9 STRATEGIES GUARANTEED TO TRANSFORM YOUR AESTHETIC PROFITS IN 12 MONTHS OR LESS

PAM UNDERDOWN
INTRODUCTION

THE 9 STRATEGIES GUARANTEED TO TRANSFORM YOUR AESTHETIC PROFITS IN 12 MONTHS (OR LESS)

1. Decrease the Number of Patients You Loose
2. Create a Compelling Patient Experience
3. Take Great Care of Your Platinum Patients
4. Increase the Number of Times a Patient Returns or Refers
5. Increase the Average Spend of Each Patient
6. Increase Your Authority and Credibility
7. Build an Iconic Brand
8. Decrease Your Costs
9. Run a Tight Ship
10. BONUS – Build Your Dream Team
11. BONUS - Increase Your Number of New Patients (without breaking the bank)
HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

I am sure you have noticed that this report is as long as a book, so if you are in a hurry, have a short attention span, or are just plain busy – you may be impatient to get stuck in to the useful parts and skip any waffle!

So, let me help you. I have designed this report for a bit of speed reading, to be followed by careful consideration and action. If you want to get a quick feel for what is possible, then you will see that each section is structured in the same way:

• The Key Point for Each Section
• The Top Tip for Each Section
• How to Take Action
• How to Implement the Next Steps

Although, please don’t forget that if this looks just a bit too long winded for you, then get in touch to see how we can help your practice grow its profits today.

• 0800 0933 160
• info@aesthetic-bt.com
• www.aesthetic-bt.com

Please note that I have decided to use the word Practice in place of Clinic, Patient in place of Client and Practitioner in place of Clinician
FREE ONE HOUR
‘BUSINESS GROWTH STRATEGY’ SESSION

BOOK YOURS TODAY ON 0800 0933 160
info@aesthetic-bt.com

Our ‘Business Growth Discovery Session’ is designed specifically to give you clarity, vision and an awareness of exactly what is keeping you stuck in your business. We will discuss and agree ideas that you can implement straight away in your business to attract more patients and increase your profits (as long as you take action).

This is offered to you without a catch, there will be no pressure to work with us or to buy any additional services.

Please remember we cannot help everybody, we work with determined, motivated and serious business owners who will do what it takes to achieve the results they desire and deserve.

FREE ONE HOUR BUSINESS GROWTH STRATEGY SESSION
**INTRODUCTION**

Here’s a fleeting moment of truth.

The medical aesthetic marketplace was much ‘easier’ before the global recession, and the majority of businesses didn’t have to try too hard to fill up their appointment book with high spend patients. Credit was available everywhere, consumers were spending and increased curiosity of the celebrity lifestyle and reality TV made it possible for everyone to believe that they can have a new life of confidence, love, wealth and health with cosmetic enhancement. The demand for aesthetic procedures was increasing; patients were showing up for their appointments and even bringing their friends, meaning that profits were on the rise.

But not anymore…the party is almost over for many aesthetic practice owners and individual practitioners.

Competition is everywhere; with too many deals and discounts flooding the high street. Changes in legislation have affected the livelihood of many independent practitioners and many aesthetic business owners feel like their business is running them, instead of them running their business. They feel like they own a job, not a business. Many are working hard, very hard in fact, to increase profits but at the same time becoming more tired, frustrated and concerned about their future.

Many patients have lost their jobs or are afraid they may lose their jobs soon so they aren’t spending on as much as they used to. Many patients who once considered aesthetic procedures a necessity are now coming in less frequently or even viewing procedures as a luxury to be put off until things are better. It doesn’t help that the media continues to make all of the doom and gloom a good story!

The world is constantly changing, and this has significant impact on us, not only on our business lives, but also on our personal lives. How do we cope with the volume of change that is around us in business, and where does it all come from? How can medical aesthetic businesses survive in such turbulent times, and is it possible to actually thrive?

Playing it safe is a dying strategy.

Nothing is safe anymore. Change really is the new normal. Many medical aesthetic practices are contending with the economic downturn, changes to legislation, public scrutiny, changing consumer behaviours, and many new competitor initiatives. And, to make it more interesting, the pace of change seems to be ever-quickening. For those business owners who wish to not only survive, but thrive, then there is no option to ignore change, to hope that what has been done in the past will be sufficient to cope in the future. How can businesses thrive when faced with these challenges? Certainly not by doing nothing, or “playing” at change. The world has turned upside down, you can’t hide and you can’t keep doing the same things you’ve been doing and expect a decent outcome.

