

## The Dawn of the Professional Aesthetic Vlogger

**Ron Myers from Consulting Room discusses the use of video and vlogging with Lorna McDonnell Bowes, CEO of Aesthetic Source: [www.aestheticsource.com](http://www.aestheticsource.com)**  
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**Ron Myers:**

Hi there, this is Ron Myers from the Consultant Room. I'm absolutely delighted to have Lorna McDonnell Bowes join me today to discuss what we've actually both noticed as one of the few positive changes over the last few weeks and that's what we've called the dawn of the professional aesthetic blogger. So, I've known Lorna for many years. Lorna, if you don't know her, she's the CEO and founder of Aesthetic Source and she's got, I think, a breadth and depth of experience as a practitioner, a clinic owner, trainer, distributor, and advisor that is pretty much unmatched within the aesthetic industry. So Lorna, welcome. I hope that today finds yourself and your family in good health.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Thank you, Ron, likewise. It's great to talk to you. As you say, we've known each other many, many years. We've come across each other for various different reasons. It's great to share the sort of knowledge that we've shared together over ... and I'm not going to say how many years.

**Ron Myers:**

Lovely. So, thank you very much again. For a number of years now we've all witnessed the so-called professional bloggers or influencers as some people call them making a living providing lifestyle, beauty, and also skincare advice as well and promoting themselves as experts in their subjects. So, I think to start, could you comment on the information that they give, whether you feel this also classifies them as an expert as well.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Absolutely. So, my definition of an expert is somebody who's made every single mistake. That's what I would describe myself as. I've made every single mistake. I still don't think I'm an expert on most things. But when we look at people who are putting videos out on YouTube, talking in magazines, etcetera, et cetera, there's a huge confusion about who has what knowledge. We have the super derm group, who are often referred to by the journalists and they're frequently not dermatologists. They're frequently not even doctors.

So yeah, there's this huge confusion. When you go onto YouTube and you look at somebody talking about skincare, often it's just because they've used that product. They may speak very eloquently, they may have a cute accent, they may have some great skills, but they may not necessarily know about the product itself. There is so much misinformation out there. It's staggering. If you ask the internet most questions about skincare, you will get answers back which don't really bare anything in relation to what actually happens with the skin and what ingredients actually can affect the skin.

**Ron Myers:**

Yeah, fantastic. Well, I would agree with you there as well. I mean, you and I both come with an evidence based approach, we've been involved in many professional meetings as well, where we work

with true experts in their field who are giving information more direct to the industry. But I think what's been really interesting that both you and I have noticed as well, is that because of obviously what's happened with lockdown and the fact that the only thing that practitioners have been able to really generate any income with is really getting into the skincare advice side of things. The ones that have embraced that and provided information and then followed that up with a professional one on one consultation that they've done virtually do seem to be making some astounding difference to their business. I don't know if you want to comment on that with some of your customers?

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Yeah, absolutely. We have somebody who did a blog this weekend on one of our skincare ranges. By Monday morning, she had several thousand pounds worth of orders that had come in. That was one blog, well-constructed, well-presented. She put herself forwards as having authority. She described who she was, she's a doctor. She has x-knowledge, x-experience, and this is the skincare she's talking about. This is why she uses it, this is her experience of it, and this is how straightforward it is. Her customers who were listening and their friends who were invited to come and listen joined in.

**Ron Myers:**

Okay, fantastic.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

... and it delivered significant orders.

**Ron Myers:**

I think that's been reflected by other people that we know as well. I think the other thing that's really interesting with this that I missed as well came from my daughter who's got a very small clinic, who started to embrace this literally, I think it was the week after lockdown. I remember seeing on Instagram Live, which I'm not really on Instagram anyway, but I thought I'd have a look at it. She was in her bedroom, she'd got the dog running around on the bed, she's got a glass of wine there, and I was going, "Oh, my god." But as a result of that, she sold about £9,000 worth of skincare in the last couple of months. Not only that, she sold to people who would never ever come to her clinic because they're not in her locality. So, most of her retail sales would normally be driven within clinic, but now you're starting to reach people all over the country. If you've got a good message and people believe you and are happy with that one on one personalised sort of advice, you can generate income.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

And having that little key, that little thing at the end of however good your presentation, however well you speak, if you don't have that call to action, if you don't show somebody, it's a really clear, "And this is how you can now order this product." Not cheesy sales, but just a very simple, "Here's the link to find out more."

**Ron Myers:**

Let's look at video in general. So, how important do you really think the use of video for aesthetic clinics is going to be in properly embracing this form of education and marketing for the future success of their businesses?

