



Brand Building vs. Brand Busting

By Wendy Lewis

Suffice it to say that your practice brand is a lot more than just a logo, a tagline, and a color scheme. Your brand is a crucial asset that can help to shape a positive perception of your business in the minds of consumers, peers, neighbors, industry contacts, and the media.

If you get it right and stay true to your brand's principles for the long term, people will become aware of who you are and what you stand for. This will essentially crystallize your practice's key values, personality, mission, and positioning. If you fail at this important exercise by straying from your brand principles, you will be undermining all the hard work you and your staff have put into it.

Striving to build a strong brand has numerous advantages in the current competitive environment of aesthetic surgery. For example, enhanced recognition, patient loyalty, increased value to your target audience, credibility, and overall trust. A strong brand will help to generate awareness, word of mouth recommendations, and helps your practice stand out from the competition. In turn, this can translate into being able to attract new leads and convert them into long-term patients since people who share your values and mission are more likely to be interested in what you have to offer.

Another important benefit of building a brand rather than just another aesthetic surgery practice is to help you attract a dynamic team of like-minded individuals who will be on board with your mission and goals. Having a staff who genuinely support your values and principles can tend to be more loyal and committed. Hopefully, the end result is that they will stay with you for the long haul. In this competitive environment, staff turnover is a fait accompli.

We all have go-to brands for every product and service that we buy into. In some cases, consumers may recommend a favorite brand to friends and colleagues. Fortunately, in



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When patients come to your practice and buy into what you offer, the desired outcome is that they will love what you do and send their friends. It's important to get that not every industry has a go-to brand, like an Apple or a Tesla. In many cases, there is no clear hero brand and clients may feel just okay or indifferent to the brand they choose. In fact, they may not like it very much (i.e., doctor, staff, location, treatments, etc) but are not entirely sure where else to go for an elevated experience. This scenario can represent an opportunity. Patients who show indifference towards a brand they have a relationship with may present a window of opportunity to lure them away to your brand by offering some-

thing they have not found elsewhere in terms of state of the art treatments, long lasting results, rockstar staff, or an exquisite experience.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

One of the caveats of brand building is the basic concept of simplicity. This is an important component of developing a brand by distilling what you want to say down to a word or two, an experience, or a feeling. Think about some of the brands you admire. For example, consider 'CoolSculpting.' What does a consumer think when they hear that brand name? They can easily recognize and remember it perhaps by these 3 words that can be found on the home page of the consumer website; 'target,' 'freeze,' 'reduce.' Other words that may come to mind might be 'innovative' or 'effective.'

Some brands lose out by trying to be everything to everyone by drafting a complicated message that is neither ownable nor memorable. You should be able to explain your own brand in as few words as possible so it can be readily understood. A straightforward message is more likely to connect with your target audience and stay top-of-mind. Frankly, most of us have limited attention spans, so short

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and sweet beats hard to pronounce, tricky to spell or unrelatable every time.

If you want patients to truly connect with your brand, their feelings towards your brand need to be consistent. They should be made to feel positive when they see your logo and marketing messages. A consistent brand will go far to create a familiar emotional experience that tends to keep patients coming back. Your messaging may end up falling flat when there is no consistency around what you stand for. Different messaging means your clients may not have the same experience every time they come to see you. To avoid this, invest in your brand as early as possible in the evolution of your practice to select the right tone and repetition in your messaging.

Once you have created a consistent message and image, it will naturally evolve over time. Consistency allows your brand to grow and expand while continuing to connect

with the core audience you are eager to attract. You can't design a strong brand out of thin air. There should be a feeling of authenticity that makes patients and colleagues feel comfortable because they are familiar with the experience you deliver and know what to expect every time they come to see you.

Authenticity is a key component of effective brand building. Without that element, your brand will suffer from inconsistency and unpredictability, which is the polar opposite of what you want to convey. Your brand should pull together every aspect of your practice, and you should communicate this ethos clearly and reinforce it 365 days a year.

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