

CLINIC WEBSITE THE MARKETING MOTHERSHIP

NATIVE NEW YORKER WENDY LEWIS IS THE UNDISPUTED GURU OF MARKETING FOR AESTHETIC PRACTICES. THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM HER NEW BOOK 'AESTHETIC CLINIC MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL AGE'.

The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself – Peter Drucker.

Your clinic website is your marketing mothership.

In today's digital world, having a dedicated website for your practice is a critical component of giving patients instant access to information about your practice, special expertise, and the products and services you offer.

An informative and interactive website with the right updated content will strongly position your practice as being committed to delivering the highest level of patient care and education. Patients today go online more than ever to research and gather knowledge about health

and well-being. By having a website that can be easily found on search engines, with relevant, consumer-friendly content, you can stand out against your competitors and consistently attract new patients.

By customising your site with the specific products and treatments you offer, coupled with compelling before and after images, patients will be able to find what they are looking for in a few clicks, and make informed decisions regarding their own treatment.

Strive to design or update your site with fresh content on a regular basis—monthly for some categories and weekly or bi-weekly for special offers, blog posts, events, and so on. Create an inviting, aesthetically pleasing site that uses proven strategies people are

seeking, such as a photo gallery, blog entries, special promotions, and downloadable educational brochures about your clinic and procedures, as well as pre- and post-procedural instructions.

Web marketing (now called digital marketing) is the most highly effective, efficient and affordable means of driving patients to your practice. When done well and consistently, it provides the best ROI, bar none.

Staying on Brand

Having an updated and optimised website today is a mandatory initiative for all successful aesthetic clinics, and your website should be created to reflect the personality and positioning of your clinic.

Patients are searching for local businesses online, so your site must be optimised for search engine pickup, or only people searching for you by name will find your clinic online.

Promoting your clinic is no longer only about having a pretty brochure or an adequate website. You also need to be in all the other places where your patients go, live, read, and play. Marketing your clinic now is about creating multiple touchpoints to connect with your target audience in meaningful ways.

Think Mobile-Friendly

With advanced mobile devices becoming a fact of life across all demographics, mobile marketing has taken centre stage. If your website is not searchable on mobile platforms, you are unwittingly turning visitors away. It is important to be readable on thumb-friendly mobile platforms, because the majority of social media activity is now coming from a smartphone or a tablet. Since the screen size of a mobile phone or tablet is small, the scope of content that can be displayed is limited.

The best content for mobile

devices, whether it is text, images, or video, needs to be a lot simpler than for desktops or laptops.

Reaching out to patients on the technology they use offers many unique benefits, including lower costs, improved customisation, easier tracking, and reduced staff time.

Creating a mobile version of your practice website is a worthwhile investment.

Above the Fold

Remember when being 'social' meant going to someone's home? Now it is more like going to someone's home page.

The top of the landing page of any website contains the most valuable real estate of the entire site.

You have only three seconds to convince visitors that your site is worth any more of their time.

Therefore, the look and feel of your site should create the desired effect. The landing page should contain the words or pictures that are already on the minds of your target audience, and it should deliver on any promise your external marketing program makes for consistency.

The top of the landing page—above the fold—should contain the most important details that you want the visitor to know. For example, tell visitors who you are, what you do, where you are located, and how to reach you by including a phone number, e-mail link, and/or scheduling form.

Every landing page needs a clear call to action (CTA)—a message that tells visitors what to do next.

For example, having a Contact Us form for patients to fill out and submit for more information will help you capture inbound patient information for future follow-up and to add to your database to market to. Place a Contact Us link near the top of every page throughout the site.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A GREAT LANDING PAGE

- **Clinic credentials**—certification, specialty
- **Location**—neighbourhood, city, state or province
- **Call to action**—scheduling form, e-mail contact, phone
- **Testimonials**—from patients, media
- **Reviews/links**
- **Trust symbols**—organisations, brands, affiliations, awards
- **Photo(s)**—doctor, staff, facility
- **Map/navigation**—how to find you
- **Key services**—what do you offer?
- **Photo gallery**—section most visited by consumers
- **All social buttons**

Components of a Killer Website

Web content is one thing clinic managers have control over, so do not overload your site with excessive non-essential or irrelevant text. The motivation is understandable—your website is the hub of your online marketing presence; you want to share everything you can about your clinic and make sure your keywords are included in your text. But this strategy can be a detriment to functionality as users can get lost in pages of text, or may be turned off by too many clicks to get to what they want to read. Since the attention span of users is so short, text should be short and to the point.

