look like a pro did them? CANVA can be a godsend.

Working with staff remotely and managing patients via teleconsults have expedited the adoption of new and efficient methods of management largely based on a hybrid selection of best-in-class apps, like Doxy.me.

You will also need to expand the forms of communication you use. WhatsApp is great, especially if you communicate globally. You may need an app like Expensify to keep track of expenses. Adopting an app like Square to accept payments may be useful. To stay on top of your team, apps like Slack can keep everyone in check. I recommend a mobile scanner app too, like TurboScan.

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### **GO DIGITAL OR GO HOME**

The post-pandemic business environment is much different than what many had anticipated. To engage with patients and fulfill their long-term goals, practices must stop ignoring their digital audience. As 2021 showed, businesses are at risk of closing, and relying solely on physical marketing is not a safe strategy.

Consumers have increased their utilization of social media as a tool for identifying products, collecting information on products, evaluating products, and making purchases. Practices must step up their efforts to establish an online presence to engage and inform clients across several platforms in 2022.

As the aesthetic industry grows, businesses may sell comparable products and services, making differentia-

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## WHAT SHOULD BE MY FOCUS FOR 2022?

Experts help you set resolutions for your practice.

**T**his is the season for making (and let's be honest, breaking) New Year's Resolutions. From implementing COVID-19 vaccine policies to the best ways to promote your brand online, our practice management pros share resolutions that are guaranteed to make 2022 a year that your practice thrives.



### LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Video is where it's at. If you don't believe me, look at the meteoric rise of TikTok. The human race has become increasingly lazy over time. We can blame the internet for making it easier for us to do things in record time and connect with each other in new and exciting ways, but I believe it's more complicated than that. Our lives are busier than ever

because we have more on our plates than in the past. So, it is only natural that we are constantly looking for ways to streamline some day-to-day tasks to leave more time to conquer the life-or-death deliverables. Video fulfills that need for many of us.

If video is not your thing, make 2022 the year that you get comfortable with this critical medium.

Invest in the simplest yet most effective equipment to do videos on the fly. I often do my videos from the back of an Uber and text them to my team with instructions on how to post and who to tag.

You may need any or all of these to get it right: USB microphone, LED video light, tripod, branded and/or solid backdrop, etc. Get advice from a pro before you buy. Neewer is a good brand to check out, and Amazon Basics works fine, too. When you are

just getting started, write out a script for what you want to say to get your key messages across. It will get easier as you go, I promise. Practice until you feel confident and run with it.

For users who tend to keep the sound off on their phones in public places, try to add text to your videos to get your key messages across.

Keep in mind that video content works across all platforms, not just TikTok and Instagram Stories. You can repurpose video with or without music for your website, blog, monitors in your practice, and all social media channels.

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# Stacking THE ODDS



## IN FOCUS: STACKING THE ODDS

### TREND WATCH 2022

As you reflect on 2021 and the year ahead, it's a great time to think about new ideas and ways to improve your life and practice. Wendy Lewis (@wendylewisco; wendylewisco.com) shares a trend you should adopt and one you should leave behind:

**Trend to take into 2022: Voice & Visual Search.** It's here! Voice and visual search are part of our daily lives. That means that you need to make these new-ish forms of communication part of your aesthetics practice ASAP. For starters, these models can help drive growth, increase revenue, and streamline the patient journey. Visual and voice search are rapidly changing the way we connect, find information, and make purchasing decisions. So, this means that in 2022, more companies, businesses, and consumers will be jumping into these models as they will emerge from a "nice to have" to a "must have" for your marketing strategy. New developments in artificial intelligence have improved these technologies by light years so that more consumers are coming onboard to simplify their experience of interacting with all sorts of businesses. In particular, this trend is having a big impact on how we search and shop for all kinds of products and services top of mind. AI offers improved ways to connect and engage with current patients, while at the same time, attract new ones.