Change on its own is insufficient; it is transformation that is needed.

**SO, WHY ARE SOME MEDICAL AESTHETIC PRACTICES THRIVING, WHILST OTHERS ARE MERELY SURVIVING?**

Despite the ever changing buying habits of aesthetic patients, our industry is crying out for the regulation highlighted in the Keogh Report. So with new competition opening daily and many jumping on the ‘bandwagon’; you need to know and believe that it is still possible for you to make an absolute success in aesthetic medicine if you have the right strategies in place and you take immediate action to implement them into your business right now.

Our brand new report will reveal the specific strategies to attract floods of patients, get so many referrals your diary is filled for months and make sure that you are on track to build a long term sustainable business. These proven strategies are designed to….

- **Completely Revolutionise Your Medical Aesthetic Business**
- **Give you the cutting edge patient-attraction strategies that work NOW so you’re not left behind**
- **Enjoy double-digit growth regardless of competition, legislation changes and other factors outside of your control**

Whether you’ve currently highly successful or not quite as successful as you would like, I absolutely GUARANTEE our report will help you discover the secret code to unlock all of the tactics the best medical aesthetic business owners implement to make tens of thousands of pounds of profit every single year and exactly how to transform your aesthetic business profits to a level you have not seen before now. In fact...this report is literally jam-packed with instantly useable information - and nothing else.
INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT IS NOT FOR EVERYBODY

It is for you if you are already investing succeeding in the medical aesthetic marketplace in one way or another. If that’s the case, then I can promise you the new information revealed here will be responsible for at least an extra six-figure revenue stream or more to your business.

Now it is also for you if you’re a “newbie” but are very, very serious about building a profitable business in Medical Aesthetics. This is a golden opportunity to be provided with a roadmap from multiple sources who have all “been there and done it”. Implementing the actions in this report is an absolute no-brainer! (Unless you course, you have a ‘know-it-all’ or ‘seen-it-all’ attitude). Work through the nine steps in this book to achieve your own practice sales success. This report comes complete with the forms, tools, knowledge and inspiration you need to double your practice sales... without selling!

But first things first, who am I and what do I know about the medical aesthetic business?

I owned my first medical aesthetic business in 2005 and whilst the revenue was fantastic, the bottom line profits left a little to be desired. You know the feeling? Hard work for not much reward! I had pretty much bought myself a job for 3 years and even though I did everything in my power to make the business a success (not the injecting), I was the first one in, the last one to get paid and there were too many others getting a ‘slice of the pie’ while I was left with the crumbs…shall we say. Since then I have licked my wounds, recovered and learned the lessons I needed to rebuild and move forward.

I have watched the medical aesthetic industry go through massive change during the last nine years. There have been some exciting times but there has also been challenging times, however I hear the same thing from business owners everywhere – they feel like they own a job and not a business. Whilst they are great at what they do and they love doing it, the business is running them and they aren’t building the profitable, sustainable business asset they would like.

Following those first three years in business, I have had the opportunity to advise, guide and teach a number of business owners across a wide range of industries including medical aesthetics. At the same time, I have developed and improved upon my skills and knowledge; both in my area of expertise (sales and marketing), but more importantly, I have learnt what it takes for a business to build a long term sustainable asset and of course, what mistakes to avoid and most importantly of all, I never stop learning.

I firmly believe that if you are not learning, you are dying!

A bit melodramatic I know, but I think the key to any growth and success in life is to learn from what others have done to build their businesses and then just implement their successful strategies and avoid their costly mistakes. After all, why not learn from those who have ‘been there and done it’, instead of re-inventing the wheel?

A wise man learns from his mistakes. A genius learns from other people’s mistakes.

I am an avid reader, I attend many training courses, absorb all of the useful and practical information at business building / entrepreneur workshops and conferences, as well as online training webinars. In addition to this, I also use not just one, but two business coaches to help me with my business and my personal growth. I am, in the words of my partner, A SPONGE!! Although more importantly, in the words of the late Nelson Mandela: “Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world”

The truth is I have made the same mistakes that many of you are making and I had to figure out a way of creating sustainable financial success without killing myself. I have made some great business decisions and some bad decisions. It’s because of the information I learned, mistakes I have learned from, coaches advice that I have followed, and creating a business model that works in any business. Now I am teaching all of that to you, so YOU can learn from what I have done. I’m here to help you grow and expand your business.

