



Navigating the World of New Media Leads to Practice Success

By Sarina Moretti, Contributing Editor

Within the vast realm of media, new formats are emerging that may seem foreign or confusing at first, but harnessing these tools is essential for survival in our current digital age. These exciting technology developments have opened doors specifically for physician practices, making the use of new media evermore essential to building a well-rounded and successful business.

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“U.S. consumption of digital media grew by more than 83% from 2010 to 2013.”

Historically, any technologically new communication tool that allowed a skill not possible before was considered new media. For example, the fax machine was once considered new media because it allowed people to communicate in a format that was previously inconceivable. As technology has progressed, the fax machine has all but been replaced by e-mail as it is an easier, quicker and more efficient way to communicate.

Today, the online world is our newest form of media. According to West Jones, co-founder of Incredible Marketing (Irvine, Calif.), “U.S. consumption of digital media grew by more than 83% from 2010 to 2013.” This new domain has created a space for uncharted communication pathways that are still developing as users discover what works best.

New media also provides practices with crucial tools for exposure, consumer interactivity and advertising in ways that were never possible before, giving small businesses the same opportunity for online

exposure as bigger firms that typically have larger budgets to spend on high-cost traditional advertising. Understanding the dynamics of the changing media landscape will allow you to adapt to today’s consumer and as a result, build a thriving online presence.

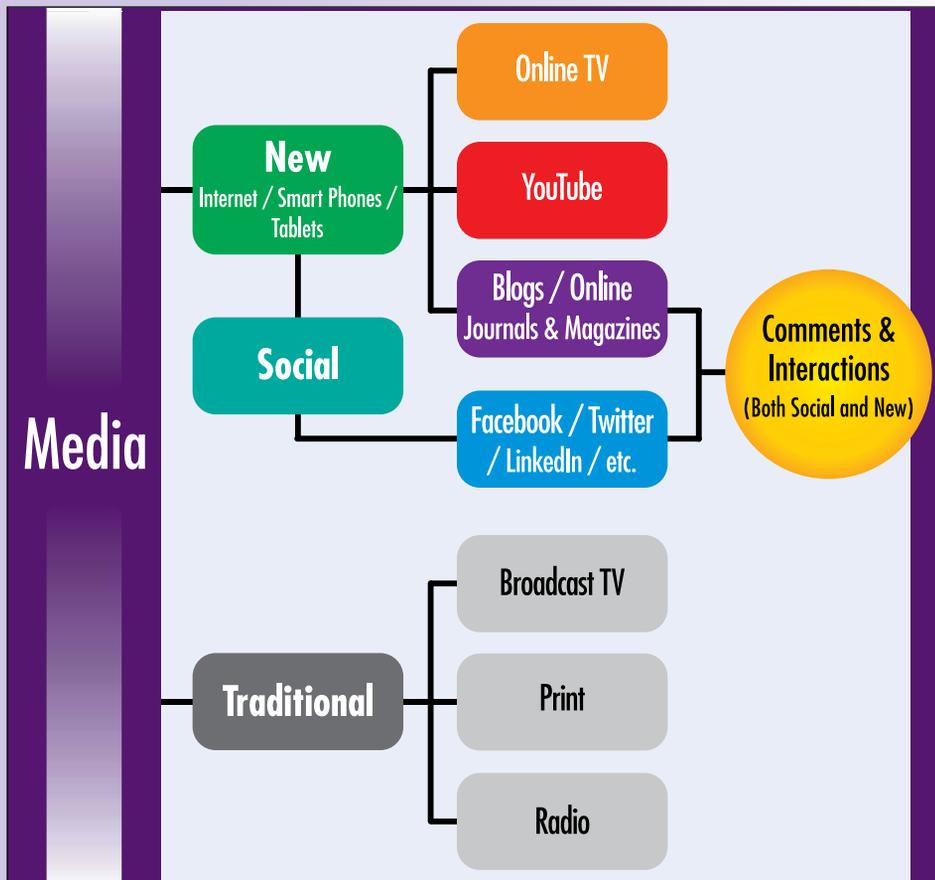
Essentially, new media is, “on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, and creative participation.”¹ This concept includes anything that has been integrated into a computer medium for consumption. Online news, blogs, television, YouTube and smart phones are all forms of new media.