Your site should have two primary goals: to provide brand awareness and to generate new customers.

Keeping your content short and to the point will inspire customers to contact you more quickly. Landing page content should be easy to read and understand and tell the story that is on your visitors' minds.

Keeping text brief on the landing

BEST PRACTICE

page makes it clear and uncluttered. It helps people understand what you are saying quickly and easily. It also downloads and performs faster, giving users a better experience so they will stay on the site longer and convert to customers more often. Do not be afraid of some white space.

Showcase Your Skills

A curriculum vitae (CV) is much more than a résumé for physicians. It serves as a record of a lifelong accumulation of milestones, training, degrees and accomplishments. Therefore, do not expect anyone to take the time to read through every research project you did in medical school or conference attended. In many cases, these additional facts will just dilute the most important highlights you want to convey.

Aesthetic physicians should maintain a brief biography that is consumer-friendly and includes the accolades consumers are programmed to look for in priority order.

Include a brief narrative followed by bullets of key important details. If you want to use a full CV, it can be added as a link to a separate page or downloadable PDF.

Your photo should be current, taken in the last 3–5 years at maximum. If you had a full head of dark hair once, and have a sparse head of gray hair now, you will look very different to patients when

they first meet you, which can be misleading. A personal video introduction on the landing page is a welcome addition and allows patients to feel comfortable with you before they come to the clinic.

Site Navigation

Navigation is how visitors go from page to page or section to section of the site and how they find what they are looking for. There are three basic ways to navigate a website. It is recommended to implement all three navigation types throughout your site for a consistent user experience:

1. Horizontal navigation (across the top)
2. Vertical navigation (usually on the left side)
3. Footer (at the bottom of each page)

Web surfers have short attention spans, and they will not spend extra time on a site if they cannot find their way around easily. Maintain the same style, fonts and colours throughout the site, and do not get too crazy. By following these simple design principles, users will get used to the style of the site and the look and feel of your brand. As they get comfortable, they will (hopefully) spend more time browsing, which is the ultimate goal.

Use phrases in your navigation that are specific; do not make them guess what you mean. For example, avoid vague terms like News or Resources. These can be left open to interpretation. Choose terms that are clear and concise and three words or less, such as Patient Gallery, About Our Clinic and Meet Our Doctors.

Make it easy for users to find what they are looking for in under three clicks. If it takes more than that, they may just give up and leave the site in frustration.

Less Is More

Site navigation and organisation are key components of effective search engine optimisation, so if

you want to be found by Google, be specific. A good number of links to consider for your menus is 6–8 items maximum. Do not overwhelm users with too many choices that can cause confusion. Drop-down menus can be used for more specific terms, but these may not get picked up by search engines.

Make sure you have a visible link on each page so the reader can get back to a previous page or the home page quickly to keep it user friendly.

The footer is the series of links that appear at the very bottom of the site's landing page. This area contains technical information including copyright and date, name of the site's owner, business name and address, links to key pages within the website, and an e-mail link.

Photo Gallery

One picture is worth a thousand words – Fred R. Barnard

We live in a very visual age where pictures draw more attention than words. A robust photo gallery of actual patients to showcase your results is usually the section that consumers go to first. If you do not have good photographs to post, your site will be at a supreme disadvantage.

It is important to avoid blacked-out eyes, pictures of facial regions instead of the entire face, and blurry photos with bad lighting or inconsistent angles or makeup, too much hair on the face, and jewellery.

Descriptors let visitors know exactly what treatment was performed and the interval between the before and after photos.

Consider watermarking all patient photos you post online so they are less likely to be lifted and end up on Facebook or another outlet. Remember that patient photos require written consent from the patient, and this consent can be rescinded at any time.

Microsite Marketing

Microsite marketing can be an effective technique to drive additional visitors to your site. The concept of developing microsites specifically targeted to new segments of potential clients allows your practice to establish a broader presence online among niche markets.