Success only teaches bad lessons and I found out the hard way the best lessons are the ones you learn as you fail, pick yourself up and try again.

I am also a consumer who has regular medical aesthetic procedures, so I can clearly see the marketplace from all angles. As we all know the medical aesthetic marketplace will continue to be challenging from now and only the most strategic and innovative businesses will survive. Those businesses who are adapting and changing with the times will get more calls, get more callers to book appointments, and get more appointments to show up and ultimately get more prospective patients to actually say YES to aesthetic procedures and even recommend their friends afterwards.
I have seen the effect of the recent legislation changes and the current economic climate on the businesses and lives of a number of my close friends and colleagues, and I also know that a drastic change is needed to help those people whose businesses have been affected to get back on track and achieve their patient-focused and profit driven goals. I also firmly believe that our marketplace needs regulation and the public need to trust in the service they receive from any aesthetic practitioner.

This is my reason for sharing this knowledge with you.

My sole aim is to create as many success stories as possible, so please do let me know if this report makes a difference to your practice profits.

I would love to hear your success stories, please get in touch.

SO, WHY SHOULD YOU READ THIS REPORT?

You may be thinking that the bold heading of this report is there simply to capture your attention and I suspect you may have a few doubts as to whether I can substantiate this very bold claim……. of course, I understand your concerns. However, I trust that you will take the time to READ this free report and IMPLEMENT each of these action steps in your business and I truly wish you every success. As a small business owner, I do what I teach. I teach and advise business owners how to significantly improve the results of their business by acquiring the critical business skills and tools necessary to produce sustainable success.

This report will not only teach you some of the latest sales and marketing techniques to win new patients, it will teach you a few of the techniques that I use with some of my clients to help locate and correct the systematic problems that are causing their businesses to feel lousy and run down. From my years of experience, I know that a manic obsession about growing sales and revenue will not treat the primary causes of business fatalities, or improve the long term health and longevity of business, there is much more to it than just that.

I know something radical is needed.

It’s not the knowing ‘how to’ that will make you successful, (that’s actually the easy part!).

It’s taking action and implementation that will truly bring you success.

This report is a must for every team member. It will keep you and your team entertained, inspired and motivated. And that’s a promise. In case you hadn’t already noticed, I’m on a mission to get you to really understand how you can have a full appointment book, earn great money, and achieve your dreams and goals - without pushy sales tactics. Does this sound good to you? It’s time you got off the sales roller coaster. For its consistent sales that will make you, as an aesthetic practitioner, truly successful.

Throw Away the ‘Old Rule Book’.

It’s time to throw away the ‘old rulebook’ because it won’t serve us in this new era of aesthetic medicine. Our clients want a different experience than the one we’ve been giving them. And the good news is this…

The practice owners, managers, practitioners and aestheticians who take this on board will not only survive, but thrive. They’ll be the ones who attract the best staff and have their appointment book consistently packed with top clients.

Now it’s your turn to achieve. This report is the start of your journey to business transformation and growth. You can do it and I’m here to help you do it every step of the way.
THE 9 STRATEGIES GUARANTEED TO TRANSFORM YOUR AESTHETIC PROFITS IN 12 MONTHS (OR LESS)
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Now before we talk about radical strategies, I am sure you are aware that whatever business you are in, there are only two ways to increase your bottom line profits:

1. **Increase your sales**
2. **Decrease your costs**

Most business owners genuinely believe that the most important strategy to concentrate on is No. 1 – increasing sales by getting only new patients through the door. However, as we all know it can cost a small fortune to acquire a new patient – **but it costs next to nothing to keep them**. In fact, research shows that it is **seven times less expensive to keep an existing patient** than it is to find a new one. In addition to this the financial beauty of your relationship-based business is that your costs will dramatically decrease if you simply look after your patients well and maintain the database you spent time, money and effort to get in the first place.

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS TRENDS

Over 87% of businesses, start-ups, or people who plan on starting a business as of today have no strategic growth blueprint plan. Here are the things that are holding them back according to research:

1. **Economic Fears**
2. **Lack of Branding**
3. **No Marketing Plan**
4. **No Passive income Plan**
5. **Lack of Focus**
6. **Lack of Capital**
7. **No accountability**

All of this stops now… I am going to personally help you by sharing my plans I already have underway for my clients. Here are my focus areas:

Focus No.1: **Speed of Implementation**: From the moment you come up with an idea in your business to the moment you implement it, will determine how successful you will become. The faster you implement your ideas, the more successful you will become.

