



High quality case studies can strongly assist patient's decision-making: learn how to use these to maximise your marketing, and expand your business!

## Case in point

**Julia Kendrick** outlines how high-quality case studies can showcase clinical skills, persuade patients and ultimately boost business

**P**atient case studies are an essential tool in your marketing and PR box, and can be a key deciding factor for patients considering treatment. However, time and again we see poor quality examples that do not truly reflect clinical skill or treatment benefits. This easy step-by-step guide will help you capitalise on your greatest assets: positive patient experiences and strong clinical results. By maximising your existing marketing approaches with high-quality case studies, you can optimise the patient decision-making process and expand your existing customer base, while attracting those all-important new patients.

### APPROACHING CASE STUDIES

Strong case studies can support your business across a plethora of activities, such as clinical research presentations, papers, abstracts and posters, as well as in-clinic materials, website and PR outreach. Before getting started, consider your desired outcomes and target audiences ahead of approaching any patients: do you want to demonstrate a particular treatment effect or benefit? Will you be using these case studies primarily for clinical work, media outreach or patient materials? Would a female or male case study work best for your current needs? Start scoping out what you need and begin matching potential candidates for each strategy.



### WATCH OUT!

The majority of cosmetic surgery "considerers" are keen to achieve a "natural look" – so avoid any case studies who have had a high degree of augmentation or an "extreme" makeover like Jackie Stallone (left). Market research shows that images, which look "too perfect" or "over-done" do not resonate with consumers; they prefer realistic, aspirational images that reflect "the natural look". If you wish to use your case studies for PR and marketing, it's also useful to consider the general traits, which media look for, i.e.

- Between 25-45 years old
- Career/lifestyle focused
- Family orientated (1-2 children)
- Image conscious (hair, fashion, exercise)

Recruitment requires a considerate approach: a good place to start is to discuss the opportunity with existing patients with whom you have good relationships, as they already have some experience of treatment. Start by discussing their positive past treatment experiences and highlight what you're looking to do: show them examples of what this could look like and provide a brief overview of how you are planning to use these materials. Discuss which aspects of their treatment you would like to include within these case studies and help the patient understand why they are particularly suitable.

It's very important to provide a clear overview of what is involved in being a case study – including how these may be used for both clinical and marketing purposes. If patients agree, they should sign a comprehensive consent form, which outlines all these details and gives you the rights to use the materials as stipulated. Patients should also be made aware of how to withdraw their consent and be encouraged to contact you with any questions in the interim. Always ensure you adhere to ABPI and professional codes of practice regarding case study use with consumer audiences – there can be no promotion of prescription-only medicines among the public e.g. no stating "Botox® injections" – stick with "wrinkle-relaxing."



Before

After

### BEFORE AND AFTER BEST PRACTICE

For the photography element of a case study, consistency is key: take the time to ensure your patient has removed all makeup and jewellery, and uses a hairband to keep hair well back from the face. Background should be plain white or black and if possible, the patient should wear the same clothes at each shoot. The only differences we want to see are those as a result of treatment! Use a high-resolution DSLR camera with a tripod or fixed position for steady, consistent shots, which capture the fine details. Ensure the patient is well-lit with no shadows and take a variety of shots, including:

- x4-5 full face and focused area shots
- Full frontal, 3/4 and side views
- "Dynamic" and "at rest" expressions

Avoid temptation...we're talking Photoshop! Resist the temptation to digitally manipulate your shots: quality and integrity are fundamental in building



Before

After

trust, therefore it is vital that your images are a true reflection of the treatment and procedure effect. There is ever-increasing scepticism about the validity of cosmetic, cosmeceutical and aesthetic treatment claims, so it is a huge advantage to provide images which have not been re-touched.

### TESTIMONIALS

Strong testimonials can be a big convincer to those still considering – they bring to life the emotion behind a treatment decision and help us to imagine how we would feel after having treatment ourselves. Work with your case studies to tell the story of their experience, but in a succinct bite-size format (250 words or a one to two minute video). Make sure you cover:

- How they felt BEFORE treatment? What questions did they have? How were these handled?
- What motivated them to have the treatment in the first place?
- What was the treatment experience like? (focus on key concerns such as pain, downtime, recovery etc)
- How does it make them feel NOW
- How have people responded to their new look?

These testimonials can then be incorporated throughout your clinic marketing: website, waiting room materials and PR materials.

### CONCLUSIONS: PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS & THE TIPPING POINT

We all know the power of a personal recommendation: hearing directly from someone we trust instantly has more gravitas and is more likely to influence our decisions. The aesthetics industry in particular suffers from the 'botched bodies' breed of media coverage, which negatively impacts consumer confidence and decision-making. One way to take back control is to literally let your work speak for you by following the tips above to develop high-quality case studies. By highlighting real-life clinical results and getting your patients to act as your advocates through multiple media channels, you will have a highly persuasive tool to convince both new and existing patients to make that decision about a particular treatment, product or procedure and ultimately boost your business potential. **AM**



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