



- Misdemeanors of Monetizing Social Media
- Call for Cases

SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS STARTS IN 2018

By Jon Hoffenberg

I recall running a large facial plastics practice over a decade ago and watching my peers determine they simply did not wish to participate in search engine optimization (SEO) and web design, as my office laughed all the way to the bank, generating millions per year in revenue silently giggling at doctors wondering if people would really buy Botox, lasers, or surgery based on a website. I saw the same occur over the last five years as practices felt social media could not be monetized and the time taken to create a Facebook page was largely wasted. It is this lag between the first movers and the stubborn that creates a market ripe for the taking as of the writing of this article.

People do not like change, so they follow the same tired steps as their peers until one day reality dawns on them and investment occurs. In most practices we encounter, the pattern of misdemeanors, which add up to social media felonies, is as follows:

1. Ignore social media.
2. Set up a Facebook page, but ignore it.
3. Realize there is some value in social media so use the person most-resembling-a-millennial-because-young-people-know-social-media and have that person do some posts on facebook.
4. Realize the receptionist is not accomplishing much and no money is being earned, so talk to your web marketing and SEO team erroneously assuming the skill set necessary to perform website marketing is similar to curating, creating, and executing superb social media.
5. Give up after realizing the web team provides nothing authentic, posts a plethora of stock photography and uninteresting articles.
6. Search for a professional social media team and realize just about none exist with any experience or acumen for the aesthetics industry.

Breaking the Cycle

While solutions do exist, with a small volume of professional social media management firms in existence, replete with Ivy League-educated management coupled with aesthetics experience and artechnology (a word we made up that we hope you will use and hashtag sometime soon) acumen, there are ways, if you do not have budget to pay professionals, to overcome the majority of the typical misdemeanors:

- **Do It Yourself.** The first step to breaking the cycle is understanding the nuances of each feed. Posting to Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google +, and Snapchat is simple enough, and it is important that leadership—ideally the doctor, owner, or senior manager—take charge of posting personally for at least a month or two. By doing so, a working knowledge of the effort it takes to curate and create engaging posts is realized, plus an avatar that represents your practice can be established.
- **Authenticity.** As you create before and after photos, promote testimonials, share personal experiences, and get the hang of how the social world works, you can simultaneously establish authenticity. What are your practice and you about outside of work? Do you love golf, eating odd foods, traveling the world, or coaching your kid's soccer team? Are you a world expert in a specific area of cancer treatment, non-invasive skin or body procedure, or the only person in your city offering the newest \$200,000 zapper box? Is your style formal and professional, or avante garde and tongue-in-cheek? If you follow @iscreamsocial-media on Instagram you should see that we are fun, funny, hardworking travel nuts that love a craft whiskey and a good pun. That may not attract all of our readers, but on social media the key word is “differentiation” and the key to differentiation is authenticity.
- **Variety.** So you are saying that you have done the work yourself, established a creative, differentiated

and authentic feel to your social media and you are ready to delegate it? Now it is time to have your team do the work—often your patient care coordinator or a person who has a vision for sales is a great person to manage your feeds—and that means creating variety. When we look at Facebook and Instagram feeds for those lucky enough to have millions of followers, we often realize their social media itself is not particularly impressive. The logical fallacy is that Kim Kardashian or a doctor on TV has followers because they are great at social media, when the reality is they have a massive following because they are in the spotlight and succeed in spite of having poorly selected social media posts and best practices in many cases. Don't fall for the hype. Those practices that build loyal and monetized followings do so by keeping engagement levels high and avoiding followers going numb from repetitive posts. Surely showcasing amazing before and after photos of happy patients or letting your followers know you have a special on skincare for Valentine's Day is a prudent choice, but they should be used sparingly and must be peppered with a cornucopia of fascinating content. For ideas review the section on authenticity above. Don't let your followers go numb. Focus on entertaining.

- **Know Your Statistics.** Each year we speak on faculty at a half dozen or so meetings. When polled, our audiences nearly unanimously focus their attention on Facebook exclusively and less often on other feeds. Unfortunately, very few of your post will be seen by your followers on Facebook; as many as 15 percent and as few as two percent, depending on which article or small group study is cited. Assuming Facebook buries around 95 percent of all posts by companies, if you have 1,000 followers you can expect only 20-50 of those people to see your post unless you pay Facebook to boost the post. As most sources agree that Instagram shares two to five times that many posts with your followers, plus every follower in Instagram also has access to view your Instagram stories, you should get a two- to 10-time result on Instagram over Facebook if your followership is equal in volume. There are a slew of other factors from how much engagement your posts get with likes and comments to the time of day you post which we'll save for a different article, but know that it is important to read a book or two and Google some articles on social media to uncover counterintuitive truths that impact your social reach.
- **Think Big.** We have several clients who have literally millions of views per week on Snapchat, a largely

homegrown fame, and none are Howard Stern-style "shock jocks" that we associate with the biggest followings in the industry. You can be involved in all major social media feeds and be yourself, but you need to think big and invest. While a select few doctors are born for social media and feel an immediate kinship, growing their following unilaterally, most invest and do so heavily to get ahead of competition. There was a gravy train for those who got in line for the buffet early, but much more of social media is now paid a la carte with little free on the menu. A proper social media post can take from five to 30 minutes to create, curate, hashtag, hat tip (giving credit with an @____), and monitor for comments. To go big on social media you will spend many hours per month personally, likely at the cost of hundreds or thousands of dollars per hour spent on internal team investment, or you will be hiring a professional firm. If you have ever been taught there is no such thing as 25 cent lobster, it is also true that a proper social media feed for a medical practice doing \$750k to \$100 million a year in revenue is going to cost thousands every month.

The great news is doctors across the country are monetizing their social media. With a typical breakeven point of one new filler, laser, or surgery patient a month, profitability is within reach. And as the trajectory for social media is positive and likely exponentially so for the coming decade, investing in 2018 is paramount for most practices performing well in other areas of the business. While the push towards paid advertising will grow, so will the penchant for doctor selection through YouTube and Instagram, alongside older and newer feeds such as Facebook and Snapchat respectively. ■

Jon Hoffenberg is President of iScreamSocialMedia and SEOverSite. He has been named "40 Business Leaders Under 40" and to "The 50 Fastest Growing Companies in South Florida" by the South Florida Business Journal. He lives in Miami and does his best to stay off of social media after 8pm.

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