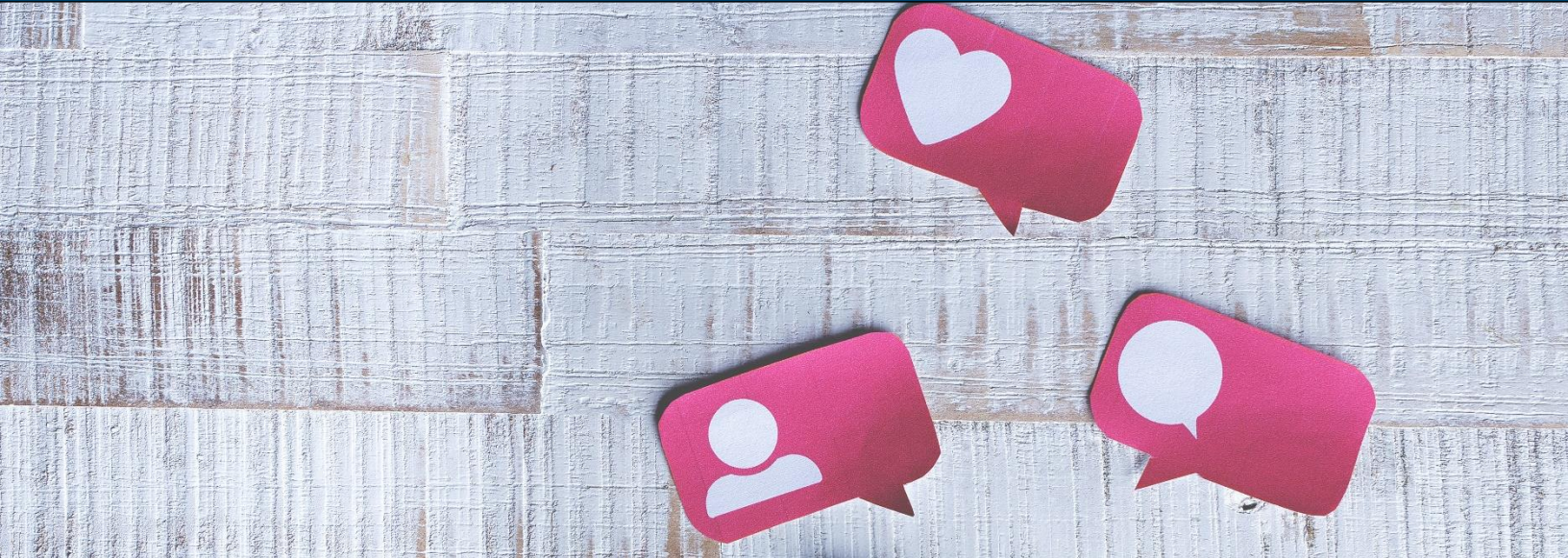


# Breaking Down How to Break into Social Media

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An editorial published in April 2021 highlighted the growing role of the dermatologist in social media (1). In fact, most of the dermatologists interviewed for the editorial shared the sentiment that social media is here to stay and will continue to develop in coming years (1). As experts on skin, hair, and nails, dermatologists are the most qualified to discuss these topics on social media. However, learning the nuances of social media profiles, posts, and videos is no easy feat. We have compiled some tips and useful tools to aid in creating a successful social media presence by effectively branding yourself, engaging your audience, and creating content.

## Branding

Though branding has previously been used as a marketing tool for physical products, branding has now developed into a method of promoting and presenting yourself. Branding on social media can help distinguish yourself and aid in content creation. When creating your brand there are a few tips we suggest:

*Tip 1: Describe yourself or your brand in 5 words*

By selecting five attributes or roles, you will be able to focus your social media content and posts more effectively. Some examples of attributes can be seen in Figure 1. Example 1 paints the picture of someone who owns their own practice and enjoys cosmetics while still wanting to share their personal life, including being a parent and having adventurous hobbies. Example 2 describes a dermatologist who wants to focus on evidence-based, academic medicine with an emphasis on educating their audience on social media. Once this brand is solidified, this should stay consistent in posts on your social media page.

While the person described in example 1 may have a page filled with parental anecdotes or posts describing a fun weekend hiking or camping, these same posts would be less congruent if posted on the social media page of the person described in example 2. The consistency of posts with your branding allows your audience to identify who you are and what content they will be seeing by following your page, and in turn, may lead to more loyal and interested followers.

