



Best Practices of Doctors On Social Media And Key Networking Platforms

Dr. Cheng Ruan interviewing
Dana Corriel, MD



Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

I'm so excited to introduce Dr. Dana Corriel. She is the Founder of DoctorsonSocialMedia.com, and super enthusiastic about creating this giant network of doctors to have conversations and cross-promote on things that doesn't necessarily exist fully. She is a licensed physician, but she's so passionate about the things that she does, and I'm really proud to have her come on to talk about Social Media Doctors or SoMeDocs. I'm so excited to have you on finally, welcome to the summit.

Dana Corriel, MD

Thank you so much, I'm so, so excited to be here.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Yeah, so, you know, you have such an interesting story, but I'd rather you tell it that than me. So how did you come to where you are right now with Social Media Doctors?

Dana Corriel, MD

So, I was a practicing internist. I practiced for a while for around 15 years, but during that time I had some experiences that set me apart from what other physicians traditional experiences and that I took a break away from the clinical medicine setting, and I was acquainted during that time with so many different perspectives in life that I probably would not have been privy to if I did not take that break. So taking that break from medicine allowed me to sort of look at life differently and see what's out there and also experiment with some things in life that I just probably wouldn't have had time to. So that led me to discover the digital world and the power of it, and yada, yada, yada, I created my own personal online brand and then I basically opened up a startup in order to help other doctors in this world do the same.





Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

That's so great because I think reciprocation is kinda lost currently, especially with marketing and social media and stuff like that. And more importantly, I think that, I mean, doctors are kind of trained in a very hierarchal format where you go to school, more school, even more school, internship, residency, and fellowship for some people, and then you're out in the world and you're like, oh, that's kind of it, let me just practice medicine a little bit, right? And so I think we have to respect that everyone has their own journey, and I think part of the reason why people are even watching us right now is because they also have their own journey. So if you have your own journey out there, go for it. But specifically, you know, you decided that you took a break and you're like, you know what? I wanna help doctors, right? I wanna help other people like myself have a voice. I'm sure that's just started as an idea, but how did you even develop to what it is right now? What is the power behind that?

Dana Corriel, MD

So first of all, it takes time for your idea to be baked into fruition. I always knew what I was creating, I just didn't necessarily have the steps laid out or the tools that I needed that I have now in my hands, and there's still probably a ton of things I could do better to even expand it even further. So yeah, I think that all of our ventures start from an idea and from like that random discussion that we have with someone, but to actually make it to breathe life into something like this takes a really long time and I think the problem for us as medical doctors is that we've spent so much time earning our degree, that a lot of us don't have the time, the energy, we're burnt out, so who's going to really start with a startup, I mean, you think about all the famous people that have had successful startups and a lot of them started early because they really don't have a lot to lose, they have a lot of time on their hands, they're dedicated, whereas we're sort of like midlife, many of us are midlife and we're going, wait, there's literally nothing else I can do right now because I'm working 80 hours a week for my employer, and I don't even have time to pursue a startup, which takes well over the 80 hours that I'm working currently.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Yeah, absolutely, and you're absolutely right, it takes time to bake. I really like the way they used to say that. I used to call it the incubation engine, you have to incubate in your head a little bit and then see what is out there. But it's a risk, you know, as physicians, we come from sort of, let's say we have a job, where you have an employer or we're in private practice, right? And then we decided to do something a little different and take that risk, there's the financial risk, there could be a legal risk, and you're stepping into the unknown in midlife, like for the first time ever, and it's pretty scary, right?





Dana Corriel, MD

It's extremely scary and it's extremely risky, which is why I go back to the point I just made, which is that this is why a lot of successful startups are actually created by younger folks because when you don't have as much to risk, then you kind of give it your all and you just go, well, if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out. So someone maybe who's younger in their career or younger in general and doesn't yet have a career, can do this to see, well, where will it take me, or if you don't have a family that you need to support, that's dependent on your paycheck, then sure, you could do that, and if you don't like have kids that you need to pay attention to, then you can work 24/7, right? Like I love pop culture, and The Social Network is one of those movies that really stand out to me because whether you like what Facebook has grown a lot or not, and I can talk about the positives and the negatives, but he is someone that grew something that's extremely impactful, but when you even just watching that movie, you see those scenes where he got his friends to be sitting there and working around the clock to create all of those codes to make Facebook work, and that's what's needed with a startup today because especially in the digital world, you have to constantly stay ahead of the curve 'cause there's constant changes going on and algorithm changes, etc, etc.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Yeah, and the pandemic changed everything. It changed the demand, it changed I think digital media behavior, and it changed actually I think physician voices as well. You know, there's a lot of things going on and censorship and stuff like that, so I think we're in an ever changing world that's gonna be perpetually evolving. So, enough of the difficult stuff, let's talk about some of the more exciting stuff, is that, you know, you are where you are right now because you took a big risk, right? So, I'm sure just like myself, that I also took big risks, but what do you think are sort of the biggest mistakes that doctors do make when it comes to social media and marketing in general?