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

I think it's absolutely critical. There are two ways that it can work, I believe. Firstly, that you can reach, as you've just said, a very wide audience by putting your voice out there. I think one of the changes that we'll see in the world, and I think we're going to see a lot of changes, but one of the changes will be that people will use the web even more to get their information. So, if they land on your site, land on your videos, and find really excellent content and you have a platform that you can then sell to people, you will reach a very wide audience.

I think on the other hand what's going to happen is that people will drop buying from multinationals so much and will want to shop local. If you have a local clinic, then people are going to want to seek you out. If they can find you online, learn about you, they start to trust you because of your skincare advice and consultations and the products that they've purchased from you, they're much more likely to walk in through your door in your locality. You can easily reach out to your locality with local groups. We have a little local group around here with about 5,000 people who are on that Facebook group and they listen to each other's videos. There's a real groundswell in supporting the small business.

**Ron Myers:**

Which I think is fantastic. Yeah, I would agree with you there. I think a lot of the corporations are very stilted in terms of how they come across from a marketing point of view. I think especially with the skincare side of things as you know, in general, it's some sort of celebrity that's been airbrushed, where you're setting totally unrealistic expectations for what that product can deliver. I think people are seeing through that now. So, what types of video content do you think clinics should produce?

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Well, there's all sorts of education that you can do that can be just a simple question and answer session. Either with somebody coming in and giving you the questions or have a list of questions, the sort of common questions you're asked when you're doing consultations with your patients. So, what skincare is good for this? I get the occasional breakout, what's good for that? What sun protection should I wear? Questions about vitamin D. There are thousands of questions. You can do those either in little batches or just one question at a time.

Then, there are the more informational videos, where perhaps you would talk about a skincare brand or a particular regime that you could have depending whether you're American or English. Then, there are other things like lunch and learn. It's great fun to invite people at a set time to come and do a video because that's a great way of getting people to understand that you're there because then they'll search for more content from you. So, invite people to come along on a subject. It might be rosacea or it might be keeping your skin relaxed while you wait for your next Botulinum toxin treatment or whatever.

I quite like the idea of a peak and peel, which is where you do a demonstration of something like the SkinTech Peel2Glow, which is a really, really simple home peel that people can do. It's incredibly simple. It's two steps. You can do a video of you doing that on yourself. Then, you invite people to do exactly the same. You can talk them through how to do it. So, people who are nervous of doing a home peel, how can they read the instructions without their glasses on and still get the peel on their skin, for example. You can sit there and talk them through it and they do it with you. That could be great fun. All sorts of ideas like that. Be creative with what you can do.

**Ron Myers:**

I love that. I think you're right. I think that element of creativity linked to sound educational content and information and knowledge is probably the key isn't really. One other thing that I have seen some people do, and I think is particularly relevant maybe at this point in time, is that we all talk to clinics about getting testimonials from customers and probably now is a really good opportunity to do that with some key customers who've you really helped with their skin over the last few years. And doing something very simple like this, where you could set up a Zoom meeting and either do that live or possibly record it is a way where you could interview a customer around their journey through your clinic and the difference that you made to their skin. Then you have video content that you've got. Because a lot of practitioners ask people for testimonials, but in general, that's more in written form. I think this could be a much more powerful way of doing it. So, if you have those types of people that are happy with this, it's an opportunity to do it now.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

And it's a fabulous idea not only because it's a good idea in itself, but it's also so much easier if you're nervous of doing this sort of online conversation sitting on your own like Zoe, your daughter did so successfully. Some people don't want to do that. But actually having somebody else here, it's so much easier. You and I having a chat, I think is probably more interesting than me ... well, I'm sure it's more interesting than me sitting on my own speaking to a camera. So yeah, it's a great idea. And bringing other people in as well. I mean, one of the ideas I saw recently, I haven't actually seen anybody do this, but I think it's a great idea to have a little teaching session, how to teach your husband to do a facial.

**Ron Myers:**

Oh, I love that. That's a great idea.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

We're all stuck at home. Maybe it could be your mother, your sister, it doesn't matter. But it would be fun if it was your husband or your partner doing the facial.

**Ron Myers:**

I love that idea. I think that's really good. Yeah. I really do. So, the other aspect of this is once you've got this video content together, is where you put it. Now, a lot of people obviously put it on their website and utilise it in their social media feeds. But I think what a lot of people do miss is also YouTube and the power of YouTube as a search engine. It's the second biggest search engine in the world and on a lot of people's smart TVs nowadays as well. What I found when I started to look at this in a little bit more detail was an opportunity there for I think UK based clinics to get properly optimised content out there that beats ... pretty much most of the time, it's American content because they've embraced video a little bit earlier than us. So, I did an exercise where I typed in "does laser hair removal work forever" and I just came up with a load of American clinics and sites that were answering that question. So, I just put together a short three-minute video that answered that question specifically, then put that in the title of the video and a little bit of a description in there as well, and I've already come up in the top page after just over a week.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

That's phenomenal.