Don't make the mistake of assuming that AI is just for Tesla-driving tech wizards and younger audiences who live on their phones. On the contrary, people of all ages are eager for ways to simplify their lives and complete basic tasks more effectively and efficiently

to have more time to enjoy self-care, family time, and Netflix. We are all very busy, even more so post-COVID-19, and having the ability to get answers 24/7 is very appealing. So, if you are looking to catch the eye of women and men who are on the hunt for toxins, fillers, skin-care, and surgery, you need to be visible everywhere they are. Think of voice and visual search as a means to that end.

**Trend to leave behind: Content Chaos.** Be honest. Are you drowning in content but not sure what to do with it all? Do you often find yourself staring at your various screens feeling lightheaded trying to figure out where to post what and when? You may be suffering from a chronic condition sometimes called "Content Chaos." Fortunately there is a cure; no vaccine required.

Get organized by creating a system of managing your content in all forms to be filed, distributed, shared, or deleted as needed. If your content collection is not well managed or carefully evaluated, you may be at risk of missing out on opportunities to market your practice or stand out from the competition.

Content chaos creates unnecessary diversions that can keep key stakeholders in your practice too busy sorting through it all to use it in a timely manner. This requires more than just a better filing system; rather it needs a universal strategy to quickly determine how to optimize the best content for the right channel. In some cases, your top content may be repurposed for several platforms in different ways. For example, a great video of a provider doing a treatment can be posted on Instagram first, and then re-used on another channel at a future time. You may also re-post it on

Instagram as a #throwbackthursday post with a fresh caption and/or intro copy. An article about a new product or research work you may be doing may be cut down to 500-750 words for a blog post with an image added. Bear in mind that each marketing channel you may be active on tends to appeal to readers or viewers in a different way. You wouldn't use the same exact content, i.e. words and images, on Facebook and LinkedIn, although I see this very frequently. A Facebook business page is primarily used by aesthetic practices to reach consumers, whereas LinkedIn is a B2B platform where you can connect with colleagues, vendors, and like-minded businesses.

If you find yourself with a deluge of content in the form of photos, audio, video, articles, and random thoughts, get it under control for 2022. You can thank me later.



## Content Marketing 2022: Staying on Brand

By Wendy Lewis

### FACT: WE ARE DROWNING IN CONTENT, GOOD AND BAD.

Just wading through the content being thrown at us in a 24-hour cycle has become a full-time job. It is hard to extract what you really want to consume from all the white noise. If you're feeling the strain, your patients are overwhelmed. They are faced with unlimited choices of quality content which makes it much harder to stand out.

Content marketing is all about creating, publishing, and distributing useful content developed to reach a specific target audience; females between 30–60 with high net worth, interested in beauty treatments, as an example. The right content to reach your desired demographic should be relevant to them and more educational than pure self-promotion in tone and format. It should also be unique to your philosophy and on brand. Ideally, a high percentage of the content you put out should be credible enough to encourage them to take the next action, such as scheduling a virtual or in-person consultation, following your brand on Instagram, or booking a treatment, etc.

The secret sauce of content marketing is knowing who your audience is, learning what they want to consume, where they want to get it, and in what formats. Once you have figured that out, you can be more strategic with your content planning and make it more personalized and original. You probably don't want the same content to pop up every time you log on to a news site or a retailer's Facebook page. Your audience doesn't want to see the same content every time they go to your channels either. The key is to identify what they are most interested in and produce more of that by varying the formats to keep them engaged.

With all the different types of content in use today, it is more difficult to choose the best ones to focus on to build your brand. Experiment with several popular content formats to add diversity to what you post on



Focus some of your content on what you love most about the field and what inspires you to give your audience a glimpse of who you are as a person, not just a surgeon.

your website, blog, and all social channels. You can also remarket the best content that has performed well by switching out the graphics, changing the format, or reworking the composition to keep it fresh.

