

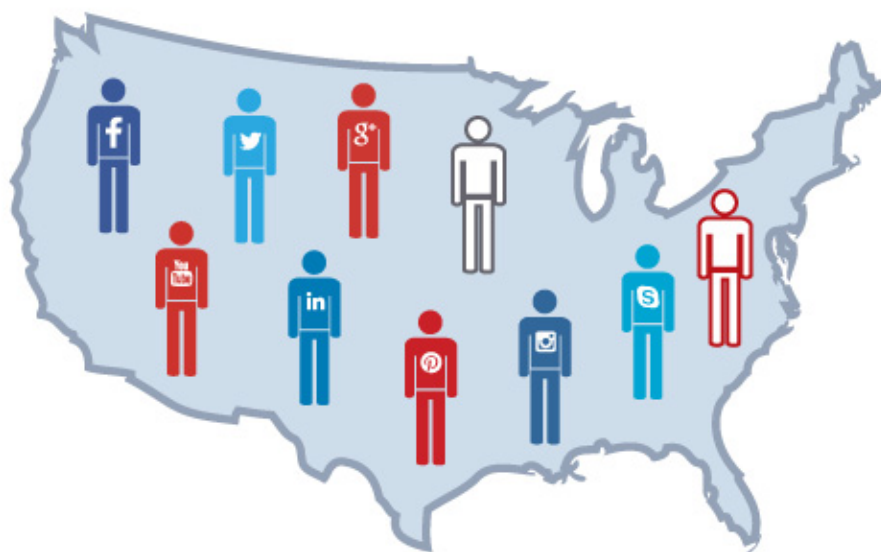
# THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR COSMETIC SURGEONS

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Social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, and LinkedIn can provide cosmetic surgery practices with an extraordinary opportunity to reach out to a greater number of potential patients. As the social media revolution sweeps across all demographics, age has ceased to be a criterion, and cosmetic surgeons are uniquely placed to leverage the robust marketing options that social media platforms offer. Forward-thinking cosmetic surgeons need to keep abreast of ongoing changes if they are to stay on top of things.

## THE NUMBERS SAY IT ALL

According to A.C. Nielsen, more than **80 PERCENT OF ALL AMERICAN ADULTS USE AN ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK**. In fact, a large majority of potential patients are active on social media sites. Given the fluid exchange of information over these sites, cosmetic surgery practices simply cannot afford to ignore their growing importance.



According to the latest statistics in social media trends:

- ▶ Facebook continues to be the most widely used social media platform across the globe and Americans spend more time on Facebook than on any other website.
- ▶ As of March 31, the number of people using the site was 1.11 billion while the number of active users each day sits at a staggering 665 million.
- ▶ Additionally, each month the number of active users using Facebook from a mobile device is 751 million.
- ▶ 1 million websites across the globe have integrated with Facebook.
- ▶ 34 percent of marketers have generated leads using Twitter and till date 163 billion tweets have been generated.
- ▶ Instagram has more than 40 million users worldwide and 40 percent of brands use Instagram for marketing their business
- ▶ Each month Pinterest gets 10 million US unique visitors and 80 percent of the visitors are women
- ▶ 40 percent of marketers use Google+ and websites using the +1 button generate 3.5x the Google+ visits than sites without the button

One look at these numbers is more than enough to establish the extensive reach and the immense power that social media commands when it comes to reaching out to potential patients.

## ADVANTAGE FOR COSMETIC SURGEONS

Independent cosmetic practitioners stand to gain distinctive marketing advantages if they include social media within marketing strategies. In a study of 1,180 small and medium businesses (SMBs) and 500 customers conducted by Zoomerang, a leading online survey firm, key reasons were identified as the main drivers behind the increasing adoption of social media among SMBs and independently practicing professionals.<sup>1</sup> These include:

- ▶ High visibility to a large number of people
- ▶ Personalized connectivity with potential patients
- ▶ Personal image enhancement, self-promotion, and building credibility
- ▶ Faster results with very little spending

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH POTENTIAL PATIENTS AND FANS

Cosmetic practitioners need to understand that social media, in addition to being a powerful marketing tool for expanding the scope of operations for their practice, is also a great and cost-effective way of building relationships with potential patients. Because it offers easy and instant interactions, social media is an active medium for building trust with new patients.

Based on survey results of a recent study published in the May 2013 issue of *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, the following trends were observed:<sup>2</sup>

- ▶ **HALF OF THE PLASTIC SURGEONS CURRENTLY USE SOCIAL MEDIA REGULARLY TO CONNECT WITH THEIR PATIENTS.**
- ▶ Surgeons who responded to the survey said Facebook was their primary social media tool followed by LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube.
- ▶ A majority of responding surgeons said that social media use was a professional necessity and was important for marketing to new patients.
- ▶ Top reasons cited for use of social media included patient education about various plastic surgery procedures, followed by patient referrals and feedback.
- ▶ One-third of responding surgeons were convinced that social media positively impacted their practice.

Social media marketing is a veritable goldmine and is quickly becoming the most effective way to build relationships with potential patients. The changing marketing landscape is bound to affect cosmetic surgery practices as much as it affects other businesses and professional establishments. By investing requisite time and resources in creating a top-notch social presence, cosmetic surgery practices can reach out to a greater number of potential patients and establish their credibility within their area of expertise. ■

1. <http://visual.ly/consumer-vs-business-behavior-social-media>

2. [http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2013-05/wkh-hou050113.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2013-05/wkh-hou050113.php)



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