**Ron Myers:**

Yeah, I think there are opportunities out there especially in the skincare side of things. You know, you could be looking at what is the best treatment for dry skin on the face or the hands or the neck, or any parts of the body and just do a little two or three minute piece around that. When I typed in does NeoStrata work for age spots, for instance, I found just all American sites. Generally, they weren't even clinics, they were influencers as well. So again, I think there's a lot of opportunity there to put that content together. For me, outside of the optimization component, what video does, it demonstrates expertise and authority, which is the critical part of it. So, if anyone comes to your site and sees a body of content on there, or they see you, and see you answering questions that are in their heads, I think that elevates you above other clinics that have just got text in there. If they hit your YouTube channel and you've got 30 or 40 videos in there, immediately it's going to display authority and expertise.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Absolutely. A huge opportunity out there for people. Some of us are working as hard if not harder than they normally are. Yes, you recognise that one.

**Ron Myers:**

Yeah.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Some people aren't because their clinics are closed. Although, there are a lot of people who've gone back to the NHS and I salute them all, there are a lot of people who are home schooling, caring for others. But there are people who are genuine experts who could really benefit from getting out there and talking about the brands that they use, talking about their clinics, drawing people in. It's a massive opportunity. I'd love to know what percentage of time people are spending on YouTube at the moment, but I bet it's very, very high. So, my advice to people is to listen to this, get some ideas, give it a try. If anybody wants to contact you, contact me, I presume that it's okay to say this, I'm quite happy to interview people about the brands that we carry. I'm sure you're quite happy to interview people about brands that you carry.

**Ron Myers:**

Absolutely.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

We can help people smooth the route into producing their own vlogs.

**Ron Myers:**

Yeah, absolutely. So, another thing to add to this as well, we launched a couple of weeks ago, it's called the Consulting Room Challenge. So, the Consulting Room, obviously we put that out there as being hopefully a quality and factual information site for consumers. We built it over the years and we have about half a million pages of content in there now, which surprised me when our web designer told us that. But we don't have a lot of video content in there. So now we're going through our next phase of trying to getting quality video content in there from people who have expertise in the area that they're passionate about and really understand.

We're looking at just short form content, answers to questions about skincare or any of the treatments that they're doing that they should be doing anyway for their own YouTube channel, for their own websites, social media, but also we'll host the best of that on Consulting Room. We get around 800,000 visitors a year. So, hopefully people will get some more, if you like, eyeballs on them and their content. We're incentivising that with 10 free memberships for a year. Also, we pulled together £1,000, we call it a freedom voucher because I'm sure you, and I'm certainly planning this, once we can get out of lockdown, I just want to go away somewhere nice for a weekend or whatever and we're happy to fund that as well for the winner of this. So, we've got a bit of an incentive. I think you said as well, you provided a little bit of something around specific videos around NeoStrata?

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Yeah. What we said we would do is that we'll offer £500 worth of products from the Aesthetic Source range for the best video around a home treatment performed using products with NeoStrata or Exuviance or Skinbetter science or Peel2Glow. They're the main ones people use at home. Or even using LightStim. So, anything from our portfolio really. Mix and match, play together. LightStim is amazing in combination with other treatments.

**Ron Myers:**

Yes, absolutely.

Wonderful. Lorna.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

I was just going to make you laugh and just come back to the getting ready to go away. Our little motor home is parked outside the house and we've even gone and sat in it and pretended one evening because it was just, "Let's get out of the house for a few minutes."

**Ron Myers:**

Well, my wife's commented she says she's never known me so keen to go down to Tesco with her. That's the highlight of my week.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Absolutely.

**Ron Myers:**

So, lovely ... I really appreciate that, Lorna. Thanks for your time. And thanks as well for supporting us with this challenge. Hopefully it makes sense to the people that are listening to this. You've got some great brands there and it seems like a perfect opportunity for people to get some quality content around what are fantastic products that they can use to help promote those to their customers. So, thank you, Lorna.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Thank you very much, Ron. We look forward to seeing all of those videos and sharing content between us and getting everybody else's voice out there as well as our own.

**Ron Myers:**

Wonderful. Oh, by the way, just to say, if anyone's interested in the challenge, it's [consultingroom.com/challenge](http://consultingroom.com/challenge). That's the website to go to, to basically get more information. From your point of view, Lorna, just send any content to what email?

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Yeah, best to go to [orders@aestheticsource.com](mailto:orders@aestheticsource.com) or [lorna@aestheticsource.com](mailto:lorna@aestheticsource.com). Happy either way.

**Ron Myers:**

Thank you very much, Lorna. Cheers.

**Lorna McDonnell Bowes:**

Thanks for your time. Take care.