

Finding Influencers to Promote Your Dermatology Practice



Influencer marketing is not simply a form of paid advertisement; it is based on a mutually beneficial partnership.

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>> Influencer marketing is essentially a scalable, highly targeted variation of celebrity endorsements. It can be affordable and effective for virtually any type or size of business, including your dermatology practice. It can also be daunting to define and locate influencers. Here is what you need to know to get started.

WHAT IS INFLUENCER MARKETING?

Celebrity endorsements have long been a popular and successful marketing tactic, although it was traditionally reserved for big-budget big-business. In the era of technology and social media, that is no longer the case.

Of course, hiring an A-list movie star or world-famous model is likely far beyond the budget of a local dermatology practice. But what about an aspiring movie star with a small hometown fanbase? Or a locally famous model? Or even someone within your community who is “famous” only on Instagram? With audiences counted in the thousands rather than millions, these people are not major celebrities, but they are influencers.

When these influential online personalities recommend a product, service, or business, their followers take notice. That is because the influencers are popular and because they tend to be picky about who and what they endorse. The higher an influencer’s standards are, the more their audience trusts their recommendations.

You cannot simply hire an influencer. First, you need to find someone who aligns with your practice brand message, is interested in your services, and has an audience that closely matches your target patient base. Then you need to build a relationship, just as you would with a patient or close business associate—because this person will be a bit of both. Although influencers are financially compensated, their recommendations are (ideally) genuine.

WHO QUALIFIES AS AN INFLUENCER?

Merriam Webster defines an influencer as “one who

exerts influence: a person who inspires or guides the actions of others... often, specifically: a person who is able to generate interest in something (such as a consumer product) by posting about it on social media.” In dermatology marketing, it is the second, more specific definition that we are interested in.

Having a large number of followers does not necessarily make someone an influencer. An “influencer” has an engaged audience who readily consumes their content and values their recommendations. However, follower count is the primary metric that determines the size of the audience and the influencer’s fees.

When it comes to followers, more is not always better. Micro-influencers, typically defined as those with fewer than 10,000 followers, can generate up to 7 times the engagement of macro-influencers. Smaller audiences can be narrower in parameters, allowing for more laser-targeted messaging.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN AN INFLUENCER

This will vary depending on the details of your practice and marketing strategy, but a good dermatology influencer generally meets the following criteria:

- **Audience size.** This can be a little tricky to calculate because influencers publish content on various platforms. Followers on various social networks, blog readers, and podcast listeners can create an extended audience. However, loyal fans are likely to follow across multiple platforms, so the audiences overlap. It is best to choose one network and use the follower count there as the primary metric for audience size. Instagram is the most popular network for influencers, so it is usually the best choice.
- **A good fit for your practice.** Naturally, you want to look for influencers interested in your niche. For those

already talking about skincare treatments, anti-aging products similar to those you wish to promote are ideal. Additionally, pay attention to the type and tone of content and the overall image that the account presents. This should align well with your practice's brand identity and marketing message.

- **Positive engagement.** Not every account with a high number of followers is influential. If the content is not quality, trustworthy, and aligned with the audience's interests, it largely goes unnoticed. Many people scroll right past their posts. Less popular content receives less exposure on most networks, reducing reach. For these reasons, you want to look past the follower count. Look at how many reactions the posts are receiving and whether they are positive. Read comments and see if the influencer is successful in generating excitement about products and services.
- **Local.** If you sell skincare products online and only wish to promote eCommerce products, you want to broadcast your message nationally or even internationally. However, most dermatology practices are looking to attract new patients. In that case, you need an influencer who is not only based in your community but also has a primarily local following.

HOW TO FIND DERMATOLOGY INFLUENCERS

Once you know precisely what you are looking for in an influencer, the next question is how to go about finding them. This step can actually be quite challenging and take some time. Here are some tips to help:

- Start with your own followers. The best influencers are those who already have an interest in your services. They are likely to be enthusiastic about becoming brand ambassadors for your practice.
- Follow relevant hashtags. Pay attention to accounts that frequently appear under hashtags related to your services. Also, try location-specific hashtags, such as those including your town name.
- Search social networks. You can use native search functions or Google's advanced options to find accounts relevant to chosen keywords.
- Look for those already endorsing similar products and services. Influencers are financially compensated, and they are required to reveal that fact. Try including terms like "ad" or "sponsored" in your searches to locate accounts that engage in influencer marketing.

A PARTNERSHIP

Do not think of influencer marketing as simply a form of paid advertisement. Think of it as a mutually beneficial partnership. The key to success is finding the right influencer and building a good relationship.

You will be providing free services or monetary compensation in exchange for promotion. However, direct paid advertising does nothing more than broadcast your message. On the other hand, an endorsement from a prominent and respected individual builds trust in your practice. Similarly, the benefits to the influencer extend beyond payment. If the audience loves your practice and services, then their confidence in the influencer's opinion is enhanced. ■

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.

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