Under the umbrella term of new media also comes social media, or what is now being referred to as social tools. Social tools offer two-sided communication, while all other new media is predominately one-sided. For example, Facebook participants speak to one another in a two-sided conversation, whereas with online television the message is being communicated to an audience, but they cannot communicate with the show. This distinction is what sets these two forms of online media apart.

However, the line between social tools and new media can be blurred in the case of responses and reviews to a one-sided medium, such as with YouTube comments. The delivery of YouTube videos is a one-sided communication, but video comments are interactive in nature and thereby two-sided. The ability to respond to a one-sided medium is an entirely new development that is changing the landscape of media as we know it.

The exploration of new online mediums by active users is exemplified best by the formation of Wikipedia. Most think of Wikipedia as an easily accessible and largely accurate online source to find quick facts about almost any topic. With over 32 million pages and more than 1 billion edits solely from volunteers, Wikipedia is the first successful website of its kind to have each and every page created and run entirely on voluntary contributions from active online users.²

These users are motivated purely by their interest in becoming part of the new online community. They are the same users who will also participate via your online platforms — be it your website, Facebook,



New Media Marketing Tools

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“87% of today’s consumers will research a company or practice online before making the decision to take their business there.”

Twitter, an online television program, or physician review sites. By targeting these participants online you will open a new pool of potential patients.

As this newly established community of online collaborators is rapidly adapting to its new media space, so must your practice. Online users are a different type of consumer than those from offline precedents; they are attracted by the abilities of new media formats, therefore understanding these formats is vital to solidifying your online presence.

Interactivity

Today’s online consumer is identified by their ability to interact and connect online, rather than be passive viewers of previous media technologies. This online interactivity – described by two-sided communication – is the key feature that has transformed our perception of media.

This shift is the foremost difference seen in online advertising versus traditional formats. Interaction between online users, specifically between consumers and providers, has opened doors for how products and services can be marketed. Providing the ability to listen and react to the voice of the consumer, new media offers a different structure for success. Direct consumer response is an immeasurably powerful new tool for any company, including an aesthetic practice, because you can determine exactly what your patients like or dislike about a given product or service.



Lora Budd
AestheticsPro Online
Lacey, WA

Lora Budd of AestheticsPro Online (Lacey, Wash.) pointed out, online marketing allows for immediate results, thus practices, “receive instantaneous interest, responses and feedback from existing patients, as well as new leads,” unlocking additional possibilities to develop lasting relationships with patients. Previously, such information was only available through expensive market research, but now online consumer feedback gives your practice quick and free insight into what your patient really wants, so you can

completely saturate the market or grow beyond your niche.

In fact, according to Kacey Burr of DemandForce (San Francisco, Calif.), “87% of today’s consumers will research a company or practice online before making the decision to take their business there,” thus underscoring the essentiality of an all-inclusive online presence.

Another way for online users to actively participate is through reviews and comments. Many websites dedicated to physician and procedure reviews allow patients to interact with one another or with physicians to discover which procedure is best for them. Upholding this perspective, Ali Husayni, CEO of Millionarium (Fort Collins, Colo.) referenced a quote from



