

Growth spurt

Pam Underdown continues her series on how to master the business of aesthetics by looking at “quick wins” and immediate improvements that will help you see the wood through the trees when it comes to your business growth

Welcome to the fourth in a six article series to help you to ‘Master the Business of Aesthetics’ and be on your way to achieve exactly what you want for your business. This month I would like to share with you some of the strategies that have bought my clients some quick wins and immediate improvements along with new found energy, belief and confidence. So, if you are struggling to see the wood through the trees, then I hope you find this useful.

STRATEGY NUMBER 1 - Out with the new, in with the old

The majority of aesthetic practitioners I speak to tend to focus on getting new patients, but if you need instant revenue – then the best place to find additional sales is with your existing patients. You are sat on a goldmine if you are lucky to have a database of inactive patients who once came to see you – what can you do to re-ignite your database? What needs do your existing patients have that you aren’t meeting? Ring them and ask them. Are they aware of all of your treatments and services? Remember there is nothing more frustrating for your patients to not know how else you can help them, as the chances are they could go elsewhere and not get the best result or service. Send a survey (via a tool such as SurveyMonkey.com) or attach a list of problems you can help to resolve (not a list of treatments you do or a list of equipment names) to your consent

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form and ask them to tick the box if they are interested in finding out more. This is a very subtle way of opening the door to cross selling if it’s not an area you are comfortable with.

STRATEGY NUMBER 2 - Engage, empathise and educate

How often are you talking to your patients? Don’t assume all communications should be sales driven, the majority should be service driven. Are you calling all of those who took home a retail product, or a tester to ask them how they are getting on? Are you calling all new patients the day before they are booked in to for a consultation to introduce yourself and start building rapport? No one likes hard sales but we do like hearing from businesses who add value to our lives with no return demands. Just add value whilst maintaining dialogue. How often should you be communicating with your patients? Do you know what your patients enjoy? Have you ever asked them? Don’t assume a weekly email is too often; instead ask, but also monitor and test the response from your communications. I send my email list two very useful business and marketing emails a week – there are no sales messages, just useful tips.

One of my most successful clients sends weekly educational email’s and their patients love them. Don’t be afraid of

regular, but consistent and useful communications – both online and offline across multiple media.

STRATEGY NUMBER 3 – Break through your budget

If you stop and think about it, as an aesthetic practitioner and therefore, as a business owner, everything in your life, your business, your finances and your future is linked directly to your ability to find and retain a steady flow of patients who are willing to pay the right price for your treatments. So are you willing to invest your time to get really good at this? You must learn to love marketing and learn to become more effective at driving revenue from your marketing. Don't treat marketing as a cost. Whilst stopping advertising when times are tough is easier than letting a member of staff go, turn this thinking on its head: marketing shouldn't be a cost – you should be able to spend money on marketing, know what cash arrives at your business and what that means in terms of the lifetime value of your patients. So if you know it costs you £100 to get a new patient through the door but that patient is worth £2000 over their lifetime with you, then how many £100's would you spend to get a steady flow of new patients? Do you know this correlation in your business?

STRATEGY NUMBER 4 – Follow up and follow through

Are you following up with everyone who has enquired? Or are leads slipping through the cracks? The biggest mistake is that most people assume that if they haven't bought from you now, then they never will. We all

do it, we enquire about new products and services all the time, but we don't always take action and buy straight away. Sometimes it happens weeks, or even months down the line. There is a mountain of money hidden in your business that are waiting there for multiple follow ups. If you aren't communicating with them, in multiple ways – emails, phone, by mail, etc -then you need a system in place to do it for you.

STRATEGY NUMBER 5 – Sell to serve

Your ability to sell and understand what's involved – is essential. The majority of aesthetic practitioners (and other business owners) don't want to sell, as most people

don't particularly like selling, because they think its unethical and pushy. Most people go into business as they are really motivated to do what they do or they really love it. It doesn't matter if you are just starting out, or have been in aesthetics for years, you have to be great at selling and marketing – in the right, ethical way of course.

So, instead of thinking of it as selling, think of it as educating your patients about how you can help them, because if you don't - then you are doing them and you a disservice. My core message for you today is to understand how important it is to really master the art of selling – everyone in your business must be a sales person, whether that is your receptionist, or your fellow aestheticians. George Forman the former boxer said the one thing he would always do in life is to teach his children to sell. This is one of life's most important skills, if you can sell, then you can always make a living and you can always get a job. You know as a business owner you would snap up

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the best sales people that came into see you tomorrow, so why are you any different?

STRATEGY NUMBER 6 – Create a patient who brings you more patients

Most businesses rely on accidental referrals – the ones that happen by accident, simply because most people are not being proactive when asking for referrals. You need to have a system in place, along with a referral culture that ensures both your team and your existing patients understand that referrals are a core part of how you grow your business. Say something like “I build my business primarily through word of mouth referrals and recommendation with patients who are just like you. So if I do a good job for you and you are very happy with the results of your treatments and delighted with our service, would you be willing to recommend me to someone who would also benefit from my services?” Imagine if every person bought one new person into your business each week, you would never have to do any marketing again.

STRATEGY NUMBER 7 – Are you a true business owner?

Some people think they are, because they have set up and run a business. But the stark reality is we have created a job for ourselves and if we take a day off, then our revenues are affected. The definition of a true business owner is someone who has a business that can operate without them. To get there you need to become dispensable as soon as possible. Extract everything out of your head and the heads of your team and get it onto paper. You don't have to aspire to be a franchise – you just need to turn your business into a well-oiled machine. If you or anyone in your business can no longer work, then someone else should be able to

take over and carry on running your business. Start by identifying your key processes, then document everything. How far away are you from being a true business owner?

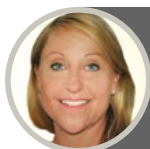
STRATEGY NUMBER 8 – Focus on your 20% (outsource the other 80%)

The use of your time is directly linked to the money you are making. How you manage your time is a core part of being a business owner. Without exception – the most successful business owners in the world achieve so much more in their business and life because they have created a time revolution using the 80/20 principle. The 80/20 Principle (Pareto's Law) states that 80% of results come from just 20% of causes. This will have such a huge impact on your life if you learn it and implement it. Whether you are new to this or whether you have heard it before – it doesn't matter. Are you doing it and are you living it?

STRATEGY NUMBER 9 – Be Better Than You Were Yesterday

You need to create a high level of belief in yourself and unreasonable expectations of yourself to make sure you truly believe you will be successful (Lewis Hamilton had a genuine belief at the age of 12. President Obama did too when he chose to run for president). You need to have strong belief structures and unreasonable expectations for yourself. Look at your language and how you talk to yourself, do you fill your head with negative language? Just by seeing and visioning yourself achieve – your brain starts to build muscle memories – so when you do start to see yourself succeed – your brain will know it's not the first time.

In next month's article, I will be focusing on the key strategies for online and digital success. **AM**



Pam Underdown is the founder and owner of Aesthetic Business Transformations, a business growth specialist working exclusively to help medical aesthetic business owners increase their profits and reduce their costs. Pam has more than 25 years' business development, sales and marketing experience and has been specialised in the aesthetics industry since 2005.