

# **To Dance or Not to Dance? The TikTok Marketing Dilemma for a Seasoned Plastic Surgeon**

**By Terri Ross**

The world of plastic surgery, traditionally built on expertise, trust, and meticulous reputation management, has been dramatically reshaped by the rapid rise of social media platforms. Among these, TikTok has become a powerful force in how patients discover, engage with, and decide on aesthetic procedures. But for the seasoned plastic surgeon, TikTok presents a unique dilemma: to embrace the viral trends or stick to the conventional methods that have worked for decades?

## **The TikTok Phenomenon**

TikTok, with its millions of users and viral trends, has become an undeniable influence in many industries, including aesthetics and plastic surgery. The platform allows surgeons to showcase their work, explain complex procedures in short-form videos, and engage directly with potential patients in a dynamic, informal way. For younger surgeons, the shift to TikTok is natural—they have grown up in an era where personal branding through social media is second nature.

For the seasoned plastic surgeon, however, TikTok can feel unfamiliar and even frivolous. Yet, TikTok's reach cannot be ignored. Its algorithm curates content that is highly discoverable, even for niche audiences, and offers the potential for a wide-reaching, engaged patient base. More importantly, today's patients—especially Millennials and Gen Z—are increasingly turning to TikTok as a source for aesthetic inspiration and education.

## **A Double-Edged Sword**

One of the main concerns for seasoned surgeons considering TikTok is whether it risks diluting their credibility. Can a 15-second dance or catchy meme convey years of surgical experience? Or, worse yet, could it undermine a surgeon's reputation by giving the impression of carelessness or chasing after fads?

While showing personality is key on TikTok, there's a fine line between relatable content and content that may seem too informal for a medical professional.

Surgeons who embrace the platform smartly—by blending education with entertainment—can find ways to navigate these concerns. Many surgeons have found success by focusing on informative content, such as short clips explaining procedures, post-operative care tips, or patient testimonials. These posts still gain traction without requiring surgeons to step too far outside their comfort zone.

### **The Generational Divide in Digital Marketing**

The TikTok dilemma also highlights a broader issue: the generational divide in how plastic surgeons approach digital marketing. Younger surgeons are not just adapting to platforms like TikTok, but they're building entire practices based on social media visibility. For seasoned surgeons, the learning curve is steeper, and the payoff less clear, especially if their existing patient base skews older and prefers more traditional means of communication.

### **A Balanced Approach**

The solution lies in finding the right balance. TikTok doesn't have to be about dancing or engaging in viral challenges. Instead, it can be a powerful tool for demystifying procedures, sharing patient stories, or highlighting the surgeon's unique skills in an engaging and approachable way.

By focusing on education and patient success stories, you can build a TikTok presence that is both professional and appealing to a younger audience. A strategic embrace of TikTok can open doors to attract new patients and ensure your practice remains relevant in the ever-evolving digital age.