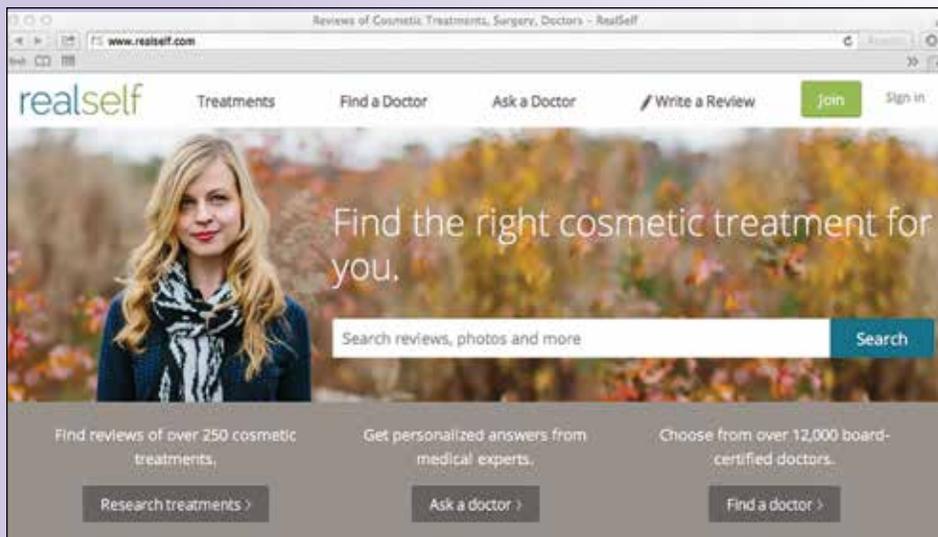
Ali Husayni
CEO
Millionarium
Fort Collins, CO

expert physician marketer Rita Zamora of Rita Zamora Connections that said, “review sites provide social proof of a physician’s capabilities, enabling patients to confirm you are the best choice for their care.”

RealSelf.com is a medical review and answers website that relies on information sharing. Both physicians and patients share their insights on procedures to inform potential patients seeking answers. The main function of the website is to enable a collective knowledge forum, where all users have more knowledge together than if they each tried to research the topics separately. This collective knowledge and universal sharing is a signature function of online collaboration that has been made possible only since the development of the internet.

Additionally, RealSelf.com allows users to view overall ratings of procedures as ranked by actual patients. Significantly, users place a great deal of trust in “amateur” opinions as the general belief is they have little to no incentive to lie, versus a large company whose chief objective is to make their product sound superior. Thus, viewers learn about the effectiveness of a procedure from a source they feel they can trust.

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Realself.com website

As an expert on organizational communication technologies, and professor at Chapman University (Orange, Calif.), Kerk Kee, Ph.D., refers to the drive behind amateur sharing as "social capital," which works based on the following concept: "If



Kerk Kee, Ph.D.
Professor
Chapman University
Orange, CA

I collaborate with you today, you may return the favor when I need your collaboration." This is one of the basic explanations for voluntary participation in our new online world.

Social capital also applies to physicians who choose to answer prospective patients on medical information sharing websites. In the case of RealSelf.com, patients can receive direct answers to any question they may ask from real physicians in their area, all at the simple click of a button. By participating on these sites you are both educating patients and building a reputation as a trusted and local authority on medicine.

Greg Riley of My Med Leads (Austin, Texas) feels, "niche social networks, such as RealSelf.com, tend to produce more qualified leads that convert at a higher rate than other general social networking. Users are typically further along in the

buying cycle and thus require less effort to convert into a real patient."

Conversely, ShoutMD offers a place where physicians, rather than patients, collaborate. ShoutMD is an app-based network, allowing practitioners to discuss methods of improving practice efficiency and profitability. This recent concept is quickly rising in popularity because it is simple and helpful.

These types of networks are successful because they improve on old ways of connecting, learning and gathering information. The collaborative style of ShoutMD and RealSelf.com go far beyond simple referrals or physician conferences, which take greater effort and coordination to execute.

Social Media and Exposure

Another important function of new media is consumer sharing of your practice or products via social tools. The considerable popularity of social tools makes this form of exposure useful, having become so successful because of their sheer convenience. They make connecting and communicating easier than ever before. Allowing for free promotion of your services in a pre-formatted and readily accessible webpage, with little input from your side, consumers on sites like Facebook, Twitter, Yelp, Four Square, and many others, may generate content for you.

