

Market Your Dermatology Practice with Infographics



Don't just show or tell. Do both!

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

>> We are living in an age of information overload, leaving people more distracted and hurried than ever. Dermatology marketing materials need to convey your message and engage the viewer in a matter of seconds. How can you accomplish that?

Don't just tell people, or just show them. Instead, harness the power of the infographic to show *and* tell.

INFOGRAPHICS DRIVE CONTENT MARKETING

According to research conducted by Microsoft, the average person's attention span decreased from about twelve seconds in 2000 to about eight seconds in 2015. The human brain processes visual information 60,000 times more quickly than text. As such:

- An infographic is about 30 times more likely to be read than text is.
- Content can receive nearly twice as many views when it is paired with relevant images.
- About 84 percent of businesses that have used infographics in marketing consider them effective.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD INFOGRAPHIC?

Elements such as catchy titles, embedded animations, and beautiful color themes can turn a good infographic into a great one. However, these things cannot save a bad infographic. Before you think about adding bells and whistles or aesthetic appeal, you need a

solid concept and good outline.

The most important points to consider are:

- **Be informative and factual.** The primary function of an infographic is to convey information in an easy-to-understand format. Your reader should learn something.
- **Keep text minimal but highly relevant.** Infographics should be scannable and easy to understand at a glance. If it takes hundreds of words to explain your point, it is better in a written article or a video. Additionally, this isn't the place for rambling commentary.
- **Use meaningful visuals.** The images in an infographic aren't just for decoration. They provide a visual representation of the information. This might be accomplished with symbols, color coding, varying sizes proportionate to numbers, or similar techniques.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOPIC

Your patients are a great source of inspiration. Think of the questions they ask, what types of information they are seeking. You can also look to your website or blog for ideas. What articles are most popular? Could that information be conveyed via an infographic?

Some subject matter lends itself to visual representation better than others. Abstract concepts, opinion pieces, unrelated collections of facts, and similar topics rarely make good infograph-

ics. Instead, think of things that are difficult to describe using only words. For example, you can explain that volume loss in the upper face leads to sagging in the lower face, but it would be easier if you had a diagram showing exactly where and how tissue descends.

If you are unsure, a simple way to evaluate topic ideas is to imagine you are preparing a slideshow presentation. What would you put on the slides? If the answer is only talking points, then it probably isn't good material for an infographic. Could it use a bar graph, timeline, flowchart, or other visual? If so, then you can turn it into an infographic. In fact, those common diagrams are infographics in their most basic form.

INCORPORATING INFOGRAPHICS INTO YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

Where do these visual stories fit in your content strategy? The answer is everywhere!

- **Social media.** Visual content is posted, liked, and shared more often than plain text updates. Even if you have a message to convey, the best way to do it is with an image, which is why memes have such great appeal. Infographics have similar properties to memes, but they are more professional and offer greater value.
- **Adjunct content.** Most people scan a webpage quickly, taking just seconds to decide if it is relevant. If you have lengthy, in-depth

Keep it simple.

Decorative fonts, fancy borders, animation, and detailed images should be used sparingly and carefully. A beautiful infographic is wonderful.

However, if it looks confusing or cluttered at first glance, then it isn't effective.

Check the accuracy of visuals.

Remember, the images represent data.

It is surprisingly easy to get lost in the aesthetics of design and overlook simple mistakes that skew your message. For example, if you are using larger or smaller symbols to represent higher and lower numbers, make sure the size is proportionate. Similarly, keep the same distance between years on a timeline, make sure maps are accurate, and double-check color coding.

TIPS FOR A WINNING DESIGN

Use a color palette.

Too many different colors can make your graphic look unprofessional and difficult to read.

Choose an appropriate selection of colors and stick with the same palette throughout the design.

Don't try to highlight everything.

Designers often use larger font, a high-contrast color, or other attention-grabbing element to draw the viewer to the most important bit of information. This is a great strategy, but only if used carefully. Highlight one key point on a small graphic or maybe a few for a lengthy piece with a lot of information. However, if you try to make everything stand out, nothing will.

articles or videos on your website, consider adding complementary infographics. This allows viewers to see the key points at a glance and piques their interest to learn more.

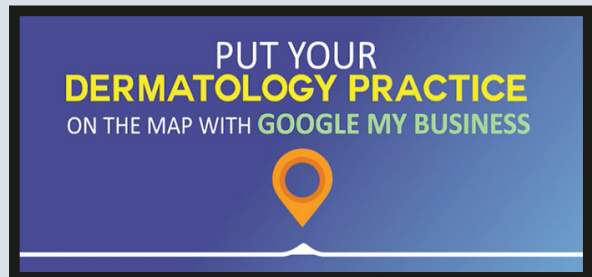
- **Patient handouts.** Infographics don't have to live online. They can be valuable educational or promotional resources in your office, as well. Use them in brochures advertising your latest services, treatment after-care instructions, and PSAs (Public Service Announcements) such as reminders about using sunscreen.
- **Promotions.** Are you running a special on Botox this month? Post a small infographic showing how crow's feet develop along with your ad. Pairing educational content with advertisements helps people recognize the value of your services.
- **Storytelling.** Although most infographics feature numbers, they can also be used to convey visual stories. For example, you could walk patients through the steps of a treatment process or describe your practice history.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

It can be hard to catch and hold your audience's attention with plain text and equally difficult to convey a message with images alone. Infographics combine the two, giving you a way to educate and engage your audience. You can present even complex concepts and large amounts of data in an easy-to-understand, attractive, and sharable format. ■

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