

'GOODBYE, RITA' AND HELLO HIGHER EVO ICL PATIENT VOLUME



How one social media campaign helped to build this practice and its phakic IOL conversion rates.

BY ANANDA CASTAÑO MANOTAS, MD

The Clínica Oftalmológica Castilla in Madrid, Spain has specialized in refractive surgery for more than 25 years (Figure 1). More recently, we have also added specialty services including pediatrics, retina surgery, and periocular aesthetics. With our vast experience, we have come to recognize the importance of social media in helping us build our practice's reach. We have found that using social media improves the relationships we have with our existing and potential patients and brings our practice closer to them with the aim of generating trust and transparency.

In this article, we discuss the journey we've taken with social media and highlight one campaign in particular that has helped us to boost our practice's profile and to build our phakic IOL volume to new levels.

THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Clínica Oftalmológica Castilla actively participates in posting on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram, and we routinely engage with our patients in each medium. Our outreach also extends to Whatsapp, where patients can reach out directly to the clinic with any questions they have about our services, products, or continued care after surgery.



Figure 1. Dr. Castaño and Ricardo Romero, MD.

We have found that the users of each of these networks—Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram—are of different demographics and are typically looking for a specific type of information. For instance, patients who use Facebook tend to be older, whereas patients who use Instagram are much more likely to be in the millennial age range. Because of this, we adjust the content we share according to the interests of the demographic we are targeting. Patients and potential patients who look us up on Facebook and Instagram are mainly interested in obtaining information

about our practice and a resolution of doubts. On the other hand, patients who view our practice's Twitter and LinkedIn accounts are a more specialized and professional audience, so the information we share is more scientific and related to the sector.

The clear benefit of using social media is that a particular practice can extend its reach to more patients and can also strengthen the relationships it has with current patients. Using more than one social media platform ensures that you reach a variety of patients, with a variety of wants and interests.



Figure 2. Examples of patients' photos from the Goodbye, Rita campaign.

GOODBYE, RITA

In collaboration with STAAR Surgical, the Clínica Oftalmológica Castilla participated in the GoodBye, Rita campaign. In short, every patient who underwent phakic IOL implantation with the EVO Visian ICL (STAAR Surgical) received a pair of GoodBye, Rita sunglasses without optical prescription. (GoodBye, Rita is a Spanish glasses retailer with what the company describes as a “unique style.”)

After surgery, we took pictures of the patients with their new sunglasses (Figure 2), and we asked them to share the photos on their social media accounts.

This campaign helped drive traffic to our clinic's website and eventually increased patient inquiries, as we gained access to the social circles of our patients—where we could then find new patients and create brand imaging.

Thanks to this campaign, we were able to experience how social networking on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and even LinkedIn influence the patients' relationship with our clinic, how it has helped to

create a more positive image of our clinic, and how willing patients are to share images and experiences across their own networks.

We also have achieved an increase in the number of patients who contact our clinic through the internet, thanks to what they have read and seen about us through other users' social media accounts. We have seen an increase in our patient base in general and also specifically with regard to the Visian ICL. Now other patients want to be able to wear sunglasses without a prescription!

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

In March 2017, I shared my experience with the Goodbye, Rita campaign at a local EVO Visian ICL user's meeting. During my talk, I emphasized the impact our collaboration with STAAR has had in our journey to increase not only our clinic's brand and presence but also patient outreach.

The Clínica Oftalmológica Castilla shares the same philosophy and principles as STAAR Surgical regarding how we provide patients with visual freedom through a top-quality

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premium refractive solution, and we recognize that partnering with an organization such as STARR is a win-win for all. Because they pay attention to the digital world and have tried to make the most of it for them, we were encouraged to do so as well, and the rewards have been plentiful.

CONCLUSION

Social media is a powerful tool. It can help a practice to create a brand image that patients and potential patients can relate to and that they consider trustworthy and personal. Our recent experience with the GoodBye, Rita campaign has proven to us just how strong social media sites are, and how much it can boost a practice's reach and overall image. We plan to implement other similar campaigns in the future to continue our growth in a positive direction. ■

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