Dana Corriel, MD

So, first of all, I wanna preface by saying that I don't think we can generalize and say, this is a mistake for you because I truly, truly, truly am a believer, everyone has a different trajectory and our like the customization of our business journey, our career journey needs to be stressed, like we need to really say to ourselves, I am me and what I need maybe different than Dana Corriel or than Cheng, you know, like we have different things that we're doing and so a mistake for me, isn't necessarily a mistake for you, but I'm still going to generalize and say that one of the mistakes I see being done with physicians who tackle social media, is to consider the social of social media, is to think that social media is social. Now, social media can be social, but I don't believe that looking at social media as social is actually the key to our happiness or anything else.





Social media is media, and the second you truly grasp that, is the second that you give yourself the chance to succeed by using this very powerful tool. And I say that because it is so double edged, like it has so much power to like propel us to such heights and also the same potential to make us feel like we are the loneliest person on the planet, and I've seen people sort of jump, you know, commit suicide, because they felt like the whole world just turned upside, right? You see teenagers that have a comment said about them or some, you know, I've seen so many stories about someone being bullied online and then killing themselves, and it's horrible because at the moment you're feeling like nobody likes you, the world is against you, and that can be really, really bad pressure and really we're humans, so to me the number one advice is probably to separate social and media and to really start understanding that yes, there could be social components to it, but at the end of the day this is media, your real friends are literally your real physical friends who know you, who know that you make mistakes, who know what you mean, who know who you truly are deep down inside.

I think that's really, really important. And then other pieces of advice that I can give from there is that you should really think twice about pigeonholing yourself into a side, like when something comes up and you're sort of posting about your side, you are pigeonholing and people also make assumptions from your social media presence, like, oh, if they're saying this then it means they're that kind of person, or if they are saying that it means this about them. And the same goes for extreme viewpoints, understand that people interpret, and in media, remember this is not social media, it's media, in media when you put yourself out there, you can't take it back. So whatever you say can have consequences. So it's about thinking through, it's about remembering that the space is curated and it's also at the end of the day about forgiving yourself and remembering that life is more than just what exists in the digital world, it's the real world, and so have people that you trust set up in real life that you regularly connect with to remind you about the human good that you represent.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Absolutely, and that's so beautifully put, probably the best response out of that question I've ever gotten to be honest.

Dana Corriel, MD

Thank you for that, I appreciate it.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

So, let me, 'cause you know, I've been on social media for a while too and developing my direct





consumer channels, but what you said is powerful and it's pretty emotional for me 'cause I kind of went through that line of depression about seven years ago, when I first started going like every day on Facebook Live, and at that point I just wrote a book, I was working on a book and preparing for launch, and you're right, there is not necessarily clear separation between like social media and the fact that this is social, but doesn't mean that hey, the world is against me, I've been there and it sucks. It's painful, but I got through it and I realized that, hey, the family and the friends and the people that are around us, that's far more powerful than my Instagram window.

Dana Corriel, MD

And I actually see it the other way as well, because some people I'm seeing sort of fall into that trap of becoming an influencer and like hitting that high, if you let say, become viral, but forgetting that you're still a human and just not acting nicely about certain things. And that's where we sort of need to separate the digital world and what really matters in life.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Yeah, absolutely. And one of the things I talked about on another segment with Brent Lacey actually is that, you know, we talked about how whatever we're putting out there in the digital world, the digital media, our great, great, great grandchildren are actually gonna see it 'cause Google literally indexes everything, which is different from how our great-grandparents are before that age, so whatever we're putting out there, it's there whether it's behind a private wall or whatever, but it's there, it's indexed. And if it's indexed, it's on a digital fingerprint, so whatever we put out there is really the energy that we want to portray and knowing that like several generations down they're gonna see this, you know, and it's gonna be a lot easier to look for older relics, digital relics I call it of people from before and really have to take that into consideration. But you talked about earlier separating the fact that social media is still a media, and I think what you're trying to get at is maybe that whatever that's being portrayed on media is intentional, right? And so someone may seem to have a really good life and do X, Y, and Z and be an influencer, but behind the digital wall is still a person with the same struggles and we really have to remember that as well, because if we don't it can create a lot of resentment and a lot of negativity as well, is that right?

