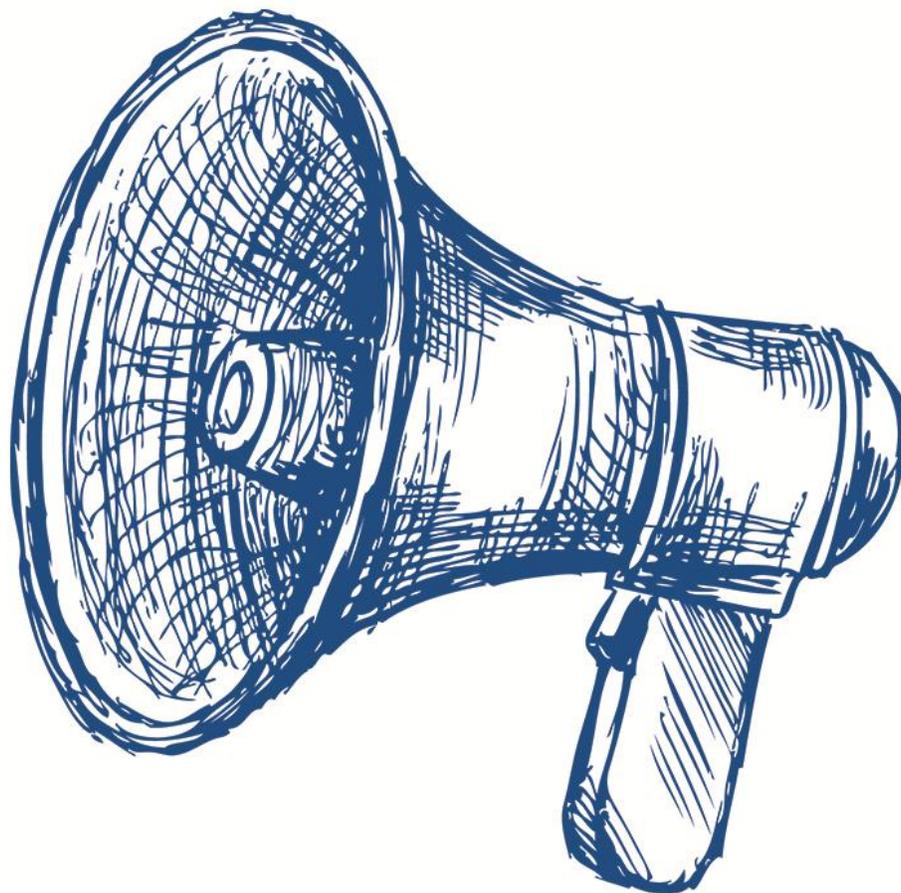


Vegas Cosmetic Surgery: practice marketing tips

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Wendy Lewis provides some of her top tips, as featured in the Vegas Cosmetic Surgery Daily News



Does Facebook generate facelifts?

Social media is changing the way your patients see themselves, and it also provides another way for you to reach them and brand your practice. With 1.31 billion monthly users, Facebook remains the biggest social platform out there, but it's not the only game in town. Other social platforms of importance to all service businesses include Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, and YouTube.

When it comes to your practice's Facebook page, post once or twice daily about any specials at your practice, upcoming speaking engagements or publications, as well as any trending plastic surgery stories. Remember the goal is not quantity; rather it should be quality and engagement. These elements are more important than merely the number of Facebook fans you have.

To gauge engagement, look at whether your Facebook posts are being liked, commented on and shared. At its core, social media is all about building relationships with your audience. Sharing photos and video content is key. Research suggests that people are 44% more likely to engage with content that has images. Make your business page look like a magazine — with attractive and appealing images, customized content, and a beautifully designed cover photo.

Your page is like real estate so don't waste that space. Social media is not free or something you can just dabble in. It involves an investment of your staff's time and/or the possibility of outsourcing your social media accounts to an experienced vendor.