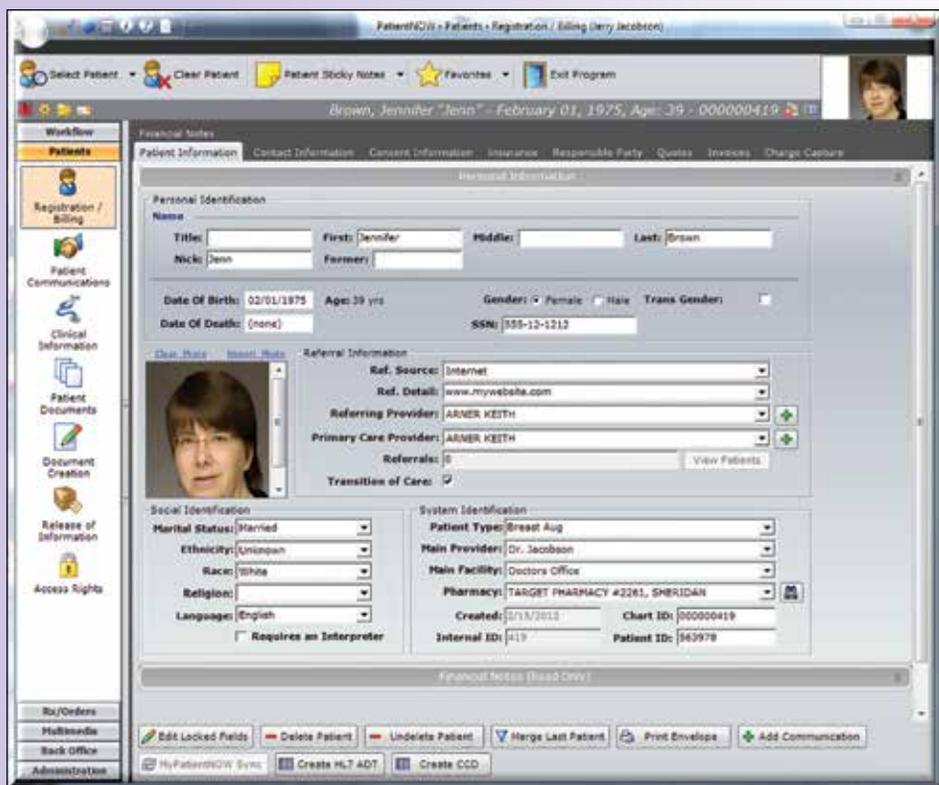
On average Americans spend 37 minutes daily on social media, which is more time spent than on any other Internet activity, including email.³ Considering there are approximately 317 million Americans in the U.S., "it is evermore important to have an online presence so patients have an opportunity to interact and engage with your practice in the ways they prefer," Ms. Burr emphasized. If a consumer has a good experience with your practice they are likely to share it with their friends because it costs them nothing to do so.

As described by Brittney Combs of Incredible Marketing, "social influence is on the rise and is a great way to increase your online visibility, promote word-of-mouth marketing and build buzz." By mastering online dynamics you can dominate this new space.



ShoutMD App

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PatientNOW patient demographic information

“New media allows you to target a particular market segment with exact precision, making your marketing efforts more strategic, thus ensuring they successfully reach the intended market.”

Benefits of Online / New Media Advertising

Since we have already examined the interactive nature of new media, we should explore the remaining aspects and benefits of new media advertisements.

Advertising has now become targeted and measurable. Whether it is to complement your current marketing plan or lay



Shawn Miele
Advice Media
Park City, UT

the foundation for an all-inclusive online marketing approach, you can increase the focus towards your target audience. Shawn Miele of Advice Media (Park City, Utah) explained, “instead of mass marketing and hoping someone with that interest sees the message, we have taken the message directly to highly targeted, interested leads. We now have the ability to utilize inbound marketing and opt-in methods because

internet users choose to view your ads and visit your webpage, instead of being forced to view interruption marketing as with traditional media.”

“New media allows you to target a particular demographic segment with exact precision, making your marketing efforts more strategic, thus ensuring they successfully reach the intended market,” Mr. Jones reiterated. What’s more, “traditional advertising is frequently cost prohibitive, so when it comes to return on investment, online marketing stands head and shoulders above conventional marketing approaches for measuring effectiveness,” he added.

Through the internet and new media, practices can locate their ideal online user based on three targeting tools: behavioral targets, direct response targets and demographic targets.

