

Client Education: A Win-Win Marketing Strategy



Use your digital outreach to educate patients and build relationships.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

>> Odds are, content marketing is an important aspect of your overall marketing strategy. If not, it should be. Content marketing produces about triple the number of leads per dollar spent that paid search advertising does. However, simply publishing content isn't enough.

You need the right type of content, and it needs to provide value to your audience. For dermatology practices, one of the most effective ways to accomplish that is through client education.

WHY EDUCATE CLIENTS AND POTENTIAL CLIENTS

Today's consumers are always looking for ways to improve their health. Additionally, they tend to share important or interesting information, from warnings about toxic houseplants to housebreaking tips. By turning your online presence into a reference source for dermatology clients, you can accomplish several things:

- **Improve client loyalty.** People are much more likely to follow you on social media or subscribe to your newsletter if they find the materials useful. This not only reinforces the client relationship, but also keeps your practice name fresh in their minds. When they need a dermatologist, they are likely to come back.
- **Build your professional reputation.** A series of informative articles or blog posts can turn your website into a go-to resource for dermatology clients. This also positions you as an expert in the field, demonstrating the depth of your knowledge as well as your genuine concern for the wellbeing of your patients.
- **Attract new clients.** The internet is full of so-called information, but a great deal of it is inaccurate. Most people know that. Therefore, when they find a great, reliable resource—like skincare guides on a dermatologist's website—they are likely to bookmark it, remember it, and return to it. You have already earned their

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trust, so when they need a good dermatologist, you're going to be first on the list.

- **Improve compliance.** The benefits of producing educational materials extend beyond marketing. They can also help your clients care for themselves better. For example, during an appointment, you might not have time to fully explain the risks of untreated acne. A few months later the client might not remember everything you said. However, if it's on your website or printed on a client handout, the patient can read it thoroughly, absorb the information, and reference it later.

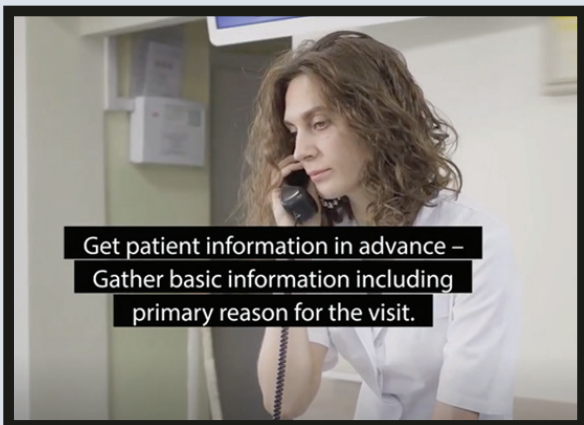
TOP TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

When you hear "content marketing" you probably think of the written word. While text is certainly important, it is far from the only way to convey your message. In fact, text content is much more engaging and effective when paired with appropriate images.

Other important types of content include:

- **Video.** About 95 percent of website visitors will retain the message when viewed on video, whereas only 10 percent when reading it as text. Video also performs very well on social media.
- **Infographics.** A good infographic includes short bits of factual text, usually with important words and numbers highlighted in some way. The imagery is

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simple, and visually demonstrates the information. This helps people understand the important facts at a glance and piques their interest in accompanying text or videos.

- **Podcasts.** This is a fast-growing marketing technique and a wonderful way to connect with patients. As with articles and videos, you can include links on your website and social accounts.
- **Mixed media.** Don't limit yourself to just one form or style. Instead, aim for a variety of content types, including mixed media. The best webpages often include a mixture of quality images, videos, text, and interactive elements.

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT: WHERE TO START

So, you have some great educational content. Where should you publish it? The options are endless, but some of the best channels include:

- **Practice blog.** HubSpot reports that prioritizing blogging in your marketing strategy can improve ROI as much as 13-fold. One of the great benefits to blogs is their flexibility. The text tends to be less formal than strictly referenced articles, and the topics can vary

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widely. This is ideal for dermatology practices, because you can personalize your content by mixing in personal commentary, clinical information, and more.

- **Website articles.** A quality website is the core of a strong online presence. It is often the first thing a potential client will see. You want it to be professional, informative, and inviting.
- **In-office materials.** Videos that play in your waiting room, the hold menu on your phone, and counter displays at the front desk all provide opportunities to educate clients. Choose materials that highlight services they might not be aware of, as well as relevant dermatological information.
- **Social media.** Dermatologists have a real advantage here. In many industries, marketers struggle to find topics that will start a social conversation. However, people love to learn about their health. You can (and usually should) post links to articles, blog posts, and videos, as well as some content made for social media. Little-known tips, warnings, and seasonal content perform especially well here.

BECOME A RESOURCE

Effective dermatological marketing is not just about selling your services. It is about gaining brand awareness, nurturing relationships with current and future patients, and building your professional reputation. When you become the educator, the resource of choice for reliable information, you also become known as a trusted expert. ■

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.