

Business Focus: PR

Editorial Planning for Clinic Communications

The most important thing to know about PR is that it's not a one-off activity. Keeping 'public relations' going and maintaining interest in your business is key; be that with patients, the media, or stakeholders. Common PR tools include marketing emails and clinic blogs, but do you ever find that you're stuck for new things to say? Or you haven't had time to update the blog or send out a mail in ages?

Nowadays, fresh content is king – it is the backbone of your PR and marketing activities and when used effectively, it can drive sales during slow periods, highlight new trends and treatments, and build your profile with patients and media. Many practitioners have difficulty finding the time to do this effectively, but with a few simple steps you can take a more joined-up approach to PR that won't swamp your time (or budget!).

Why Create An Editorial Calendar?

Building a comprehensive editorial plan will help structure your approach to clinic communications across the year, so you will have already done the 'hard work' in terms of thinking what to say and how to pull the content together. You can identify business and environmental milestones, and brainstorm interesting story angles to provide to your patients and the media.

Depending on the frequency of your communications, you can plan out what stories, angles, and news and offers you can want to send out each month. Seeing the calendar at a glance helps connections jump out more easily and allows you to plan tailored communications around each milestone to keep a consistent thread through your outreach – such as pre-event 'teaser' posts and followed by post-event reports, learnings and key takeaways.

Get Started!

Begin by building a master editorial calendar so you can layer in this information line by line and match up what you want to cover across each communication 'channel' – i.e. your blog, or a newsletter etc.

There are lots of free templates available to download from the web, but you can even just get started with something in a spreadsheet format:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Seasonal Milestones												
Congresses												
Clinic Milestones												
BLOG PLAN												
NEWSLETTER PLAN												
PATIENT EMAIL PLAN												

Start by planning seasonal opportunities – this is an easy one to get started. This includes national holidays, awareness days, festive events and ‘seasons’ like holidays, wedding season, autumn, Christmas etc. You should aim to have at least one item planned in per month in this line.

Make sure you also include key industry events and clinical milestones – be that congresses, your clinic ‘birthday’ or team news, a new product launch or treatment offering, a paper you’re publishing etc. This will of course need to align closely with your business development plan for the year.

Next, think about layering in treatment offers, news and opinion pieces related to your areas of expertise and passion. By tying in your business objectives and opportunities with your overall dialogue, you can help iron out those peaks and troughs of customer interest and sales, as well as profiling and boosting sales for a particular offering. Regular, relevant contact is a key way of maintaining loyalty among your existing patient base – to keep them coming back to your clinic time and again.

Before you know it, you will have an editorial calendar chock-full of ideas to help structure your content development and struggling for ideas at the last minute will be a thing of the past!

Next time: Building media relationships.



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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.

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