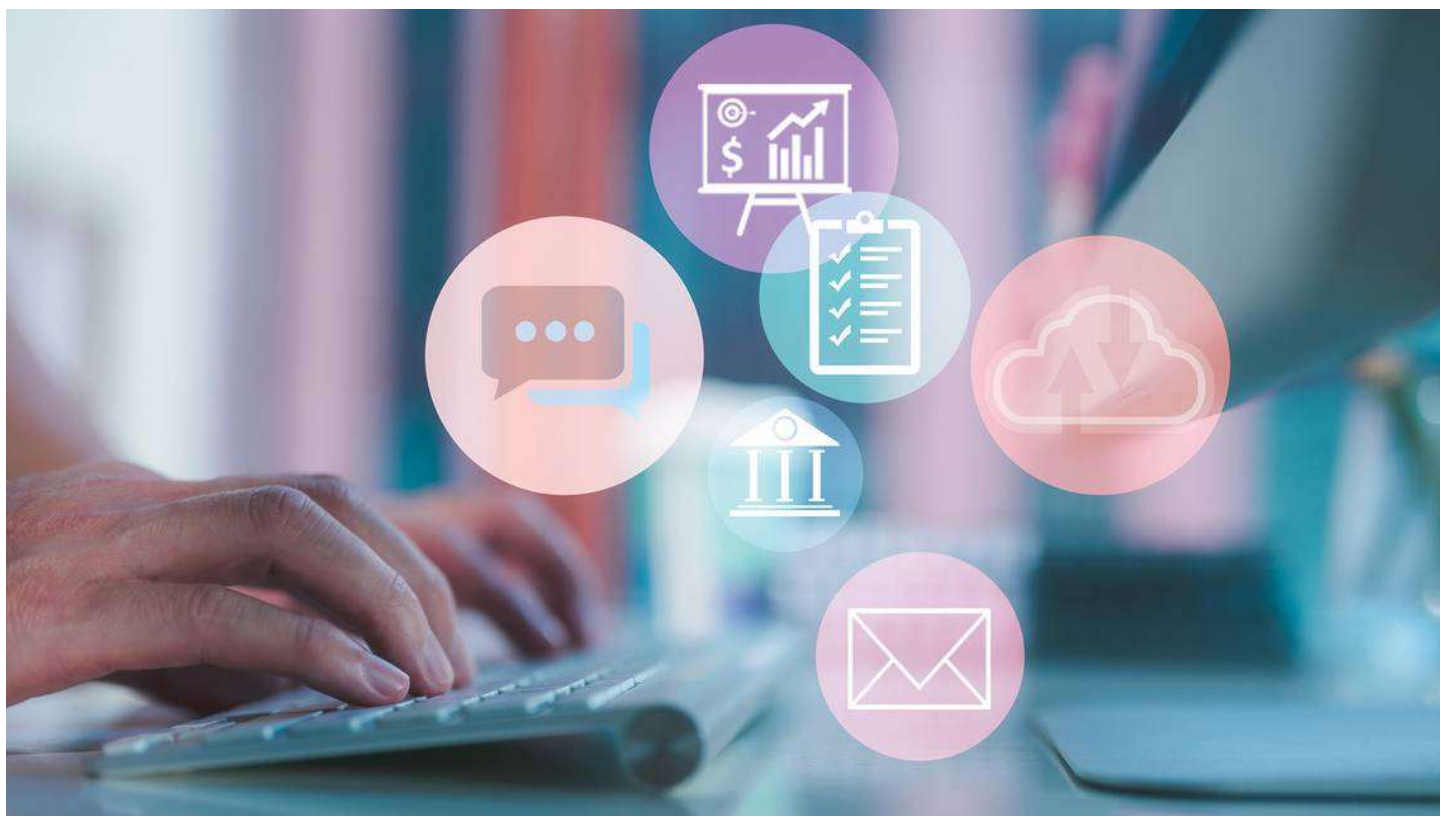


## Panic-induced Digital Marketing: Avoid Short-sighted Shifts in Long-term Strategy

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Short-term actions based on emotion or short-sighted reactions to events do not support the best long-term results. The stock market embodies this notion; as one of many examples in history, investors who did not touch their \$10,000 savings during 9/11 would have benefited from the upside and the power of time, not timing. By the end of 2023, this investment would have exceeded \$58,000 or an average return exceeding 8%. The same theory applies to marketing your dermatology practice.

