



How to Use Celebrity Endorsement to Boost Business

PR consultant Julia Kendrick takes a look at tried and tested tactics of celebrity endorsement and gives her top tips on how to effectively harness 'star power' to build your clinic brand

When it comes to celebrities, more often than not they are used by the mainstream media to demonstrate the cartoonish, exaggerated or ghoulish effects of bad surgery. Yet increasingly, the UK aesthetic industry is using good quality celebrity endorsement, with the likes of Sharon Stone for Galderma and Karen Brady for HydraFacial. But is celebrity endorsement only achievable for big brands, or in trendy clinic hotspots like LA or Harley Street? No – in fact, celebrity marketing is well within your grasp and this article will prepare you for if and when the lightning strikes!

Why use celebrity marketing?

Nowadays, a great deal of products we use are associated with a celebrity endorsement or 'brand ambassador'. The critical premise here is to make consumers feel that they can emulate the celebrity lifestyle by buying the fragrance, the clothes, or the food: we all want a little bit of that A-List feel in our own lives. By coupling the right celebrity face with your clinic and brand, you can achieve an instantaneous business boost, outshine your competition and gain visibility amongst a much larger network of potential audiences than through your own marketing alone.

Finding your 'celebrity'

The ideal scenario is that a local or, even national, celebrity just happens to walk through your clinic door – but this is only relatively likely if you are in Harley Street or certain London hotspots. The vast majority of clinic celebrity endorsements arise through good old-fashioned word-of-mouth, so start by reaching out to your key suppliers, business partners and of course your patients to see who they might have connections with. Be subtle in your approach – as any new patient recommendations should always be

welcome, not just celebrities – but if you mention you are looking for more ways to showcase the work you do and potentially work with some well-known faces, this is a good place to start.

A match made in heaven?

Once a celebrity crosses your threshold, don't automatically assume that any publicity is good publicity. The success of a celebrity endorsement rests entirely on whether they align with, and appeal to, your existing patient base. If there is a mismatch, the endorsement will not deliver the business benefits and even worse, it could damage your reputation. You need to protect your brand and carefully consider:

- Would the majority of your ideal patients want to look like/emulate this celebrity?
- Do they resonate with your patients in terms of age, socio-economic status, personality, lifestyle and career?
- Have they had a lot of previous cosmetic procedures elsewhere? Going back to the 'ghoulish' danger signs, you want to steer clear of anyone who looks over-done, especially if all the work wasn't yours to begin with!
- Would you be happy with their final result being publically acknowledged as your work?
- Do you have matching values?
- Are they easy to get along with, or are you continually fearful that something will backfire?

Seal the deal

So you've found a celebrity who is a good fit, but what next? The answer is to treat them like a normal patient. Give them the same level of care and excellence as you would for any other patient; build up the relationship and establish a rapport before asking them for anything. Remember, as with many aesthetic patients they may be reticent even to admit publically that they have had cosmetic procedures – so the approach here must be softly, softly. It can sometimes take years before a celebrity will be comfortable acting as an ambassador, so judge carefully when to approach them. Ideally, their great experiences as a patient may prompt them to approach you proactively and offer their testimonial or endorsement – so much so, the better.

When it comes to payment, if the celebrity is a new introduction there will usually be an expectation to have their treatment for free, in return for promoting you and your services through a number of means. Make sure you nail this down in writing so that expectations are clear on both sides. If a key supplier or manufacturer has connected you to the celebrity, ask them to cover the cost of the product for you, again, with the clear understanding of being credited in subsequent publicity.

The process

You need to be crystal clear what you would like your celebrity to do and how you will use the information. You may just wish to publically confirm that they are one of your patients, or get them to post on social media, or give their image and testimonial for your clinic marketing and website. The key is to be clear and take their lead on what they are comfortable with, and above all, NEVER do anything without their expressed, written permission lest you get a nasty lawsuit. Celebrities will usually have their own agent or PR team who will work with you to develop a contract and legal consent form that outlines and agrees the scope of activities. Make sure it clearly stipulates how and where any text, images or videos may be used



Real life best practice

Dr Victoria Manning, River Aesthetics

Celebrity: Meg Matthews

How did you find your celebrity?

A makeup artist we work with mentioned that one of her clients, Meg Matthews, was interested in getting a treatment for her 50th birthday. One of our supplier partners is always looking for celeb case studies, so we got their PR team to connect with Meg's PR team on our behalf to set up the treatment.