Facebook ads are also needed to grow your fan base. Without ads, it will take a long time to build a respectable sized community. It also helps if you boost Facebook posts for as little as \$15 using targeting features.

Don't forget to use 'Like us on Facebook, Follow us on Twitter' signage in your practice and on all materials to help build your online community. Your practice's social media presence is a big factor in the search engine-ranking algorithm, and enhances branding and word-of-mouth exposure. Take it seriously and have fun! Social media is here to stay.

The power of PR and earned media for physicians

The Public Relations Society of America defines public relations as 'a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics'. This includes any and all activities that are undertaken to build brand awareness and credibility that drives consumer spending, demand for treatments, and patient referrals.

This can be accomplished via consumer media outreach. PR professionals spend their days pitching, setting up interviews and following up with editors to score valuable earned media for their clients. Earned media is precisely what the name implies — coverage in the lay or consumer press that is attained by merit, luck, or happenstance, rather than being bought. Importantly, public relations and search engine optimization (SEO) are not one in the same.

An SEO professional's role is to increase search visibility for clients on Google and other search relevant engines. This is a data-driven role. By contrast, PR is more about relationship building using verbal and visual skillsets. Many practices may seek to go it alone when it comes to garnering media coverage.

Only a true PR professional who has experience writing press releases that get noticed and not deleted, and has developed strong relationships with local and national editors and producers can get your practice on the media's radar. If you decide to hire an individual or a PR firm to handle your public relations needs, make sure that they do have relationships with the beauty editors, magazines, television shows and online outlets you are targeting.

A PR pro can also let you know if your expectations are realistic and can be achieved with a PR campaign, in the same way that you can tell your patients whether their goals are realistic and will be met with a given plastic surgery procedure.

Ask colleagues or any journalists you know for names of PR professionals they enjoy working with and ones they do not. This can help you make an informed decision on whom to hire. Remember great placements don't happen overnight. Give the firm ample time to dazzle you with their prowess; set aside a minimum of 6–12 months to gain traction.

Patient seminars are not dead

Despite the widespread reach of social media and the digital revolution, open house patient seminars remain one of the most effective ways to keep existing patients engaged with your practice, and to get new patients in the door.

A program of seminars can be timed around holidays or seasonal themes such as Mother's Day, Spring Awakening or Bridal Beauty, as well as specific topics, such as Beach Body Tune Up, An Evening of Facial Rejuvenation, and New Year, New Skin. These events offer great ways to highlight all of the new technologies and products that are offered at your practice, and introduce patients to the staff.

Consider implementing a girl's night out that encourages women to bring their friends to find out about available spa services, skincare products and offer attendees complimentary mini treatments, and demonstrations of peels, lasers, injections, etc. Consider a 'bring your BFF' event where current patients can bring a friend to learn all about the latest in body contouring for a fun evening out. Goody bags are also an important opportunity to give guests something to take home in the way of skincare samples, brochures, and gifts.

Open houses can also introduce existing patients to a new product, treatment or technology. In most cases, a brief slide presentation starts the conversation off. Serving wine and cheese, coffee and cookies, or a light buffet breakfast depending on the time of day can give the attendees a chance to relax and socialize.

These seminars also give the surgeon a chance to interact with patients and get to know them in a less formal atmosphere, which can help build trust and foster a relationship.

Use eblasts, invitations via Evite and Paperlesspost, and social media platforms to market your seminars and invite patients. Always encourage them to bring a friend too. Consider inviting local media, and referral sources, such as salons and spas, nutritionists, image consultants, personal shoppers, OB/Gyns, dentists, and their clientele also. It has become

customary to offer a discount on the procedures discussed to open house attendees, if they schedule on the day of the event.

The costs of running a successful event (flowers, invitations, refreshments, gifts for guests) are nominal compared to the dollar amount that you may be able to ring up. Make the offer compelling, such as buy one get one free, or 20% off specific services. Many practices also invite their vendors to talk to guests about their products. Vendor support can be a big plus to make your events entertaining, informative and revenue-generating.