Dana Corriel, MD

Yeah, I call it curation. It's absolutely a curated a platform. And, you know, I see a lot of like the buzzwords of like authenticity, be authentic and be transparent, and those are very important, but remember even the people that are saying that you should be that, and sometimes even the people that are that, are still curating their presence. So you can be authentic but still kind of be





following a script or following a narrative. So just always remember that, and again, like it's a very complicated world out there and anything that you do online may represent curation and not necessarily represent the person as they are in real time in real life.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Yeah, absolutely. And you know what I have three beautiful daughters, I have a seven-year-old, a five-year-old, and a three week old. So she's in the other room right now, and seeing the five-year-old and the seven-year-old, they're sort of in this generation where they really think the content that's curated for them on media, you know, YouTube, YouTube Kids, whatever, is part of a reality and I constantly have to really remind them, say, hey, this is not necessarily reality, this is just what they put on there, it's like a show, it is a show for you, you have to understand that. And I fear for sort of that generation, being a father of three girls that I want them to like not have self image issues, knowing that this is rampant even in adults, and doctors are not immune to this process because deep inside we're all human as well.

Dana Corriel, MD

Oh, 100%, one of the most important things that I hope to pass on to my own three children, and I have three boys that are much older than yours, but one of the most important things that I want my kids to grow up doing, is thinking for themselves, because what I see is a huge problem that's beginning to take shape, and unfortunately it has infiltrated into medicine and is affecting physicians is this concept of group think, and I'm not even talking about a specific topic, it's just in general this whole mentality that if we're not thinking like you, then we're somewhat defective or somewhat should not be followed, and it's this really vicious circle that I see playing out on platforms where someone will become an influencer and call over their influencer buddies, and then they almost like group, they form like a group response on someone else, and then that person feels little, and again, it becomes beyond a child's game, now it becomes adults are affected, and you're affecting an adult life, an adult who is free to maybe say something and even if what they're saying is wrong or is a mistake, you have essentially created a bullying type of response, which is making that person feel really small.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Yeah, yeah, and so we really have to come together. You know, now that now that we're talking about this, and I haven't even thought about this before until you just mentioned this just now. I think there's a responsibility of people coming together and curating messages that are positive and that are very fruitful. But let's talk about your platform, 'cause I'm excited about your platform, and I've been in your Facebook group for a little while now, and now starting to pull all





sorts of different things, and we had a really fun session last night where I actually pitched this summit in 45 seconds, which is really hard to do in 45 seconds. But I think the energy and by the way, the female physician representation is on point, so congratulations to you on that. My wife's an OB-GYN so we always talk about under-representation of female physicians in larger societies and stuff like that. But let's talk about your platform. So, let's talk about the different elements of your platform 'cause if I were to go to your website, there's so many different elements there and they're all very pretty by the way, so congratulations on that. Well, let's talk about what's what and a little more details into what you do.

Dana Corriel, MD

Yeah, I think that what really stands out about SoMeDocs and DoctorsonSocialMedia.com is just the vast amount of resources that we have built in such a small amount of time, and so the main point of SoMeDocs is really to just help physicians to expand their career. We do that through different mediums, through different resources is maybe an easier word to understand in that there's these interactive spaces, so it's important for me to have a place where doctors can easily freely and transparently exchange their work. So there's interactive spaces, there's also a platform I'm building on the website and the reason I'm doing that is because the interactive space is using Facebook's platform, but Facebook's platform is not decentralized, it is owned by Mark Zuckerberg, so I don't get to make the rules, Mark does. So he's limiting how much people can see what I put out there for a various amount of reasons but I can't help that. But if I build my own platform online, then I can make the rules, and if it's important for me for everyone to get seen then I could start doing that there.

