



# NOW HEAR THIS!



Your practice is on social media, but are you listening?

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

**S**ocial listening is one of the hottest trends in digital marketing, but what exactly is social listening, and how can you leverage its power in your aesthetic marketing strategy?

Have you ever been in a public place and overheard a comment about your practice or a conversation about anti-aging treatments? If so, you probably gained some valuable insight into what people are really thinking and saying. “Overhearing” all those conversations occurring on social media can provide a lot of valuable insight.

Social listening is precisely what the name implies. You are (metaphorically) listening to comments and conversations in public social media spaces. A typical strategy will include gathering data from popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, and anywhere else where your aesthetic practice has an active presence. Listen for mentions of your brand or conversations about a specific topic.

Social listening is not social media monitoring. Social listening uses real-time data to evaluate current social sentiment and trends. It can be used to gauge the current mood and trends and react quickly to unexpected changes.

By contrast, social monitoring uses historical data to analyze metrics and measure marketing performance. It is about hard numbers, which can allow you to compare results of A/B tests, calculate ROI (return on investment), and set marketing budgets.

## SOCIAL LISTENING 101

The premise of social listening is very simple: watch for mentions. The secret to acquiring the most valuable data is choosing the right keywords. Decide specifically what topics you need to know about. This likely includes:

- Your practice name and its username on various social networks, as well as the names of doctors or other important clinicians
- Your top competitors

- The services and products that you offer
- Terms relevant to any services you are considering adding

Once you have chosen keywords, you need an automated system for tracking them. There is a plethora of social listening tools available in every price range including HubSpot Social Media Management Software, Sprout Social, Falcon.io, and Hootsuite.

Plan prices vary considerably, based on factors such as the number of individuals/users/teams; the size of the organization/practice; and specific features, services, or needs.

## BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING A SOCIAL LISTENING STRATEGY

Like any other form of analytics, the data you gather is only as useful as you make it. Here are the best ways to use social listening to your advantage:

### Gain invaluable audience insights:

Polls, surveys, and other forms of requested feedback are naturally skewed because people have to stop and think about the responses. They are likely to give what they believe is the “right” answer rather than what they actually feel. Social posts and comments tend to be more authentic, unfiltered, and spontaneous.

### Get ahead of PR problems:

Disgruntled employees or unhappy patients airing their complaints on social media? Are new services not meeting patient expectations? Listen

in and take steps to mitigate the problem before it snowballs.

**Take competitor research to the next level:** Positive mentions of your competition alert you to threats in the market such as when a competitor has a hot new device and you don't.

**Make the most of micro-moments:** Micro-moments are the moments when someone may rapidly take to Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or another platform to engage with users when searching for information on a new "buzzy" aesthetic service or product. Seizing upon these opportunities requires responsiveness and consistent listening. And the provider who is equipped to offer the service that the consumer is asking about or looking for will beat the competition.

## “SOCIAL LISTENING USES REAL-TIME DATA TO EVALUATE CURRENT SOCIAL SENTIMENT AND TRENDS.”

**Stay at the forefront of emerging trends:** Notice an uptick in interest around a particular area of aesthetic services? Now is the time to promote that service and post your best content. Did a recent news story raise questions or concerns about a specific topic? Create educational content to demonstrate your expertise and provide the answers people are seeking.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

With social listening, you can quickly discover what your audience likes, dislikes, and what they seek—and create the exact content they want. ■

---

### NAREN ARULRAJAH

- President and CEO, Ekwa Marketing
- Financial disclosure: Employee (Ekwa Marketing)