Focus No.2: **Go Big or Go Home**: My coach uses this analogy when she explains business growth to me. “There are two types of opportunities, chasing rabbits or hunting elephants.” Rabbits are little deals that make you money but they never really allow you to achieve that huge wealth payoff. Hunting Elephants means going after the big deals, the deals that may take a little longer involve more planning and details, but will result in a huge wealth payoff at the end. Be careful though; do not put all of your eggs in one basket because if you do, you will find yourself left empty handed. We all have little day to day rabbits (our core business of treatments and services) but all of us could uncover at least one HUGE ELEPHANT, the type of deal or opportunity that will change your life and business forever. This could be a joint venture, a new product launch, a partnership or a different way of doing business.

Focus No.3: If you don’t build your brand and become an authority you will disappear: The difference between success and failure this year will be branding. How branded you are will determine how much you can charge for your treatments and services. Remember the simpler the branding is the easier it is for people to understand. People don’t buy what they find to be complicated and they definitely won’t make a quick decision to buy on the spot if it’s complicated. You want your patients to make a quick buying decision because the more people have to think about it, the less deals are done because people have paralysis by analysis.

The key to growth is to focus your team on implementing the ideas and activities that will generate revenue by being transformational (**the part that brings in revenue**), rather than the transactional (**menial tasks**). Create a culture of speed and become a master at time management **because every second counts**.

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Education based marketing (i.e. giving away your knowledge like I am doing in this report) is actually one of the most effective marketing tools I’ve ever discovered. Most business owners want to hold things back because they are afraid people will just use the information they have provided and go elsewhere. To prevent this from happening, you need to turn yourself into the authority so patients automatically run to you instead of your competitors, without a second thought.
Focus No. 4: Becoming ‘The Chief Marketer’ of your practice – not just a ‘do-er’: If you are like many small business owners, you ‘do’ the daily actions of your business first and then ‘get round’ to the marketing if there is any time left over. The more you focus on becoming an accomplished marketer of your practice, the more successful it will be. Whatever vision you see in your brain for your business, must be a mirror image when it comes to your marketing. Marketing shouldn’t cost you money it should make you money. It’s called the 3x formula, if you spend £1 on marketing you should make £3 back.

Focus No. 5: Facts, numbers, and statistics: We talked about this one earlier in the report. So from today, no more guessing, I think, I hope, I believe, these are words that are often used by someone who has no clue about their business. You need to manage your business by statistics not gut feelings. Gut feelings are used to make decisions, not run businesses. You should be tracking everything and able to run any business from anywhere in the world. Only by knowing your numbers can you effectively scale your business and know where to invest, cut back or double down. It doesn’t matter whether you have no one working for you or 100 employees the fundamentals simply don’t change.

Focus No. 6: Who are you and why should I care: If you can’t show the people the immediate benefits of doing business with you, prospective patients will wait and hold off and most likely never buy from you. So we need the answer the BIG question in business…. WHY YOU?

People need to be aware of you, your treatments and services. People do business with people not because they have the best product or service but they do business with because they know, like and trust you. You need to brand and position yourself as the best medical aesthetic practitioner in your area.

Scary enough even though the economy is growing people have grown more sceptical than ever before. Although branding will alleviate someone of those fears but that is not enough. People buy people, not stocks, businesses or opportunities. They want to connect, they want to look into your eye knowing that you will not pull the wool over their eyes and carry out a treatment that they don’t want or need.

Ensure there is at least one member of your team whose job it is to call your patients to find out if there is any other way that you can help them, even though they may have not asked for help. Random act of kindness are huge WOW’s and WOW’s get people talking. One ignorant un-wow can go a long way to cost a business lots of money. So the questions is, what kind of ‘un-wows’ are costing you business? Remember, in any business it’s the little details that count.

Focus No. 7: Less Excuses: “The more excuses you have, the less successful you will become”. Most companies and entrepreneurs have created a culture of why they can’t do things rather than determine what they need to do to move forward. A very simple business principle is the more problems you solve and the more creative your solutions are, the more profitable your company will become. It seems that once you create a culture of excuses it’s easier for people to give up and wait for you to deal with it. Start by adopting a ‘zero excuse’ policy and create an organisation of problem solvers and solution finders. This means they can’t go to any managers, or the business owner unless they first tried to solve the problem themselves.