What activities did you secure with them?

We were contracted to do a thread lift for Meg, which she would tweet about and then participate in a local and national media interview. However, she loved her treatment so much that she wanted a second thread lift for her neck and this was promoted through her PR team, who secured a photoshoot and interview with the Sunday Times Style, alongside multiple tweets from Meg.

How did you maximise this opportunity?

Once the article hit the shelves it was on our website, social media channels and patient newsletters. We used boosted posts on Facebook and got between 2,500 and 8,500 views over that period.

What has been the result for you and your clinic?

We got 40 bookings in the 48 hours immediately afterwards and there has been a significant uplift in our social media followers and website hits. Meg has agreed to do a video testimonial for our website and has also referred another two celebrity friends to us for treatment!

Any key learnings or tips?

Your celebrity's look has got to be achievable and match your patient base so you don't alienate people. Also, make sure you are prepped to deal with an upsurge in enquiries; we had to outsource our calls as the phone was ringing off the hook!

Dr Sach Mohan, Revere Clinic

Celebrity: Kelly Brook

How did you find your celebrity?

Kelly was recommended to see us by another celebrity client of ours. Kelly has been with us for six years and only recently felt comfortable about 'going public', so it was a long-held relationship in the first place.

What activities did you secure with her?

She agreed to do a number of posts across her social media channels (Twitter, Instagram) and talk about the results and experiences she's had with us.

How did you maximise this opportunity?

We retweeted and maximised the social media exposure – one tip would be that there will always be 'trolls' putting up offensive comments with this kind of topic, so make sure you have a good social media strategy in place for how you handle these kind of comments.

What has been the result for you and your clinic?

This was part of our broader marketing strategy and it has definitely helped our brand, but we are not reliant on celebrity profiling and want to ensure it's always kept to a tasteful level!

Any key learnings or tips?

Never ask a celebrity to be your case study – it needs to come from them. We waited six years for Kelly, so just be patient. Also make sure they really represent your brand image and don't alienate your patient base!

in this country (and beyond, if online), ownership, copyright, usage rights and the period of use and get a signed copy from all parties. The celebrity must also understand they can withdraw their consent at any time. There is no cast-iron rule about whether or not you should expect to pay a celebrity for endorsing you – ideally they should offer to do this for free (as otherwise the association lacks credibility and value) but don't make assumptions: test the water either directly or through their PR/management team.

Prepare

There's no point getting an upsurge in patient enquiries on the back of celebrity work if you can't capture these leads. Brief your team on when celebrity activities are taking place, so they can plan accordingly and ensure the phones are manned. If in doubt, outsource to a reputable call handling service such as Aesthetic Response, who are the only full enquiry management service for aesthetics, or MyRuby who are an appointment bookings service, who can help cover you during times of high call volumes and ensure none of those valuable leads slip through the net. Similarly, make sure you take note of your current patient enquiry levels, conversions, website analytics and social media followings so you can benchmark any changes as a result of the endorsement.

Maximise the results

You need to get the maximum mileage out of your celebrity endorsement in order to ramp up your visibility and create opportunities with the local and national media. Prepare in advance so you don't get overwhelmed at the time, and think about the following:

- Adding their imagery, written or video testimonial onto your website homepage
- Create a pre-planned social media posting schedule for before, during and after coverage appears
 - ◊ Tag the celebrity, brand, company, journalist and media outlet
 - ◊ Like and retweet everyone who posts about it
 - ◊ Consider paying for boosted posts on Facebook to increase visibility – this can cost as little as £2 but you can set your budget for how much to spend, and how long to boost the post for
- Create a press release and approach local and national media with the story
- Include relevant imagery/testimonials in your patient newsletter and clinic marketing materials

Conclusion

For me, the most important thing is to ensure the celebrity is a good fit for your brand and clinic patient base. Without this alignment, you won't get a lovely halo effect, so much as an oppressive shadow, so remember – don't get starstruck, make sure they're right for you and then go for it!



Julia Kendrick has 10 years of experience in public relations and communications, and is the founder of Kendrick PR Consulting, a consultancy service specialising in medical aesthetics and healthcare PR. A previous winner of the Communiqué Young Achiever Award, Kendrick is passionate about delivering award-winning client campaigns.