The "Wow Factor" Woman: Meet Wendy Lewis, the Martha Stewart of Aesthetics



Wendy Lewis is a true renaissance woman of aesthetics. She spent more than a decade managing upscale aesthetics practices, founded her own aesthetics consultancy, launched and continues to edit and manage a popular beauty and wellness site in addition to several long-running social media channels and is the author of eleven books on the subjects of aesthetics and cosmetic surgery.

Wendy finds herself in her element when delivering talks and educating the global aesthetics medical industry from her unique vantage point as a longtime expert and consultant. More than once, the aesthetics community has dubbed her the Martha Stewart of the field.

We caught up with Wendy to hear her views on educating consumers and patients, industry innovation and using social media to drive growth and the aesthetics conversation.

Name: Wendy Lewis

Role: President of Wendy Lewis & Co Ltd , Global Aesthetics

Consultancy

Tell us a little about yourself. How did you find your calling in aesthetics?

I spent 12 great years managing two upscale aesthetic plastic surgery practices with accredited OR suites in New York City, before I started my consultancy in May 1997. In 2017, I am proud to say that we will be celebrating our 20th year. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to break new ground in this space and expand my brand globally. It has been an amazing ride.



From the start, I was 100% focused on medical aesthetics, which was quite a different thing in 1997. Botox was in its infancy, the only filler we had was bovine collagen and CO2 lasers were just gaining acceptance.

Early on, I truly believed that medical aesthetics was a multi-specialty field. I embraced the core specialties, having grown up in plastic surgery, but also saw the value in related fields, including cosmetic dentistry, oral/maxillofacial surgery, hair restoration and other professionals who brought their special expertise to the table.

I started on the lecture circuit when I first launched my company and I was often the sole non-medical speaker on many panels in the U.S. and Europe. One of the aspects of my business I enjoy most is lecturing to doctors, industry and practice staff. I still get excited when an invitation to speak at a conference appears in my inbox, especially when it's outside the U.S. I don't think that will ever change!

What's been the most important thing you've done to elevate your career?

I think being a prolific writer and early adopter on social media channels has given my brand greater visibility globally.

I started on Facebook and Twitter in 2008. Someone told me I should start a blog because I had a lot to say, so I founded Beautyinthebag.com the same year and served as the Editor-in-Chief.

We currently manage a robust portfolio of Twitter accounts, Facebook pages, Instagram and blogs, as well as Pinterest for aesthetic practitioners, medical device and skin care brands, apps and organizations, in addition to our own channels.

My personal Facebook profile has hit the 5,000 friend limit multiple times and I routinely have to delete inactive users to make room for new friends, the majority of whom are physicians, sales reps, marketing directors and CEOs in the global aesthetic space.

Since I'm so easy to find online, practice managers and doctors reach out to me for advice and referrals. I have helped a lot of people get jobs over the years.

Tell us more about the specialties of your consultancy.

As I mentioned, I jumped onto social media and digital marketing early and never looked back.

It became clear to me in 2008 that the way people communicate was changing and I have grown my business around these core competencies. I am proud to have a great team of experts on board, each of whom brings a unique skill set, range of contacts and experiences to the WLCO party.

It's important as an entrepreneur not to be surrounded by 'yes people.' When I was running a practice, I figured out that it is better to have a rockstar part-time than someone who is just okay full-time and I built my team around that principle.

My consultancy is almost 100% virtual, which allows us to keep our overhead low and deliver a high level of personalized service.

What are you most excited about right now?

I am totally app addicted. I'm super excited about how technology is changing the way we do everything, from buying groceries to scheduling doctors' appointments to tightening skin.

My office is about 98% paperless, which was a major goal of mine. I remain in awe of uber techies and engineers who embody the talent to identify an unmet need and figure out a way to make it a reality. At every meeting I go to, or with every new person or company I encounter, I'm always on the hunt for a "wow" — for something new. Innovation is at the heart of our industry.

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing our industry?

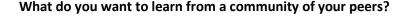
Illegal and fake drugs, devices, injectables and physician-dispensed skin care products are flooding the market, particularly throughout Asia. These are regularly imported to clinics in Europe and are starting to trickle into North America, as well.

There's a sophisticated chain of problematic vendors around the world engaging in these types of practices that have made it increasingly challenging and expensive for the industry to police itself. This affects all of us — physicians, patients and manufacturers alike.

What do you think is the biggest opportunity in front of us?

The key to growing the market lies in converting consumers from "considerers" into actual, well-informed patients. The direct-to-consumer aesthetic campaigns coming from big brands who have the budget and expertise are helping to break down barriers and normalize aesthetic treatments and bring them to the mainstream.

The more people read about facial fillers and body shaping systems, the more they talk about them with their peers and the more people are going to be empowered to make a decision to have a treatment done. We need to build the conversation and make accurate information easily accessible.



There is a need for an honest exchange of insider information in order for us all to stay on top of the trends, learn about mergers, acquisitions, industry developments and keep an eye out for what's coming next.

How would you define your career in a single sentence?

I stay true to myself and keep striving to be better.