So there's the interactive spaces, the website, DoctorsonSocialMedia.com, and then there's also what's really important for me is that there's both free and paid options, because I do wanna make sure that everyone is sort of included in different ways. And then there's services that are existed to help docs build whatever they need to build digitally in order to get seen. So, there's so much I can touch on, but just something that's really important to say is there's a lot of interactive spaces out there right now, especially on Facebook. There's a lot of Facebook groups and I give respect to everybody that has built a group, it's really hard to build a group and it's even harder to nurture it. The reason why I think that we stand out is because we truly facilitate the exchange of information without censoring anybody. And the reason it's important for me to state that out loud is that I opened it because I felt censored. There are other groups in existence where I felt extremely stifled because if someone asks about a resource and you're growing that resource, and you're in a group that's meant to highlight that resource, you should be able to answer with your resource without feeling that censorship or without feeling like you have to do





something that's not clear. So it's that like overall sense of transparency, that to me as an entrepreneur I'm frustrated with, and I'm trying really hard to set that up on DoctorsonSocialMedia.com, so that everybody feels comfortable depending at what level they're engaged.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Absolutely, and so I share that level of feeling of censorship with you, been there many times, you know, you're right, there are very large groups, very, very, very large group, Facebook groups, for doctors in different categories and stuff like that. And most of it's really, there's people presenting that they have challenges. And if me like my brand, you know, I coach businesses and I provide the value there, but necessarily can't say that you actually provide the actual value, there's that level of harshness that does go on, so I really do appreciate the platform, but I think the best thing about your platform, it is the authenticity and the transparency, because I was on there last night, 1:00 AM, I couldn't shut my brain off. Well, that's part of the reason 'cause I had to feed the baby, the newborn, but I got on there and I looked and I saw so many doctors were doing so many beautiful things with doctors in mind. So why will we not put that out there, right?

Dana Corriel, MD

Well, that's my problem is that I see us as being stifled if there isn't a place where we can fully share what we're doing and again, I am not saying it because I want to hurt anyone else who's doing that because I do respect all the other entrepreneurs, but I think there's a big difference between setting something up entrepreneurially and having rules within that entrepreneurial venture that makes sense and are transparent, versus setting up something where everyone gets it and there's rules to actually follow. And so that to me is very important and that being said, I know that everybody who sort of has these spaces grapples with the fact that we don't own it, and that makes us sometimes seem like we are petty or making rules that are annoying, but we also grapple with all these algorithms that push us down, so we gotta make different rules, but my issue is just that the physician community needs a space that they trust, where everybody can come together and be represented in an equal way and so I'm hoping that SoMeDocs, the Facebook group, and again, we have various spaces, but the physician only Facebook group is at least a place where we can openly kind of just share the links to our work, and if someone asks about a resource that they need, if someone needs a business coach or a business website, then everyone should have the chance to put the links to their business websites. And if you wanna use marketing language in the comment section, then great use marketing language, and if you want to not then don't, but everyone should sort of have the option to be visible for whatever work they're putting in an effort to. So again, there's free options,





and then it was important for me to also build a paid option because some people actually want us to help them, they want help with marketing, they want help with a website, they want help to get their word on their new podcast or book and just putting their stuff down in the comment section is not enough, so we give them an extra space and ways to do that separately.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Absolutely, and that's part of the reason I created this summit as well, 'cause we have six large companies here that was MD started, MD owned, MD run, and it's beautiful because it was all this was really designed for doctors to really decrease the burnouts, decrease fixed costs, stay in private practice, and also have personal growth and also personal finances. I mean, those are all the things that really plague most of the doctors that I know, right? And why not feature doctors who have curated this very thing for the pain point that they've experienced before. So I really want to congratulate you on that, and I'm very appreciative, so I wanna thank you as well.

Dana Corriel, MD

Oh, I appreciate that, and maybe a good thing to add here is that because I do know that the people that are coming to your summit where this is going to be heard are building their own practice or are looking for a way to get their voice out there for their practice and may say for example, why should I care about digital presence? This isn't for me, this is for someone who has a podcast or has written a book, but that could not be further from the truth because everybody should be using the digital space to be bringing in their clients and their patients. So really, again, it goes back to the beginning of this interview, which is, don't look at it as social, look at it as media, and then leverage really this free space online, where you can bring eyeballs into who you are and what you're creating, and then convert those eyeballs into actual paying clients or coming patients, you know, patients coming to your clinic, this is how marketing works, and life is about marketing, and succeeding in life is about marketing.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Yeah, absolutely. And I'm gonna add another detail to that, which is there's a lot of doctors who are listening to this who have plenty of patients. Sometimes they think they have a little too much, and they don't think I don't need to really market, but here's the thing, when a patient comes through a doctor's office or you see them on telemedicine, they already know you through your reviews, they already know you through your media presence or lack there of, they are pre-primed and their attitude towards you is already predicated by what they saw on the first and probably second page of Google search, right? And so the way that we are communicating to the patients and have patient buy-in, there's subconscious cues that the patients don't tell you





