

Business Focus: PR

Developing Good Patient Case Studies: The Ultimate Tool in Persuasion!

High-quality case studies can showcase clinical skills, persuade patients and ultimately boost business, however, time and again we see poor quality examples which do not truly reflect clinical skill or treatment benefits. Positive patient experiences and strong clinical results are some of your strongest assets for PR and marketing – so let's make the most of them!

Where can you use case studies?

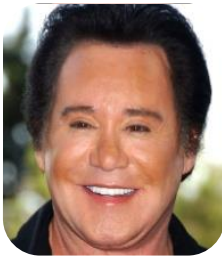
- ✓ Clinical research presentations
- ✓ Clinical papers, abstracts and posters
- ✓ In-clinic information / marketing materials
- ✓ Your website
- ✓ Media & PR work

Before Starting:

- **Consider your desired outcomes and target audiences** - do you want to demonstrate a particular treatment effect or benefit? Will you be using these case studies primarily for clinical work, media outreach or patient materials? Would a female or male case study work best for your current needs?
- **Start scoping out what you need and begin matching potential candidates for each strategy**

Recruitment:

- Start with established relationships from existing patients
- Discuss positive past treatment experiences and highlight what you're looking to do: show examples of what this could look like and highlight how you're planning to use these materials
- Discuss which aspects of treatment you would like to include and help the patient understand why they are particularly suitable
- It's also useful to consider the general traits which media look for, i.e. between 25-45 years old, career/lifestyle focused, family orientated (1-2 children), image conscious (hair, fashion, exercise)



Watch Out!

Most cosmetic surgery 'considerers' want a 'natural look' – so avoid case studies with a high degree of augmentation or an 'extreme' makeover. Images which look 'too perfect' or 'over-done' do not resonate with consumers; they prefer realistic, aspirational images that reflect 'the natural look'.



Consent:

- Case studies **MUST** have a clear understanding of what's involved and how the materials may be used for both clinical and marketing purposes
- Patients should sign a **comprehensive consent form** which outlines this information and gives you the rights to use the materials as stipulated
- Patients should also be made aware of how to withdraw their consent and be encouraged to contact you with any questions in the interim
- Adhere to ABPI and professional codes of (advertising) practice regarding case study use with consumer audiences: there can be **no direct or indirect promotion of prescription-only medicines to the public** e.g. no 'Botox injections' – stick with talking about 'wrinkle-relaxing treatments' in your marketing material.



Before & After Best Practice - Consistency Is Key!

- Ensure your patient has removed all make-up and jewellery, and uses a hairband to keep hair well back from the face
- Background should be plain white or black and if possible, the patient should wear the same clothes at each shoot.
- Use a high-resolution DSLR camera with a tripod or fixed position for steady, consistent shots which capture the fine details
- Ensure the patient is well-lit with no shadows and take a variety of shots, including:
 - x4-5 full face and focused area shots
 - Full frontal, 3/4 and side views
 - 'Dynamic' and 'at rest' expressions



Avoid Photoshop Temptation!

Quality and integrity are fundamental in building trust, therefore it is vital your images are a true reflection of the treatment. There is ever-increasing scepticism about the validity of cosmetic, cosmeceutical and aesthetic treatment claims, so un-retouched images are a huge advantage.

Strong Written / Video Testimonials

These can be a big convincer to those still considering. Work with your case studies to tell the story of their experience, but in a succinct bite-size format (250 words or a 1-2 minute video).



Make sure you cover:

- How they felt BEFORE treatment? What questions did they have?
- What motivated them to have the treatment in the first place?
- What was the treatment experience like? (focus on key concerns such as pain, downtime etc.)
- How does it make them feel NOW
- How have people responded to their new look?

These testimonials can then be incorporated throughout your clinic marketing: website, waiting room materials and PR materials.

Next time: Editorial planning for your blog.



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Julia Kendrick has over 10 years of experience in public relations, and is the founder of new start-up Kendrick PR Consulting: a bespoke strategic consultancy service specialising in medical aesthetics and healthcare PR.

A previous winner of the Communiqué Young Achiever Award, Julia is passionate about delivering award-winning client campaigns and high-calibre results.

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