Figure 1: Examples of Brand Wording

Example 1	Example 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dermatology</li><li>• Business-Owner</li><li>• Parent</li><li>• Cosmetics</li><li>• Outgoing/Adventurous Lifestyle</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dermatology</li><li>• Professional</li><li>• Scientist</li><li>• Academics</li><li>• Teaching</li></ul>

*Tip 2: Creating an aesthetically pleasing social media page*

While the content of your brand is arguably more important than the “look” of your brand, the look of your social media page may attract some followers. We suggest expanding your brand to include the aesthetics of your page by selecting a color scheme that can be applied to your text, photo, and video posts. There are a few useful apps that can help to create an aesthetic brand:

1. Canva- Canva.com allows you to create a “Brand Kit.” This brand kit consists of colors, fonts, templates, and logos. The website stores this information and allows you to apply the kit to every post you create within the website. This service makes it easy to be consistent with your posts and ensure they are all aesthetically pleasing. An example of color and font branding can be seen in Figures 2 and 3.
2. Instagram Filters and Lightroom Presets- If you would like to take your branding to the next level, you can apply the color schemes to your photo and video posts as well. To do so, you can apply the existing filters in the Instagram app or purchase separate filters called “presets” to use in a separate app called Lightroom. If your branding colors include blues or purples, you should select filters or presets with cool tones rather than warmer tones, which pair better with branding colors of reds, oranges, or browns. An example of cool and warm filters can be found in Figure 4.



## Engaging your Audience

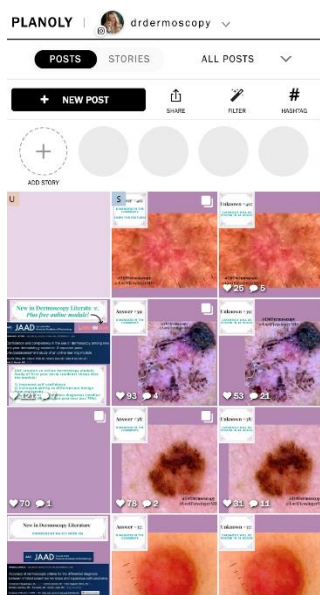
While branding and aesthetics of posting are key to attracting followers, engaging your audience is equally useful. We have provided some suggestions on how to engage your audience below.

### *Consistency with posts*

Posting consistently may be helpful in retaining followers and keeping them interested in your social media page. While you would not want to inundate your followers with 10 posts per day, you may consider posting as frequently throughout the week as your schedule allows. Try to commit to a certain number of posts per week and stay consistent with this. New posts allow your audience to feel as though they have learned or seen something new each time they check your page, which in turn may encourage them to check back more frequently.

There are multiple post planning apps available to aid in consistent posting. For example, the Canva app and the Planoly app allow you to create a post and schedule a time for it to be posted on your page automatically. This is helpful in that you can spend one day a week or even a month creating your social media content and schedule the content to post consistently throughout the week or month without additional effort. An example of Planoly scheduling can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Planning Social Media Posts using Planoly



Credit: Lori Fiessinger, MD, created for @DrDermoscopy

## *Interacting with your audience*

Followers oftentimes post comments or send messages via social media. If time permits, responding to these comments can be helpful in creating a positive relationship with your followers that encourages them to continue following your accounts. However, it is important to note that some comments on social media may be negative and may not require a response. In this instance, it is best to follow your own judgment while remaining professional if you chose to respond.

Interacting with your audience may also include asking them questions through your posts, stories, or videos. Many social media apps have options for you to post polls, question and answer text boxes, or quizzes. Including some of these in your posts is another great way to engage your audience.

If your aim is to gain a large influx of followers within a short period of time, creating an online giveaway is a great option. This would consist of creating a post describing a few items that you will giveaway (i.e. over the counter skin or hair products, a cosmetic service, etc). To enter the giveaway, you may set requirements that encourage people to follow your page. Some requirements for entry could include the following: the person must follow your page, they must tag 3 friends in the comment section of the giveaway post, or they must share the photo on their personal social media page. These types of requirements expose more social media users to your page, many of whom may not have come across your account on their own. With giveaway posts, you must be cautious of employer guidelines prior to posting as there may be regulations that discourage these types of posts.

## **Conclusion**

Social media is a complex tool to engage with the community. It is best to define who you are and start off with what you know when beginning to post on social media. Effectively branding yourself and engaging with your followers, while remaining professional, are key to success on social media.

## **References**

1. Damanpour, S. (2021, April 26). *Social Media and dermatology: A relationship that is more than Skin deep*. Women's Dermatologic Society. Retrieved January 27, 2022, from <https://womensderm.blogspot.com/2021/04/social-media-and-dermatology.html>