

Position Your Dermatology Practice for Pinterest Success

Understand the unique Pinterest audience and tailor your materials accordingly.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

Pinterest is no longer a novelty platform for DIY ideas. In less than a decade, it has grown to one of the most popular and most powerful social media networks, with over 150 million monthly users. However, it is not like the other networks. To plan an effective Pinterest marketing strategy for your dermatology practice, you need to understand the unique audience and tailor your materials accordingly.

PINTEREST IS DIFFERENT

Pinners are planners. Most social media networks are designed as platforms for users to share what they are doing or have done. People tweet the news that they are reading, Instagram photos of appetizing lunches, and post to Facebook about the great party last night. Pinterest is different. It focuses on the future rather than the present or past.

When you think of Pinterest, think future tense. It is designed for ideas. The visual layout resembles a bulletin board, and viewers are asked which pins they have tried. People are looking for inspiration, from craft projects to life events.

Less social, more network. Traditionally, social networks are exactly what the name implies. They are virtual spaces where people gather, make new friends, catch up with old friends, share their lives, and chat. Pinterest is different. It is a powerful network, but less social than the others. Here, selfies are less popular than pictures of objects, and users would prefer to follow brands rather than follow celebrities.

Pinterest is like a hybrid between a social network and a content curation platform. People use it to save information for future reference, collect ideas to try, organize plans, and

dream. One study found that 96 percent of pinners use the network to plan and research. It also found that active users are 47 percent more likely to experience an important life event such as a wedding or birth in the next 6 months.

A unique demographic. Who is using Pinterest? The answer is remarkably similar to the demographics of cosmetic dermatology patients. Female patients account for about nine in ten nonsurgical cosmetic procedures, according to the ASAPS (American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery) 2016 statistics. About eight in 10 Pinterest users are female.

It is especially popular among millennials, typically defined as individuals born between the years of 1981 and 1997. This group is projected to have greater spending power than any other generation in 2018, and they already top spending on beauty products. As these young adults enter their 30s and 40s, they are eager to get the upper hand on aging with early treatment or preventive procedures.

CREATING YOUR PINTEREST MARKETING STRATEGY

Boards. After you create a new board, go to the editing screen for more options. You will find a list of categories. Options such as, "health and beauty" or "hair and fitness" are obvious choices for dermatology content. However, you shouldn't limit yourself to strictly dermatology. Themed boards are a great way to expand your reach and add value to your content.

The most important categories include:

- **Weddings.** Who wants an acne breakout on their big day? Brides-to-be, grooms-to-be, and even other members of the wedding party want to look their best. Facials, dermal fillers, Botox,

and body shaping are just a few of the popular pre-wedding procedures. Mix posts about these services with wedding dress ideas, creative cake ideas, and other nuptial inspiration.

- Kids and parenting. Pediatric dermatologists can quickly gain a following with valuable information and ideas. The possibilities are virtually endless, from birthday party ideas and holiday crafts to quick, healthy recipes. Include plenty of skin safety tips, ideas for coping with childhood skin diseases, and information about available treatments.
- Products. Pinnerers are more receptive to product promotions. In fact, over half of them use Pinterest to shop. If you sell retail products, be sure to pin about them. Get creative with your message. Remember, viewers are thinking ahead. For example, position your cosmetics as an integral part of the perfect holiday outfit, or photograph your sunscreen in a vacation-ready packed suitcase.
- Special interest. Virtually any topic or Pinterest category can be relevant to your practice, if it is important to your patients. Think about their hobbies and lifestyles. What are they planning for? How can your products or services become part of those plans?

Pins. Once you have boards, what should you post?

- Image. The image is the most important part of a pin. Photos with human faces traditionally

perform best; however, Pinterest is again different. Hands, feet, silhouettes, and other human images without faces are 23 percent more popular, according to a study by Curalate. They also found that images with vibrant colors and minimal white space perform best.

- Text. Be sure to include a text description. Depending on the view, Pinterest may show a short line below the image, similar to a caption. The first few words of your description should be highly descriptive. Include keywords in the description for searchability.
- Link. Pinterest is the second greatest source of social referral traffic, surpassed only by Facebook. Don't forget to include a link with every pin. If you sell products online, link directly to the shopping page and include pricing in the description. For services, link to a page that includes appointment scheduling information or a contact form.

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Help website visitors distribute your content with “pin it” buttons that conveniently display within the image. Pinterest supplies a convenient code snippet for business accounts. Alternately, if you are using a content management system such as WordPress, you may choose to use a widget.

When a visitor pins an image, the alt text typically becomes the default Pinterest description (if there is no alt text or caption, the meta description will be used). Make sure that every photo has descriptive, well written, and keyword-optimized alt text.

GROW YOUR FOLLOWING

Lastly, invite your followers to join you on Pinterest. Include a link on your website and in email newsletters. Cross-promote among other social networks by tweeting or posting your profile link. You might be surprised to discover how many of your patients are pinnerers, eager to engage with your practice on their favorite network. ■

Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dermatologists. With a team of 180+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps dermatologists who know where they want to go, get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call 855-598-3320 to speak one-on-one with Naren.



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