

# DOS AND DON'TS OF MARKETING IN A POST-COVID-19 WORLD



It's time to rethink everything about how you market your aesthetic practice.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

**M**arketing your aesthetic practice will be more important than ever as you strive to bring patients back to your practice and acquire new ones in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, in a changed (and still changing) world, your previous marketing strategy might not be as effective. Specifically, the messages that your audience was once receptive to may not resonate.

How can you revive and revamp your marketing plan?

## **DO REVIEW EVERYTHING IMMEDIATELY BEFORE PUBLISHING.**

It is common practice to create blog posts, social updates, and banner ads well in advance. However, given the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation, those materials might be irrelevant (or possibly even offensive) by the time of planned publication.

This is especially true of any drafts created before the pandemic began. A few months ago, mentioning hugging a friend or referring to joy as “contagious” would have had positive connotations, but this is no longer the case. However, even recently drafted content can become outdated in a matter of days. If you have mentioned changing hours at your office, reminded people to stay home, or repeated public health advice such as wearing face coverings, make sure it is still applicable before posting.

## **DON'T AVOID THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM.**

The crisis will pass, but COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon. In fact, many experts expect it to become a long-term, seasonal disease. Moreover, this virus is far from the only contagious illness in our society, and people are suddenly hyper-aware of contamination risks. Even when personal contact is deemed safe again, many will understandably have lingering concerns. Discuss safety protocols in your practice and explain how diligent you are about sanitation in any marketing materials. Be willing to answer patient questions about safety. It is important to demonstrate why people can feel safe in your office.

Your aesthetic practice was likely forced to close or at

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least drastically scale back due to widespread stay-at-home orders. As you open your doors again, you are probably focused on recovery and what you can do right now, but a short-sighted marketing plan is not an effective one. Discounts, major ad campaigns, and pay per click (PPC) might seem like the best ways to get the phones ringing. However, you need to keep the phones ringing. Strategies such as search engine optimization (SEO), website improvements, and reputation management might not have instant results, but they are investments in your future success.

## **DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC.**

As lockdown orders are lifted, some people will be eager to celebrate, but others will remain fearful. Most will experience a combination of fear and glee, along with many other emotions. When creating marketing materials, especially time-sensitive items such as social media or blog posts, be sensitive to the mood of your audience.

**DO THIS NOW**

**Focus your limited budget on SEO. It is one of the most economical ways to market your practice, and the benefits are long-lasting. Digital visibility is essential to building trust, which is more important now than ever.**

An overly somber approach might discourage people looking for an uplifting experience, while excess jubilation may seem tone-deaf to those who are struggling. Strike a balance, and stay in touch with the local mood. The number of cases and timeline of spread is vastly different in various areas, so your audience will be unique.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Last, but certainly not least, manage your marketing budget wisely. Attracting new patients is probably the best

investment you can make right now. But the reality for many small practices is that there is not much to invest. If you need to scale back your budget, do not waste it on short-term or low return on investment (ROI) strategies. While many businesses are spending less on marketing activities such as PPC, one area has seen an increase, and that is SEO. It is one of the most economical ways to market your practice, and the benefits are long-lasting. Furthermore, digital visibility is essential to building trust, which is more important now than ever. The economy will recover eventually, but some businesses will not. Smart decisions and consistent marketing are the keys to ensuring that your practice is still going—and stronger than ever—when the crisis has passed. ■

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- A leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy doctors, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more.
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