Focus No. 8: Trust but verify: This is a problem that is plaguing more and more companies today. The owner or manager assigns something to someone and it doesn’t get done and he or she assumes it gets done only to find out later it was not. This not only causes a bottleneck, but also may cost a company a client and/or in some cases its reputation. This problem can also have the impact of a company regressing, rather than progressing; this due to the facts that owners and managers feel it’s easier if I they perform tasks themselves rather than assigning them. Rather than focusing on the transformational part of the business (the part that brings in revenue), they begin focusing on the transactional (£10 per hour tasks). However you look at it, it costs the company in both the short and long term.

Focus No. 9: Everybody must think GROWTH: Instead of thinking about how much employees cost you, start looking at how much they make you and ensure everyone knows their role in the growth of your practice. Everyone from the receptionist, to the CEO has to think about growth: how can we make the company money the more you focus on the continuous acquiring of new clients… think growth with your existing clients. It costs seven times more to get a new client than it is to focus on a new one. When everyone thinks growth it’s always healthy to the bottom line and it holds everyone accountable.

THE KEY POINT: Disrupt Your Market

When Michael Eisner, former CEO Disney was asked the simple question of how he managed to take Disney from $1.8 billion to $60 billion; he answered with one
simple word... disruption. If you don’t disrupt the market, you are eventually being surpassed by someone who will. Apple disrupted Microsoft to become one of the world’s top companies. Apple would make a larger screen on their iPhone, now Samsung is disrupting them. Netflix disrupted Blockbuster. Amazon disrupted tradition bookstores and retailers.

Bottom line is that if you are doing the same thing over and over and expecting the same results you are in for a rude awakening. Remember how you change is how you succeed. Look at Madonna and how she has re-invented herself 9 times over her career and at the young age of 50 was the top performing concert artist of that year. Business as usual is dead. You either going to disrupt the market or it’s going to disrupt you.

Now that we have the Focus trends, we need to roll our sleeves up. The first quarter of each new-year will dictate what the next 5 years will hold for you. If you don’t take action, then in 5 years from now you will be sitting in the exact spot you are sitting now except for the people you meet and the books you read. Disrupt the normal and join me into create and entrepreneurial revolution that will forever change how we do business.

The difference is that this year, I am taking you with me… Are you in? There is a lot of room at the top it’s the bottom that’s crowded.

STRATEGY NO. 1: DECREASE THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS YOU LOSE!

It doesn’t Matter How Great YOU Are If You Don’t Have Enough Paying Patients! So, Where Did Your Patients Go?

Are fickle patients driving you crazy? Too many no shows? Cancellations? Price Shoppers? Why? A big reason is because the supply and demand has changed dramatically. Years ago, consumers had one or two choices; now we have hundreds. That means the patients are in the driving seat because they have a surplus of suppliers to choose from. So, what are you to do? The fastest, easiest and cheapest thing for you to fight this “fickle patient syndrome” do is to KEEP the patients who somehow found their way to you. Treat them well by staying on time, being nice to them and giving them a good result. Do not let these valuable patients wander off to your competitor because then you’ll need to spend even more time, money and effort trying to attract another one.

Do you want to know why there are times when your patients disappear? Perhaps you thought you had a good relationship and now you realise you haven’t seen them in over a year (and trust me it wasn’t ‘just’ the recession!). What happened to them? You most likely have a database full of prospective patients who came in for a consultation but didn’t book for a procedure, or those who came in a couple of times and then wandered off and then those you haven’t seen in months or years. One thing we can definitely guarantee – they did not stop wanting to look good. They just went somewhere else.

- Perhaps they were having a bad day when they visited and couldn’t connect with your staff?
- Perhaps your member of staff was having a bad day and scared them off?
- Perhaps they went to your competitor and want to return to you but are too embarrassed?

ARE YOU A ONE HIT WONDER?!

If you spend all of your time, money and effort getting a new patient to say yes to you and then never see them again after their procedure, you are doing them, you and your business a disservice. The patient liked and trusted you enough to say yes. The hard part is done. The least you could do is reciprocate by staying in touch, following up and seeing how they are. You can do some of that with post-treatment follow up appointments. It shows you care and gives you more opportunity to bond with the patient. However, there’s a group of patients who won’t bother with follow-up appointments. They’re happy and don’t feel the need. That’s the group you want to reach out to throughout the year and give them other reasons to visit you. An aesthetic patient has endless needs so it’s almost guaranteed if they had an issue with their looks, there’s a really good chance another issue has their attention. Keep in touch to keep them coming back again and again.

