

Quality, Appreciative Patients Are Out There! You Can Find Them



When you deftly leverage dynamic networks and media, you attract individuals who are active and engaged consumers of the quality care that you offer.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

>> Self-care has long been a “feel-good,” “buzzy” word. The importance of taking care of the “self” soared to new prominence at the onset of the pandemic. This notion also fuels the demand for dermatologic services and safe, efficacious products from providers that patients trust. Consider:

- As a sense of normalcy and security is restored in a post-vaccine world, the renewed confidence in one’s financial situation can only further fuel the surge in consumer spending.
- With health care fundamental to self-care, dermatologists can only benefit from increased consumer spending as practices pivot from closures to reopenings and recovery.
- In fact, research and business intelligence consulting firm, Future Market Insights (FMI), projects the global skin care market will grow by 8.1 percent each year between now and 2031.

FMI further notes that the effects of global outbreaks (not limited to COVID-19) are driving consumers toward professional guidance on skincare regimens and on innovative techniques and products that support overall health and wellness. Their recently released study also attributes increased consumer dermatological spend on the effects of climate change. Environmental changes, they assert, are presenting a greater need for the expertise of professional dermatologists and their teams. As a result, consumers may seek the care of skin specialists to combat dry, lackluster skin, irritation, and inflammation. Likewise, they may consult with you concerning spots that arise due to chronic, unprotected UVA/UVB exposure.

THREATS TO SKIN HEALTH; OPPORTUNITIES FOR DERMATOLOGISTS

The increased demand for your team’s skills and know-how is also expressed by a heightened awareness of the effect of blue light emitted from computer screens, smart-

phones, and other mobile devices that we cannot live without. During the pandemic, your patients may have spent much more time inside in isolation. In turn, they may have passed the hours in front of these small screens. As the Department of Dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital puts it, both the visible light and heat (infrared radiation) can present the need for professional care by contributing to skin and ocular damage. There are many opportunities to serve as a vital health and wellness partner alongside your patients. For example, you may offer recommendations on how to protect the skin from evolving threats. Or you may introduce patients to technologies and treatments that reverse or minimize existing damage.

ARE YOU ATTRACTING QUALITY PATIENTS?

The keyword is “quality.” We have already established that there is undoubtedly opportunity for your practice in a post-vaccination, lingering pandemic world. First, however, it is essential to distinguish between types of consumers. Some individuals are merely looking for a short-term, quick fix to a problem. Others are genuinely engaged in the long-term, sustained health of their skin and protocols to keep it healthy and looking great.

We discussed opportunities to build loyalty among your patients through the rising prevalence and awareness of new or evolving threats to skin health. Additionally, there are myriad opportunities to leverage the highly passionate health care consumers who are vigorously active on digital platforms. In its May study, FMI asserts that the worldwide market for skincare has been “considerably aided” by innovations in digital marketing. There are many online campaigns and social media strategies to tap into that are incredibly powerful.

Unlike with traditional marketing strategies, your team can establish rich bonds with existing and would-be patients in ways not possible through static, fixed media, and advertising. The “old guard” talked *to* us, the consumer. “Next-

generation” social and digital strategies talk back. We can communicate, educate, get a dialogue going, responsively act on concerns, and basically be present on social media in ways that genuinely break down logistical barriers.

**DIGITAL MARKETING:
BREAKING FROM PRECEDENT TO BUOY PROFITS**

Teledermatology has shown that geography is no longer the insurmountable obstacle standing between you and that new patient. Sophisticated software and technologies have also closed the gaps between you and converting new patients into loyal advocates of your “brand.” Furthermore, social media has allowed patients to find practices such as yours. Without the seemingly boundless reach of digital platforms, these patients may never have discovered you! The innovative, strategic use of existing channels and networks presents an incredibly dynamic way to demonstrate, illustrate, inform, and promote many of the new technologies, techniques, and products. These innovations are being spurred to resolve increasingly prevalent skin conditions and cosmetic concerns.

So, instead of merely talking about “UV rays 2.0” (blue or high-energy visible light) within a 30-second “spot” or a quarter-page ad, you can actively show what HEV does—and what you and your team can do about it. If you are not leveraging the visual—YouTube or Insta among many other outlets—you are missing out!

GET INTO THE MINDS OF CONSUMERS

The Social Science Research Network (SSRN) by Elsevier characterizes 65 percent of the general population as “visual learners.” These learners need to see to fully digest or master the content that is being taught or conveyed. Alternately, they become lost in oral lectures (yet perform marvelously with written tasks and reading assignments).

The balance of 30 percent and five percent of learners fall into the auditory and experiential learner categories, respectively. These groups grasp topics and best learn by hearing or by doing. While it is a best practice to use balanced methods to convey your practice’s “brand,” there is no denying the power of clear, striking photos of patients’ dramatically improved skin. Likewise, there is an incredible opportunity to empower and resonate with patients through a well-shot and professional video. For instance, you or an associate may demonstrate the latest technology to calm tired skin or the newest product designed to press the reset button on tissues damaged by the effects of harmful solar radiation.

Loyal patients await ... reach them!

Also, it is best to include graphics and other accompanying imagery or animation whenever you produce written or audio content (such as podcast episodes). For example, a

well-crafted chart or animation supports understanding how a skin condition develops or how a product or service works. These products, services, diseases, or symptoms cannot be conveyed as well or as quickly with audio-only or reading-only content, compared to visual content. Additionally, when well-orchestrated, these elements all come together to provoke thought and engage the consumer. These are the same consumers that you will soon know by name as they walk through your doors or onto your computer monitor during virtual visits.

A FINAL WORD

The future looks bright for your practice. There is an undeniable (and soaring) need for your focused, specialized expertise. When you deftly leverage dynamic networks and media, you attract individuals who are more than the occasional paying, passive patients. Instead, they are active and engaged consumers of the quality care that you offer. These are the very patients that can then go on to be your best “cheerleaders” and “fans.” Once you have “sold” your services to them, they can “sell” your business to others—friends, family members, and coworkers. And they will do so without even knowing it, through their increasingly glowing and healthy skin and their brilliant feedback about you and your practitioners and staff. ■

Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dermatologists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren. You may also schedule a session at your convenience with the Senior Director of Marketing - Lila, by clicking <https://www.ekwa.com/msm/> or simply send a text to 313-777-8494.

WATCH NOW

1. RECIPROCITY

When you give, others want to reciprocate.

For example:

- a. If you offer a free sample, someone is more likely to purchase the product.
- b. If you are generous with your scheduling flexibility, patients are more likely to drive a few more miles to your practice rather than choosing the closest dermatologist.



Watch Now: PracDerm.com/Persuasion