about because they've already seen your digital presence, and we see this all the time. And so if you do have a great digital presence and put a lot of just positive things out there, be part of the community, guess what? When the patients sit down with you, when the patients see you on telemedicine, you know, they'd be like, hey doc, you know, I just saw you last week at this fundraiser, and this is so cool, I just wanna say that before we start the visit, we get that all the time and actually just puts a smile on our face and it puts a smile on the patient's face, no matter what situation that they're in, because now there's a built-in level of connection that's really there. And I experienced that in my previous practice when I was part of Walk with a Doc, we experienced this currently because we built our free online digital courses for the whole world to see on different disease states, and they really appreciate that, we build meditation courses, tight sheep, and we're starting our culinary one as well.

So we're starting to get a lot of feedback from our current patients like, hey, you know what? I haven't been back in a while, I just saw that you did this cool thing online, but now I'm ready to change my life, so I'm gonna stop smoking, I'm gonna get fit and stuff like that. So I do think that there's a huge level of presence from a digital media that predetermines the engagement that doctors have with their patients and it's really beautiful to see that transition. And I encourage all doctors, even if you're like busting at the seams with patients to build and curate that presence and I think honestly probably the best place to start is SoMeDocs, it's DoctorsonSocialMedia.com, just get in there to see what other people are doing, look at best practices, look at the Q&A's within the Facebook group, and it's something that I really cherish, you know, even at my stage in what I'm doing with the media, I still went into that group and I saw there's just some really cool stuff going on, so we wanna be learning from each other, and also making sure that we're supporting each other, reciprocating this support no matter what our beliefs are, but actually reciprocating the support because we're all physicians trying to survive and do the right things, makes sense?

Dana Corriel, MD

Absolutely, amen.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Amen, and so having said that, how can people find you? So we talked about the website, can you just repeat that URL one more time.

Dana Corriel, MD

Yeah, it's spelled out it's DoctorsonSocialMedia.com, and the tag is SoMeDocs, S-O-M-E-D-O-C-S,





and the reason is it's short, SoMe is social media, so it's Social Media Docs, doctors on social media, so it's @SoMeDocs, and then me personally, of course, we have to distinguish now between a company and me personally, I'm personally @DrCorriel that's abbreviated, D-R-C-O-R-R-I-E-L.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Perfect, excellent, they can find you on LinkedIn and social media and all those places, right? Absolutely, well, okay, so before we go, I'm gonna ask you a question that I ask pretty much all the speakers, what have you learned recently that you wish you knew maybe five years ago and you pick one thing?

Dana Corriel, MD

Oh, that's hard. One thing that I learned. I think that it would probably be the benefits of networking. And I know that that sounds very simple and people listening might say, obviously networking is positive, but I really don't think that many of us truly grasp the power in truly opening yourself up to meeting anybody and everybody, and to also actively joining networking efforts, and part of that is what you mentioned at the beginning, that networking event that I put together for SoMeDocs that I hope to do regularly, the whole purpose is that I suddenly recognized it and I was like, there really isn't something similar for doctors where it's so open and so transparent that I'm going to try and head it and see if it works and if doctors like it, you know, so it's probably the power of networking.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Excellent, that's very well put, I agree with you, the power of networking is something that I learned recently in a different way, because I used to network to actually bring in patients who build a practice and, you know, we have multiple clinicians within the practice and stuff like that. But I recently discovered the power of networking with people in the medical space has really changed my views on medicine and politics and things that actually can be done, and it really free my soul a little bit, knowing that there are things that we can to change things actually at the federal level, but I'm very, very much appreciate a view of saying that. So listen, thank you for being on here. Once again guys, go to DoctoronSocialMedia.com all spelled out, there's no abbreviations here, check it out and then there's so many cool things on that site, there's online courses, and all these different things. And then if you guys want to participate in the next, what do we call it? Rapid-Fire, like 45 minute pitch.

Dana Corriel, MD

Yeah, speed networking.





Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Speed networking, I actually signed up for the next month's event, so I'll try to be on there as well, just to practice my pitch for 45 seconds, and then I'll see you there. So once again, thank you so much for coming on the summit. Appreciate you.

Dana Corriel, MD

Oh, absolutely, and thank you so much for having me on and anyone who wants to reach out to see if we have resources that fits you, please do so, don't hesitate.

Dr. Cheng Ruan, M.D.

Excellent, thank you.