If you are not sure what formats appeal to your patient population, ask them. You may be surprised by how they respond. In addition to words and images, boost your content in different ways for variety:

- Video is essential on all platforms today
- Statistics reinforce your standing as an expert
- Surveys and polls generate interest
- Infographics can get shared
- GIFs and memes make people smile
- Music sets the right tone
- Case studies showcase your skills
- E-books help to position you as an expert in specific topics

Rather than trying to be all things to all users, align your brand with a handful of core topics that resonate with your key audience and reinforce your special expertise. For example, non-invasive body shaping, breast surgery, women's health, wellness, male aesthetics, etc. This strategy is more narrowly focused. For each of the core topics you choose to start with, break them down by subtopics. As in 'Breast Surgery,' a broad topic, can be broken down into subtopics like, 'Augmentation,' 'Reduction and Lifting,' and 'Reconstruction.'

You can expand by adding more core topics and/or subtopics when this strategy is working well, and you are getting results in the form of consults, new patients, and former patients returning to your practice. My advice is to expand once you have the bandwidth to manage more topics effectively by generating unique and compelling content in a variety of forms.

In my view, it is wiser to position yourself as a specialist in a narrow area to establish your brand, than to be a generalist who is known for doing a little of everything without a strong identity. There are many generalists out there, but far fewer specialists. Cosmetic surgery patients are so much savvier today than when I

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## Content Marketing 2022: Staying on Brand

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ran practices in New York. They are looking for plastic surgeons who specialize in offering the best solutions for their specific needs and who are considered 'experts' by their patients and peers.

Aesthetic surgery in all forms is a topic of interest to consumers and will continue to be. Fortunately, it is easier to get more eyes on your content when you're in a hot field that is constantly changing and doing something new. Focus some of your content on what you love most about the field and what inspires you to give your audience a glimpse of who you are as a person, not just a surgeon.

By selectively creating unique and interesting content, you can ignite a conversation and keep your audience coming back for more. As you identify your target audience, serve them better by addressing their wants and needs. Optimizing a content strategy can increase awareness of what you offer and drive long term steady growth for your practice.

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# WHERE SHOULD YOU SPEND \$100,000 IN YOUR PRACTICE?

Experts weigh in on where you can make the most impact.

**A**s they adjust to the realities of practice today, the specter of inflation, and the continuing evolution of technology, practices may choose to infuse some cash into their operations. If you are thinking of investing in your practice, our experts offer tips to help you make the most of it.

## MARKETING MATTERS



If you have not established your marketing plan and allocated a sensible budget for 2022, get busy.

Pivot your thinking about marketing as a “nice to have” and add it to the “need to have” column. Marketing your aesthetics practices and promot-

ing your services and products is an investment that can pay big dividends throughout this year and well into the future.

To create a reasonable marketing budget that you can stick to, review last year’s budget to see how well you did, what you didn’t stick to and why, and how you can do better this year. Leave some room for pivots, miscalculations, and new opportunities along the way. These are inevitable no matter how carefully you plan. Build in some funds for the future, such as upgrading your technology, hiring a marketing manager, renovating the waiting room, purchasing some capital equipment, investing in sponsored content for your practice, etc. You may need to make adjust-

ments to your budget by quarter, so leave some extra cash for unexpected expenses.

Take care to align your marketing plan with your goals. Set realistic expectations about what you can accomplish in-house and what needs to be farmed out to professionals. This will revolve around the expertise and availability of your staff. If you are trying to do a lot on a tight budget, identify your top priorities and address those first. You may have to allocate a higher percentage of your marketing budget to the tactics that will move the needle for your bottom line quickly. If these are successful early in the year, you may have the funds available by the end of Q2 to expand your marketing plan and budget for Q3 and Q4.

Spending your budget wisely on a well-defined and targeted approach is key to getting the most value from it. Even if you have set aside a sizeable budget, allocate this funding strategically to reap the rewards. Track your ROI at every step so that if one strategy is not delivering the results you planned for, you can refocus seamlessly to invest those dollars more effectively.

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