



Aesthetic

MEDICAL PRACTITIONER



LinkedIn – the most trusted network

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*New York marketing guru **Wendy Lewis** explains the importance of using this business focussed platform for marketing.*

With sexier social networks sprouting up constantly, LinkedIn is a platform that often gets underutilised or put on the back burner. But it can be an extremely powerful tool if you take the time to uncover all of the platform's hidden features.

It is primarily focused on business-to-business relationships and enables users to connect and share content with other professionals, including colleagues, potential employers, business partners and new employees. One of the best ways to be active on LinkedIn is to join groups that are relevant to who you are and what you do, such as aesthetic medicine and personal and professional interests, and to comment on discussions.

LinkedIn may not be as trendy as Twitter, or as popular as Facebook, but it is the most important social network out there for businesses.

With over 100 million users and growing, if you are using social media for your business or professional growth, you cannot afford to ignore LinkedIn. LinkedIn is technically not a social network.

Its stated motto is 'To connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.' It is not like Facebook; in fact, most serious LinkedIn users despise Facebook. It is a professional B2B (aka business-to-business) platform.

That is, it was intended to provide content of interest to like-minded individuals of a professional nature.

Perhaps more so than any other network, LinkedIn's purpose is clear. It is a place to connect with colleagues you already know and make new professional contacts.

Outside of the United States, India, Brazil and the United Kingdom have the highest numbers of active users, and the EMEA region (Europe, the Middle East, and Africa) is the second largest region outside North America. Students and recent college graduates are the fastestgrowing demographic, mainly looking for jobs. They boast that one in every three professionals in the world is on LinkedIn. The operative word here is B2B as opposed to D2C (direct to consumer).

LinkedIn is not for reaching consumers. In fact, I would discourage clinics from using it purely as a patient marketing tactic. I often see search engine optimisation people are posting consumer blog content for doctors in groups on LinkedIn. Frankly, that is a good way to be disinvited from a group.

New LinkedIn Logistics

Microsoft recently acquired LinkedIn, which has boosted the networking muscle as the place where all business professionals hook up.

The LinkedIn redesign is a far more sophisticated platform with userfriendly tools that help to reduce clutter and improve navigation.

The best way to use LinkedIn is to post weekly updates – sharing an update is when you share some content you read online about a workshop you saw. It can be something that came up in the news. LinkedIn is also a great way to hire staff and is ideal for job hunters. It is intended to help you connect with like-minded industry friends, colleagues, somebody you went to med school with, your community, and professional organisations.

LinkedIn Strategy

LinkedIn is really all about business, and I believe it should be managed by someone who represents your clinic internally. An important aspect of LinkedIn is staying on top of news and updates for brands that matter to you, and following influencers whose opinions you trust. Think of the vendors you work with, institutions you attended, and relevant organisations you belong to in aesthetics.

LinkedIn users are serious people.

This is not a social site in the sense of the word. It is also not a community like Facebook; but it is great for disseminating and curating current information.

Since this is a professional network, the best times to post are during the workday. The hours between 8 AM and 6 PM tend to get the most traffic, and the best days are usually Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Posting on Monday can compete with start-of-theweek meetings and deadlines, so that may not be the ideal choice.

LinkedIn's analytics provide an overview of the posts on your company page and a breakdown of your followers.

Creating a LinkedIn Profile

To get started on LinkedIn, create your 'Profile' as an individual, not as a company. Your profile should be in your actual name — as in John Smith, MD, rather than Smith Aesthetics of Surrey. Just like with dating apps, adding a photo makes you far more likely to receive requests for connecting. To make your profile findable, start with a current professional headshot. A recent, professional, smiling photo of you is golden.

Include all of your current and past positions and education.

These details will also increase your chances of getting found in searches. Listing your industry is also a vital piece of information.

Complete your profile by adding any awards, research work, books you have written, studies being conducted, teaching positions, speaking engagements, preceptorships, and so on. You never know how people may connect with you, or what searches they may use to find you.

Write a compelling summary to explain what you do, and why someone should reach out to you.