Direct response targets refer to users who actively click through the pages and links on your site. This includes people who follow the link embedded in your email or choose to contact you through your website. This group is the most actively interested in your practice, and are most likely to follow through with a purchase or procedure. The ability to cater your message to them directly will increase your ad’s rate of effectiveness.

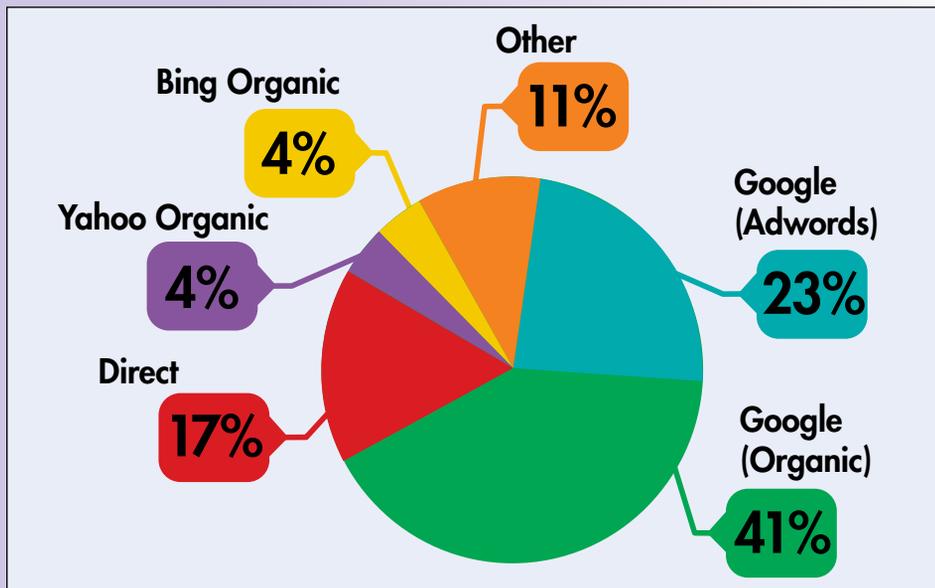
Behavioral targets are obtained by user intent and interest. Intent looks at browsing behaviors such as how long a user views a video or how much time they spend browsing a page. These clues are indicators of how motivated or interested the user is. Similarly, interest is found through usage preferences that can be collected from each online user via cookies and other markers that track which sites users visit and frequent. These signals provide an idea of what interests a specific user and how likely they are to spend time on a site or follow through with a purchase.

Demographic tools allow you to find patients in your area, and more specifically the ones you should spend time advertising



Jerry Jacobson
PatientNOW
Greenwood Village, CO

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Sample evaluation of search engine lead generation for New Jersey based plastic surgeon. Approximately 64% of his new leads are derived from Google searches.

Chart courtesy of Ali Husayni

“When it comes to Google and the top used search engines, page one search results garner close to 90% of all traffic from the average user search, so the higher you are ranked on the first page of search results, the higher your click-through rates will be.”

to. “Practice marketing systems can run a report to see which zip codes your highest value patients come from, along with patient demographics,” said Jerry Jacobson of PatientNOW (Greenwood Village, Colo.)

While these are all ways you can target your ideal audience, there is now a way that your audience can more easily find and choose you. The interactive aspect of online advertising is uniquely new because it allows viewers to look at your ads on their own time. This means they can go back after initial exposure to the ad and essentially interact with it. The fate of consumers’ ad searching has been taken into their own hands, and they can choose which ones they want to revisit or continue to view.

Lastly and most innovatively, effectiveness and performance measurability of your campaign is a new trait of online advertising. When it comes to Google and the top used search engines, Mr. Riley pointed out, “page one search results garner close to 90% of all traffic from the average user search, so the higher you are ranked on the first page of search results, the higher your click-through rates will be.”

Consider that, “each day, over 6 billion searches are conducted on Google alone,” reported Mr. Husayni, which is why it is increasingly important to utilize search engine optimization tools.

As an example, one of Mr. Husayni’s clients, a plastic surgeon in New Jersey, receives over 200 leads per month through Google alone. With more than 7,000 visitors to his site per month, Google accounts for 64% of his new leads.