Identifying Target Audiences

A microsite focuses on a specific area, such as promoting your services for a particular procedure like breast enhancement, or on a specific group of consumers, like those seeking mommy makeovers.

EXAMPLES OF MICROSITE THEMES

- Breast enhancement
- Body contouring
- Medical tourism
- Spanish-speaking patients
- Cosmetic surgery for men
- Acne treatments
- Hair restoration
- Millennials
- Vaginal rejuvenation

Microsites are meant to target only one area of your practice, usually a procedure in which you specialise, or a specific geographic location, or a patient group from which you'd like to attract more clients.

They may be used to focus on in-depth information about a narrower area of specialisation with a unique visitor experience and will be linked to your main site, so as to create better traffic from online sources to your main website.

Because a microsite is often designed to target one primary search term, it can move quickly up the search engine rank for the primary term you select.

Typically, a microsite will mirror similar branding, imagery, and design of the main site. In some

cases, the design and navigation may need to differ slightly from your main site to attract a different audience entirely.

A microsite strategy can be effectively combined with your search campaigns so that as it gains rankings in search engines, it begins to take on organic links and establish a greater presence for your clinic.

Along with the added value of your microsite, your main site gains additional value in the form of referral traffic and optimised links. Instead of depending on one complex megasite to feature everything you offer, the option of increasing your footprint on search engines offers another way to attract more clients.

Because microsites can be just a few pages, they are affordable compared to an overhaul of your main website and can be created in far less time. Microsite marketing can be a rewarding strategy to add and a worthwhile investment when designed with your specific goals and endgame in mind.

Procedure-Specific Content

A microsite enables you to position yourself as an expert in a specific procedure category. Because visitors will most likely find your microsite while looking for a specific procedure in your geographic location, they are considered highly qualified clients. By providing valuable procedure-specific information, a related photo gallery, and unique videos and content, visitors will identify your practice as a leader in the field.

Another option is to have a few larger sites for specialised areas that contain a steady supply of updated content. For example, you may want to identify two or three key areas of your practice that are worth investing in to grow. These might include categories where there is less competition in your market to allow for a higher return.

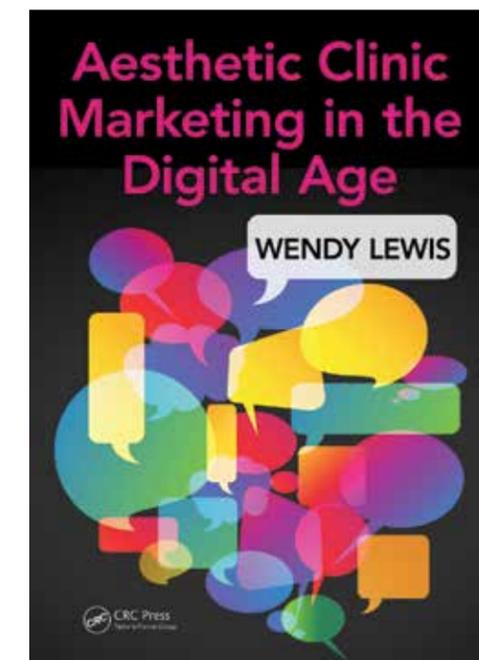
Consider domain names that have popular search phrases used by potential customers and how consumers will use the web to search for the procedure you are marketing. Domain names can be chosen based on keyword research to determine which would yield the best traffic from the major search engines.

Another commonly used strategy is to create a microsite for non-surgical or skincare and spa services that is linked to your main site, which may focus on more invasive procedures. Many practitioners also maintain a microsite that contains a shopping cart for their own skincare or cosmetic line.

Whatever you decide, make sure the strategy has been well researched for validation, and that it will not dilute your marketing budget by stealing valuable traffic from your main bread and butter site. **AMP**

ELEMENTS OF A CONSUMER-FRIENDLY BIO

- Name and degree
- Board certification or other qualifications
- Areas of specialisation
- Media recognition
- Honours and awards
- Current hospital appointments
- Academic positions or professional titles
- Relevant professional memberships
- Education (graduate, fellowships, training)



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