Leverage keywords by placing the best ones in key sections of your profile to improve how people can find you. Add at least 5–10 specific skills that speak to your individual expertise, such as plastic surgery, aesthetic medicine, cosmetic surgery, medical spas, clinical research, and so on. Last, add a brief summary of two to three lines that highlight the most important snippets you want your network to know about you. LinkedIn has automated feedback generated to help you build out your profile so you stand out.

To see how your profile appears to visitors, click on your photo on the top menu tab labeled 'Me.' 'Endorsements' are also nice to add, and it is common practice to reciprocate. By uploading a video to 'SlideShare' and enabling it on your profile, you can also embed a video on your profile page.

Your Company Page

Establish your clinic or brand as a Company on LinkedIn. Go to 'Work,' and click on 'Create a Company Page' to follow the instructions to set it up. This allows you to develop a valuable microsite for your brand, including employees, services, and content that extols the virtues of your clinic.

You can select up to 20 specialties to highlight that are searchable — for example, Cosmetic Surgery, Aesthetic Medicine, Dermatology, and other relevant terms. Company pages can be used to post updates about industry news, speaking engagements, and clinic milestones to spread the word. This is a more appropriate place to recycle blog posts, media mentions, practice news, study results, events, and speaking engagements.

You can publish an original article or upload a link to an article you find online that is of interest to the users who follow you. Add your own commentary on the topic to personalize the content. Utilise share buttons to seamlessly post articles from sites and blogs. If you are seeking a new aesthetician or practitioner for your clinic, post it on LinkedIn. To post a job, go to a Group you are a member of and post under Job. You can also click on Post a Job under the Work tab, and add it to your company page to get the best traction.

Joining Groups

Joining groups that are relevant to you is a unique feature of LinkedIn to stay visible within your field. Go to 'Work' on the top horizontal menu on the right, then click on Groups to search for new groups to join, and see what the groups you are a member of have to share. Most groups have open membership, and some will require you to request to become a member. Enter a term in the Search bar and click on 'Groups' — such as Cosmetic Surgery — and you will see 156 groups for that category, 140 groups for Aesthetic, and 60 groups under Aesthetic Medicine. See which groups are worthwhile to join based on the scope and content posted.

Groups are also formed around geographical areas, industries, companies, alumni groups, or any other social ties. If you are eager to build your local network, search for your city or country in the Groups search box. To connect with people in your industry, search for 'dermatologists' or 'aesthetic nurses,' and so on. When you find relevant groups, join and sign up for the daily e-mail digest to get highlights of the group's activity e-mailed to you. If there is a question you can answer, or help you can provide members, participate in the conversation. To gain from LinkedIn, you need to be present, and I do not believe it works unless you do it yourself.

Building Your Network

Many of your current contacts may already be on LinkedIn. Build your network by reaching out to people you know IRL (in real life.) Go to 'Contacts' > 'Add Connections.' You can sync all your contacts from a Gmail, Hotmail, AOL, or Yahoo! account, which I do not recommend, or upload your contacts as a spreadsheet.

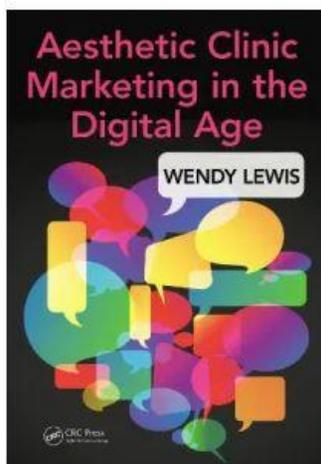
Reach out to people already on LinkedIn, and invite them individually to connect. Personalize it, like, 'I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.' By sending out individual invites, you can control the message by saying why you are reaching out and how you know the person, and then you can start building your network.

Elevate your visibility by checking out the Answers section under 'More' in the navigation bar.

Search for questions from other professionals in your areas of expertise. Answering questions can increase your visibility and establish you as an expert in your field.

Applications allow you to add business presentations to your site or promote your business blog. You can also create LinkedIn events to announce upcoming speaking engagements. Content and stimulating conversations are the cornerstones of LinkedIn's model.

In general, the best content encourages an open discussion, rather than just serving a thinly veiled vehicle for self-promotion. **AMP**



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