MARKETING TO AESTHETIC PATIENTS IN TOUGH TIMES

There is still much you can to help keep your own aesthetic profits consistent while our economy corrects itself. It will take much more time, money and effort to attract total strangers to your practice. These people don’t know you so it would take expensive repetition and effort to get them to spend their disposable income with you rather than with someone they already know.

This is the perfect time for you to go inward and concentrate on your low-hanging fruit. The patients, who already know, like and trust you are much more likely to respond to your marketing efforts. If you have been ignoring the very patients who could sustain
your practice during this shaky time, you better start communicating with them before they drift off to your competitor.

The next step is to do something. I know your first instinct is to lay low for now but that’s the worst strategy. Your aesthetic patients need more compelling reasons to invest in aesthetics so, now more than ever, give them those reasons. Educate them on little things they can do right now to look fantastic. Motivate them to act now with a special offer and a tight expiration date. Encourage them to refer their friends so; they too, can look fabulous.

USE THE FOLLOWING PROVEN TOOLS TO WAKE UP YOUR SLEEPING PATIENTS AND GET THEM RETURNING AND REFERRING THEIR FRIENDS:

Internal laser focussed marketing: For example a direct email marketing campaign is a low cost way of getting in touch and keeping in touch. Target it based on demographics – you will never know why people don’t come back if you don’t reach out – simply educating them on what’s new will help them come back to life. You will get better results as it’s more targeted. If possible, ask one of your high profile patients speak on your behalf: why they chose you and what difference it made in their life.

Be smart about your internal communications: Start with your more mature, affluent patients.

They have the most need and wherewithal to actually want and pay for your services. They have been on the planet longer and are now showing signs of ageing – wrinkles, folds, fat, droopy body parts and sagging skin. They also are more likely to have the financial means to afford your services. Perhaps they are married and a homeowner and have built up a nice nest egg for rejuvenation. Invite them to your in-house open evening to discuss new solutions to crêpey skin and sun damage. Send them themed postcards with a special offer to try a rejuvenation. Invite them to your in-house open evening. Invite everyone and invite their friends, family, colleagues and local business owners.

THE KEY POINT: Retention Is The New Patient Acquisition

Odds are you lost patients this past year. And, odds are, you can’t say for sure how many you lost, who you lost, why you lost them or where they went and are now. If you do nothing different, you’re going to experience lost patients again this year and in bigger numbers. You can tell yourself that patients of today just want discounts, or whatever else makes you feel better by not taking any responsibility for losing these valuable patients.

You are never going to know unless you reach out to them. There’s even a good chance they were not saying So, why not put “Not Yet” or “Not Now”. Since it’s always faster, cheaper and easier to reconnect with patients who have visited you before than it is to attract total strangers to your practice, you must do everything you can to reconnect with these patients. The patients, who already know, like and trust you are much more likely to respond to your marketing efforts. If you have been ignoring the very patients who could sustain your business during this shaky time, you better start communicating with them before they drift off to your competitor.

Promote your practice more strategically than before, don’t wait for things to get better, take action. You are sitting on a goldmine without even knowing it – focus on your patient database if you have invested in the right software package – then divide it up by those who are loyal, those who visited and never booked and those who you never saw again. Ensure that you and your team make your patients feel special and valued by keeping in touch with them and reaching out to them continually. I promise you – they want to hear from you!
You have an amazing opportunity here if you see it. Most aesthetic practitioners either do nothing or use very limited effort doing anything proactive to retain and keep patients.

1. Hold a team meeting to find out where your team think your patients have gone.

2. Brainstorm ideas about how to tempt the patients back to your business.

3. Make sure you set aside a good few hours to really look at your database to establish the facts: find out which patients you have not seen for a while and GET IN TOUCH!

4. Set up a campaign to reconnect with your patients

5. Make your offer so irresistible they will take action!

Act strategically and act quickly now – don’t delay. If you sit back and do nothing your business will suffer.

My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are:

1. .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................

2. .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................

3. .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................

My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately

1. .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................

2. .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................

3. .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................

Date Completed: .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................

Date Completed: .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................

Date Completed: .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................
STRATEGY NO. 2: CREATE A COMPELLING PATIENT EXPERIENCE (and keep them coming back for more!)