### **Resist Reactionary Marketing**

By its very nature, dermatology and the broader healthcare space are dynamic, and business is increasingly active. It is vital to take a step back. Always consider that one of the only constants is change when you see fluctuations in the digital space, notably when the trajectory of website

traffic is not in your practice's favor. They can be important clues to the current needs of the website. These indicators can ultimately drive strategies that result in higher website traffic and ultimately getting those virtual patients through your physical doors.

When these fluctuations demonstrate an upward trajectory, they also validate that your of-the-moment content and marketing and communications strategies are working. Stay the course to reap the benefits or, perhaps, integrate some of these items that appear to be working (as supported by the quantifiable data) into other areas of the communications strategy or operations to lift your practice's profits and efficiencies to greater heights.

You may be able to promote some of the most meaningful and compelling content on your social channels. Your content can even be reworked to suit each platform's unique style and guidelines. Since you already have the foundation for the content ready, this process is not like "reinventing the wheel." It need not be time-consuming nor resource-intensive when you are basing such enhancements on material that has already proven itself based on traffic and your community's response to it.

The intersection between your website and social media as part of a comprehensive marketing strategy is undeniable and bears some consideration, especially as it relates to your current and/or aspirational demographics and their relationship to social channels. Consider:

- In its 2023 report, DataReportal noted how the number of social media users in the U.S. was equal to nearly 73% of the total population.<sup>1</sup>
- Mobile optimization of one's site was a "sticking point" for marketing efforts and results; the number of active cell connections as of early 2023 exceeded the total population – equivalent to 113.1% of the population.
- The Pew Research Center noted that between May 19 and September 5, 2023, eight in 10 U.S. adults used YouTube.<sup>2</sup>
- Facebook, Pew reports, remains a dominant figure, with 68% of American adults on the well-established platform.
- Nearly half (47%) of adults use Instagram, while TikTok has seen the most considerable growth, with the number of users on the video-based platform soaring from 21% in 2021 to 33% in 2023.
- For the first time, Pew is tracking BeReal – a photo-based social hub launched in 2020.

While BeReal only has a user base equal to 3% of the adult population, both the introduction and metrics associated with this newer channel are notable, especially when considered alongside TikTok's explosive growth. Both BeReal and TikTok are seemingly ready-made for dermatology practice marketing. They provide real opportunities to showcase results from both medical and cosmetic services in the most dynamic of ways – using video and imagery.

Before making any drastic or potentially reactionary moves, it is always important to carefully consider the website and social metrics. Many of these indicators are shared by different corners of the digital universe and, in fact, can overlap with each other. They all generally quantify how

your digital presence is working to attract and engage with your community. The information you get from these indicators may suggest that the following steps are needed:

- Reassess your demographics: Know your demographics to account for the changing neighborhoods, communities and markets.
- Focus on new platforms: Evaluate all platforms to account for any shifts in trends or progress on attracting new types of patients.
- Diversify content type: Integrate more video, audio, and multimedia into your practice's online home

Relaunch/recommit to more digital services: Make a renewed commitment to teledermatology consultations or aesthetic consults that are initiated with photos and information initially provided by the patient via an online submission form or portal.

Audit your existing content for quality: If one service page seems to be outperforming other pages, look to model that other content after this stand-out page or, as relevant, mention that service offering in the other pages.

When resisting the urge to have shorter-term metrics dictate strategy, it is always a good practice to consider the broader market elements that may be influencing a dip in traffic or impressions. There will always be shifts in the "competition." Peak seasons come and go. The slow months will pass. Likewise, what goes up must come down when considering the impact of broader economics on healthcare consumer spend. You can see these potential drivers behind fluctuations in the metrics as opportunities, however. Once you better understand any new competition in the market, you can play up what your office or team offers that your competition does not (or do not do as well as you do it).

More than anything, know that near-term flux does not necessarily mean you are doing something "wrong" when it comes to your strategy. Sometimes it simply takes time to get some traction and the results that you desire from given initiatives. Like the stock market, time is what matters, not timing. Avoid panicking and making rash departures in your long-term strategy when numbers may dip. Take the long view and see it out so that you can benefit from the inevitable upside.

## **Overview**

Naren Arulrajah, CEO of Ekwa Marketing, shares insights into marketing strategies that help practitioners avoid panic-driven decision-making.