Also, consider using specialized sites such as GreatInjectors.com or Liposuction.com. “When properly configured these web directories come up high in SEO and point already interested viewers towards



Wayne Wertheim, M.D.
Medical Media Management
Roslyn Heights, NY

participating providers in their vicinity,” said Wayne Wertheim, M.D., of Medical Media Management (Roslyn Heights, N.Y.). Optimizing search tools will make it easier for patients to find you.

Online Television

Another tool that can be used to inform potential clients of your services and merits is online television. With online television, viewers have the choice to watch your video or not, therefore, those viewing your online television program are genuinely interested.

As a primary example of non-interactive new media, online television is dramatically changing our impression of capabilities in terms of reach and availability. This easy accessibility of online television makes it such a powerful and growing source of information. Last year, Americans spent more time on digital devices than on traditional television, said Mr. Husayni. Consequently, traditional TV is moving online to keep up with society’s interests. As more digital users turn to mobile devices and tablets to access their media content, it is critical to understand the benefits of online television.

For aesthetic physicians, *Aesthetic TV™* (ATV) represents the only online television format available to advertise your practice to viewers specifically interested in aesthetic and cosmetic medicine. With over 4 million monthly viewers, ATV sparks interest and generates new leads in a way that is unique from our traditional understanding of television.

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Aesthetic TV webisode featuring William Philip Werschler, M.D., F.A.A.D., F.A.A.C.S.

Photo courtesy of Aesthetic TV

“Producing a webisode promoting your practice or featuring you as an expert authority on aesthetic medicine will increase your professional credibility and reputation, setting you apart from your competition.”

According to Michael Moretti, founder of ATV, “producing a webisode promoting your practice or featuring you as an expert authority on aesthetic medicine will increase your professional credibility and reputation, setting you apart from your competition. This type of exposure to a targeted audience of interested and motivated viewers can elevate your practice and expand your patient base.”

Offering practice profiles, on location field shoots, treatment demonstrations and expert panels, ATV can help any physician increase their name recognition and/or build their media portfolio. Even established physicians, such as key opinion leaders and celebrity doctors, are using online television to educate potential patients and promote their practices.

Implementing New Media in Your Practice

Now is a critical time for aesthetic practices to make the shift to online advertising platforms. Used together, online collaboration, social media utilization and new media penetration will create an effective and thorough advertising campaign, enhancing the notoriety and interest in your practice.

It is essential to integrate each style of media into your marketing plan for a holistic line of attack. Social media interactively promotes your business and allows you to receive direct user feedback, while new media allows you to deliver a content rich message to online consumers.

Becoming an active new media user will expand the scope and value of your company. Consumers are no longer a voiceless audience; we each have the opportunity and means to become involved in a two-sided interaction where we can connect and communicate online.

The best ways to reach potential clients is through the use of email blasts, directly targeted ads, promotional deals via social media and adding your practice onto medical directory sites. “Studies show that the more places a prospective patient sees a physician online, the more likely they will be to call for an appointment. Therefore, the most successful online marketing strategies leverage multiple tools / platforms such as organic search, pay-per-click, various social media platforms, content marketing, consumer directories, etc.,” Mr. Meile asserted.

However, it is important to keep in mind that, “no matter what form of internet marketing is considered, ‘prospecting’ patients are always going to end up at your practice website,” Dr. Wertheim emphasized. Therefore, make sure you update your website periodically so it doesn’t become outdated or uninformative and make sure your site offers online users the opportunity to contact you directly.

Set yourself apart by including interactive or stimulating ways for viewers to obtain the content on your website via videos and active links. While utilizing new forms of media may seem difficult, it will allow you to enter a space that has not yet been fully realized or saturated by other practitioners.

Overall, new media has made it easier than ever before to connect, share, participate, learn and advertise online. Now is the time to expand your participation in the online world and all it has to offer. The interactivity, exposure and advertising possibilities available with new media prove that it is the future of commercial transactions. Promptly adapting to this new style of marketing will allow you to maximize the success of your practice. ■

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