

IN AESTHETIC SURGEONS WE TRUST



Informed marketing will help regain patient confidence in the post COVID-19 era.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

The COVID-19 crisis will have a lasting effect on the mindset and lifestyle of your patients, and that means that the way you communicate with your patients needs to shift.

This starts with re-earning your patients' trust.

Aesthetic treatments had become an essential aspect of the normal beauty and self-care routine. Some people viewed injectables or even plastic surgery like they viewed a trip to the nail salon. It was almost as if they forgot the medicine part of aesthetic medicine, but COVID-19 changed everything.

When the pandemic struck, people were forced to face the fragility of their own health. It became something to appreciate and protect, and health care took on a whole new level of importance as a result.

This shifting public attitude toward health care is clearly reflected in the Consumer Perspectives survey by The Beryl Institute, which asked patients what was most important to them. Comparing results from January to March 2020, there was a notable increase in the importance of infectious disease control, which is likely directly related to COVID-19 fears. However, it also showed an increase in the importance of communication and overall quality of care, suggesting that patients consider your skills and qualifications, the quality of products you use, potential side effects of procedures, and other clinical details.

INSTILL TRUST, CREDENTIAL

It is essential that your marketing materials and patient communications are designed to instill trust and reflect your commitment to clinical excellence. Always use images that depict clinicians wearing personal protective equipment, patients with masks, safe and social-distanced interactions, and provide details about temporary changes in hours, limited services, new protocols, and other information that is important to potential new patients.

Credentialing also counts. Make sure to mention and update clinician certification and licensure, training, expertise, and experience.

REASSESS STRATEGIES

The marketing strategies that worked a few months ago may seem tone-deaf, tacky, or possibly even offensive in a

post-pandemic world. Many of the photos available online, or even in your private archive, were taken before COVID-19. When choosing pictures for marketing materials, make sure they reflect the current reality and appropriate safety precautions.

Avoid:

- Handshakes, high-fives, hugs, and other personal contact
- Festivals, group selfies, and large crowds
- Mask-free close interactions between doctor and patient
- Packed reception areas or treatment rooms.

CHECK YOUR CONTENT

It's not just images that can offend in the post-COVID-19 world, either. Some common phrases and references are no longer appropriate or applicable, such as "viral videos" or "contagious laughter."

Also off limits are references to currently unsafe activities, such as the kiss cam at a ball game and phrases that mention physical contact, such as deserving a pat on the back or making a handshake deal. References to travel, or being out and about while social distancing requirements are in place, can also be considered in poor taste.

Content that was drafted weeks or months ago could include now-inaccurate details including:

- Days and hours of operation
- Average waiting period to get an appointment
- List of services provided
- Tips on preparing for an appointment
- Details of how a procedure is performed.
- Update all of these items before you begin trying to attract patients in the COVID-19 era. ■

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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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