

## Building Your Reputation, Online and Otherwise

It has been said that there are three vital steps to building a reputation for excellence in plastic surgery (or any other area):

- 1) Do great work,
- 2) Do great work, and
- 3) Do great work!

Every plastic surgeon these days has (or should have) a website with a blog, a subscriber newsletter and an active social media presence. You join professional organizations like [ISAPS](#) and attend the [Biennial Congress](#) in order to network with colleagues around the globe. These things can allow your reputation to reach more people — but what will that reputation be? Building and expanding your own professional credibility lies very much within your control. It starts with a deceptively simple question: what is your unique position as a plastic surgeon? What sets you apart and makes you different from — and better than — your competitors?

To answer this, you must first have an accurate idea of what your reputation is now: what are people already saying about your skills, your demeanor, your facility and your staff? What reactions do they have to hearing your name? Seek input from your staff, your colleagues in other practices, or even outside opinions from focus groups or professional agencies. Once you've found your answer, you can focus on the next important question: what do you *want* people to say about you and your practice?

Your professional reputation is a like a living thing; it requires consistent care and feeding in order to keep thriving. Engage with users of social media as much as you can (or appoint a trusted member of your staff to take charge of this). Post regular content with images, and invite your followers to share their own content or have conversations about some specific topic. Pay attention to this invaluable user feedback; it can help you get a better sense of why patients are choosing certain procedures, or what services they want that you don't offer (yet). Focus on expanding into only one new area or demographic at a time. Once you've established yourself there, you can begin strategically expanding into the next. Don't try to offer too many new procedures or market to too many groups at one time. Overreach will only hurt the quality of the rest of your work.

Doing great work means not only delivering excellent results to satisfied patients, but also making the entire surgical process as easy and comfortable as possible, from start to finish. Your staff play a vital role in each patient's experience, and are the gatekeepers of your practice. Teach and model warm, courteous behavior in your interactions with them, and make sure they understand the important role they play in each patient's journey. Be the kind of plastic surgeon people want to work for, and you'll never have a shortage of patients.

Above all, have patience. If you're consistently doing great work, people will hear about it through word of mouth (both online and in the real world). Keep encouraging your followers to share your blog posts, tag friends and tell others about your practice. The best marketing is constantly improving your own skills, your staff and facility, and your patients' sense of trust and respect.