



Competitive Marketing to Make Money

ABSTRACT:

A good marketing plan is vital for any business to grow, and, especially coming out of the recession, it is the ideal time to let your current and potential patients know about your aesthetic services and products.

The economy is turning around, and people are starting to spend money again. So, when was the last time you invested in your business through new marketing tactics? By pulling back too much for too long, you can risk losing your place in the market to another business that is willing to risk a bit for growth.

Having the most beautiful location and state-of-the-art services does not always guarantee you will have the patient flow you need. You have to invest in a plan for growth, and one of the most critical growth aspects for practice owners to consider is a marketing plan, as well as how they are going to keep a steady flow of patients coming through the door.

Upselling

One of most cost-effective ways to market is to upsell to your existing patient base. And there are several methods that, when combined or used independently, produce results.

Treatment room marketing.

Begin by asking yourself, "What services or products could I offer to this patient that I haven't offered before?" Next, introduce new product lines in your treatment rooms that help maintain results, and have your staff let patients know about them.

Practice marketing. Your office environment is the perfect showcase for before-and-after photos, product

posters, a video demonstrating your procedures, tester products in your restrooms, brochures in your consulting room and a makeover portfolio in your waiting area. Use these opportunities to let your patients know about the range of treatments you offer, as well as treatments that pair well together.

Direct mail pieces. Create a newsletter for your practice. It can be weekly, monthly, quarterly—whatever works for you. Also, it can be printed out and mailed to your patients, or you can use an e-mail newsletter format to save on costs. A good newsletter should include concise information on your practice and its services, any special offers you have available, information about upcoming events and new products or services, and possibly a section where you relate current events or news to your practice. Personalize it to keep it from being dry, but make sure you convey all the relevant information you can.

Retail area marketing. The appearance of your retail area should be constantly changing with the seasons and holidays, and you can have your team create spontaneous themes that inspire customers to explore the area. Use fresh colors and props, and rearrange products frequently. Shelf-talkers can promote features and benefits. Give away a slow-moving product with a popular one in a "gift-with-purchase" gift bag. Put samples and testers on shelves at eye level, and display your most profitable retail item prominently on the front desk, remembering to change the item each month.

Front desk marketing and closing the sale. The front desk is where the sale takes place, so it's arguably the most important point in the transaction. Educate your staff on closing statements, so these statements become second nature to

them. Good closing statements can include: "Which of these products would you like to take home today?" and "Let's pre-book your next three visits—are Tuesdays or Thursdays better for you?"

Attracting patients

Getting new patients in the door is necessary for any business to survive. But before you start marketing for new patients, you need to answer some important questions: Who is my target market? What specific income streams do I most want to promote? What percentage of profitability am I expecting to gain with my marketing? What's uniquely different about this practice? What needs does it fulfill?

Once you answer these questions, you should have a better idea of your market, potential new patients and what services they like and don't like, as well as what has drawn patients to your practice, and how you can capitalize on your unique features in order to attract new ones.

Invest in a great Web site. Your Web site is your virtual business. With the aid of professional Web designers and search engine optimizers, you can attract a large number of leads to receive automatic e-mail updates from your practice. For this, you can use regular newsletters, giveaway offers, product and service pages, service providers, and photos of your practice, as well as of before-and-afters. More savvy consumers are looking for your services via the Internet, so it's important to have a strong presence on it.

Hosting a patient recruitment seminar. The main objective here is to consult with as many potential patients as possible all at the same time. Being behind a podium gives you an opportunity to give a



presentation focused on products and services targeted to your audience.

Begin by putting together your invitation list: your database of existing leads, prospects and patients, beauty media, members of the local chamber of commerce, and other wellness businesses, such as weight loss centers and yoga studios. Include loyal, satisfied patients who are willing to stand up and give a testimony on your work.

Advertise your seminar one month in advance via your Web site, newsletter and signage in your practice. You can also take it to local media, if you like. Plan on a two- to three-hour time frame for the event, and include refreshments and giveaways. When the media arrives, hand them your press kit and a gift certificate for free services. As your guests arrive, have travel-size products in a gift bags for them.

Structure your presentation to offer solutions, telling stories about actual patient situations and results, and describing treatment processes and benefits, including facts, statistics and expert quotes. Do demonstrations, pass around samples, show photos, and include a menu, brochures and incentives in your attendees' gift bags.

Conclude your presentation with a call to action that creates urgency, such as, "For all those interested in taking advantage of our seminar special, join us now in the lobby to schedule your treatment package." Also, allow time for a question-and-answer session and face-to-face networking opportunities.

Expertise

In order to establish yourself as a go-to medical aesthetic and beauty expert, you must commit to possessing and maintaining long-term goodwill and industry-known leadership skills. You must network and

Brand marketing can make a business or practice appear much bigger—and more **SUCCESSFUL**—than it may actually be.

build relationships with industry professionals, often through philanthropic and community contributions.

You also may benefit from having a public relations agent who can keep your name out front and aid in maintaining ongoing relationships with television, radio, and local and industry media editors.

Your brand

One of the most valuable assets in business is the combination of words, images and feelings evoked from a brand. Your brand is unique to your practice. It's your collection of services, products, your staff's uniforms, stationary, e-mail signature blocks, and your on-hold message. It's the music you play, the sights, sounds, flavors, aromas and feel of your unique environment. Everything you do should reinforce your brand.

From a first impression to the end of a patient experience to home maintenance regimens, your mission, core values, color schemes, logo and labeling should speak volumes about your practice. After all, it is your brand. What do you want your brand to embody? Think of ways you might verbalize your message in a visual way. Your brand logo needs to be prominently displayed everywhere your patients are served, such as with one or two consistent color themes threading all of your treatment rooms together.

Also, legally register your brand, potentially including names, logos and slogans. If you're trying to build brand equity, you don't want

someone else using your brand and potentially damaging your reputation.

Coming together

There are many facets to marketing, and it can be easy to get overwhelmed without a good game plan. However, remember small marketing tactics allow big marketing goals—and increased patient flow—to happen. The important lesson is to invest now, be smart about your resources and reach out to successful people who have already made your goals happen. Learn from experience, play on your strengths and focus on patient satisfaction, because their word-of-mouth recommendations can be priceless in the world of marketing. ●●



Bryan Durocher is the founder of Durocher Enterprises, which provides coaching, consulting, global industry trends, marketing solutions, and Web site and e-commerce development for spas, medical spas and industry professionals worldwide.

TAKEAWAYS

- Upselling is one of the best methods of marketing.
- Target the right markets and stay true to your offerings, and you'll see your business grow.
- Becoming the go-to expert in your area lends to your credibility and also helps get your name out to a larger audience.
- Protecting your brand is essential.