

reputation

- The estimation in which a person or thing is held, especially by the community or the public generally; repute.
- Favorable repute; good name.
- A favorable and publicly recognized name or standing for merit, achievement, reliability, etc.
- The estimation or name of being, having, having done, etc., something specified.
- The estimation in which a person or thing is held; opinion.

Reputation creation

Julia Kendrick outlines her four-step method to growing a successful, lasting business reputation for increased revenue and reliability

The UK aesthetics industry is booming. With new clinics cropping up on just about every high street in Britain, competition has never been higher. So how can you effectively stand out from the crowd, attract new patients and retain your patients' loyalty? Whilst PR and marketing are crucial tools, the bigger picture is all about building a reputation which can generate patients, revenue and opportunities for your business. In this article, we outline the four-step method that takes your reputation from good to great.

THE CHALLENGE

To succeed in today's dynamic medical aesthetic industry, it's not enough to be a great practitioner. You have to be the proverbial "Jack of all trades", bringing together branding, marketing, PR, customer service, business and financial skills on top of clinical expertise. This can understandably feel overwhelming and the biggest danger phrase I hear is "Not right now". New clinics often want to wait until they have got a few months under their belt. Understandable - yes - but what does "not right now" really mean for your business? You are in fact leaving money unclaimed on the table - or even worse, watching revenue go straight into a competitor's

pockets. Without investing in your reputation by building proper positioning, marketing and PR - you effectively allow competitors to take your market from under you.

LEARNING FROM THE BEST

When it comes to successful business practice, a great way to fast-track your route to success is by examining the strategies of existing industry leaders and modelling their tried-and-tested methods. In general, you will notice that all leading businesses (including highly successful clinics) use the same four "Reputation Power Strategies":

1. They build a fundamental foundation of strong, compelling messages about who they are and why they're different
2. They create a wealth of compelling content to seed these messages among audiences
3. They seek out opportunities to positively profile themselves and build their reputation
4. They foster robust relationships and seek out strategic partnerships to enhance their business

The first pillar of the four-step reputation system is all about developing powerful, persuasive messages about who you are,

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why you're different, what you're known for and why patients should trust or choose you. These messages form the bedrock of all your PR, marketing and advertising efforts and when done effectively, will elevate your business above competitors and deliver tangible results to your bottom line. The second step relates to the deployment of these powerful messages within relevant, interesting and consistent content across all your marketing channels. This includes your printed materials, website, social media channels, press releases – every medium you use to connect people with your business. In the third step, you foster proactive and reactive opportunities to showcase, elevate and profile your business to outshine competitors and drive sales. Lastly, strategic partnerships offer a way to take your reputation to all-star level, giving you access to revenue-building opportunities that you couldn't access on your own (like being a spokesperson, trainer or speaker).

This is the same model I have used within my own business, and also forms the basis for my new service offering for practitioners with limited time and budget. The E.L.I.T.E. Reputation Programme offers a comprehensive, online training toolkit with expert step-by-step guidance to implement the four-step model, helping to build a leading reputation and implement more effective PR and marketing.

THE DANGER

Time and again practitioners skip the first step of a fundamental messaging foundation – ploughing forward with a website, or social media content strategy which just doesn't stand up to the competition. When it comes to ~~your reputation and~~ maximising precious time and budget, rushing ahead without building that fundamental messaging foundation is like pouring in petrol without first building the car. It simply won't deliver the best results for your business and get you to where you want to be.

BUILDING YOUR FUNDAMENTAL FOUNDATION

In the long-term, getting your messaging foundation right will save you time, money and energy. No longer will you be scrabbling for that snappy one-paragraph summary of your business for a congress speaker page, or condensing your fantastic services into text for website advert. You will have a compelling, consistent set of messages that can be rolled out time and again. So how can you get started?

STEP 1: Do your homework

Start by checking out direct competitors – those businesses in overlapping geographic areas or ranking close to you in Google listings. Research, identify and consider how they

position themselves, what are their “unique selling points” and note any accreditations, qualifications and awards. Which marketing channels do they use? Consider web, traditional print media, radio, social media, local events etc.

STEP 2: Define your own USPs

Next, you need to develop a series of compelling messages that set you apart from competitors. Work through methodically and create messages about each aspect of your business – who you are, what you offer, why you do what you do. Keep the focus on you as a practitioner – on your values, beliefs, and particular approach to aesthetics – these can be unique, whereas the specific treatments on offer are likely to be the same as many other clinics. By focusing on who you are and what you stand for, you can create compelling messages which differentiate you quickly and effectively – remember, practitioners, not treatments create a reputation!



STEP 3: Build a powerful pitch

Lastly, combine and condense your messages into a short, powerful paragraph that forms your business “elevator pitch”. You need to be able to confidently sell yourself and your business in 30 seconds – we all have short attention spans so we need to be convinced quickly that not only are you excellent at what you do, but that we can trust you and your services. This pitch will be used across your website homepage,

your advertising and PR. It is always deceptively difficult to write something short and punchy – so start big and whittle down until you can verbalise it in 30 seconds or less. Don't forget to tailor to your ideal audience and avoid jargon – anything that could confuse your audience or cause them to switch off. Keeping messages in the active voice and using strong verbs will help make a bigger impact and create a good, lasting impression.

CONCLUSION

Whilst there is no shortcut to developing a stellar reputation, there is a clear step-by-step method which enables you to differentiate from competitors and adopt a compelling, strategic approach to communications.

Establishing a fundamental foundation of core messages is the first critical step to success, enabling you to be the architect of your own reputation.

Taking a considered approach to competitor evaluation helps keep your business ahead of the curve, and by deciding what you want to be known for and placing this at the centre of your marketing communications, you can set your business on that tried and tested pathway to success. **AM**



Julia Kendrick is an award-winning communications consultant, specialising in aesthetic medicine. With over 12 years' experience, Julia helps brands, clinics and practitioners harness the power of PR to take control of their reputation, tangibly grow their business and cut through the competition. A regular industry media contributor, congress presenter and trainer, Julia's ethos is that excellence should come as standard. Want to assess your business reputation? Take the E.L.I.T.E. Reputation test here: www.kendrickpr.uk/scorecard | julia@kendrickpr.uk | www.kendrickpr.uk/elite | @JRKendrick | +44 78970 711 037