So, how do you create a “WOW” patient experience?

We already know that today’s aesthetic patient is a fickle consumer. The patient who wants cosmetic procedures is engulfed in emotions. They are uncomfortable about a physical aspect they want removed, enhanced or rejuvenated and that leads to vulnerability. They are most likely confused about what to do and who should do it. When they do call your practice and visit you in person, they expect a good patient experience every time.

Have you ever been in a restaurant where you could feel the cohesiveness? It felt like a well-oiled machine. Almost like a play where everyone was on their mark and every step was running smoothly? And you were glad to be a part of it? What about the most famous theme parks in the world? Isn’t it amazing that nearly everyone who attends a Disney theme park comes away with a good feeling about the visit? Many will wait in a queue for an hour in the heat and humidity yet feel that they have had a good experience or certainly got their money’s worth.

There is, indeed, magic in the Magic Kingdom. That magic can be transferred to the practice of medicine and the delivery of medical aesthetic services and procedures. Wouldn’t it be a nice goal or objective that everyone that left your practice would have the same feeling of a positive experience as when they leave a Disney theme park? Many of the Disney methods of motivating employees and satisfying the guests are not Mickey Mouse. They are great for the good for the guests, the employees, their families, and the entire community.

Why not do the same for your own practice? Let’s look at some of the similarities between the healthcare professions and a Disney theme park. The common denominator is that both organisations have paying “guests”. These guests expect to pay large entrance fees and therefore have high expectations of the service and the outcome of their experience. How any business can live up to the expectations of their ‘guests’ will determine their satisfaction, our image in the market and ultimately our overall business success.

Disney has recognized that there are critical “magic moments” or “moments of truth” where the guests have contact with the employees and the ‘Disney mystique’. Disney has made an effort to clearly identify these magic moments. The Disney organisation estimates that there are an average of 74 contacts per day between a single guest and the employees on the front line. These are contacts where Disney has an opportunity to create a positive impression on the guest and to make sure his experience is a favourable one. Disney definitely understands that you seldom get a second chance to make a good first impression.

In the healthcare profession a similar attitude should be adopted towards patients (guests) as Disney does. When the ‘magic moments of truth’ are identified you can anticipate that the patients will leave with their expectations having been met. When you place a priority of managing the ‘magic moments’ you can expect to exceed the patient’s expectations. It is then that the patients will have a positive feeling about the delivery of their procedure and our profession in general.

CREATE A POSITIVE AND LASTING FIRST IMPRESSION

What is your impression of an airlines when you sit down and open the tray on the back of the seat in front of you and find food and coffee stains on the tray? You may just worry if the same attention that was given to tray tables carries over to the maintenance of the engines. Or what is your opinion of a restaurant when you go to use the bathroom and find paper towels and toilet paper on the floor and puddles of fluid around the urinal? You may just question the hygiene that takes place in the kitchen. Well those same impressions that you receive in other service industries, may also take place in your practice.

For the most part, patients do not go into a practitioner’s private office. However, they, on occasion, will be invited into that office or often they will walk by the office and look inside. What impression are you creating if you have papers strewn over the desk, journals and magazines stacked high on the desk or on the floor, and post-it notes attached to the computer, the phone or desk lamp? Your office desk says a great deal about your level of organisation, your habits, and your attention to detail. Also, what does a cluttered desk say to your employees who will almost always see the interior of your private office?

I suggest that you give the same attention to your desk that you would when performing a physical examination. First of all, you can rid your desk of a great deal of paper if you go through your mail and take action steps on each piece of mail, i.e., that which immediately goes into the wastepaper basket, that which must be addressed immediately, and that mail which can be reviewed at a later date. You can also have three trays on the desk: one for what needs action today, another for 2-4 days, and the third for at a
later date. It is also a good idea to have a call-back sheet prepared by the nurse, patient co-ordinator or the receptionist that you check at the end of each day and make notes about the phone responses.

**Bottom Line:** You are in the business of providing health care. But you are also in the first impression business and you have to create positive impressions on our patients. Start with your desk and make sure it reflects your attention to detail and your ability to be organised and efficient. Your patients and your staff will appreciate you for this.

**First Impressions – Greeting Your Patients:** Your patient enters your practice and is greeted by your friendly, smiling receptionist who makes eye contact, acknowledges them immediately, comes from around the desk or at least extends her hand to shake the patient’s hand and, using the patient’s name, says: “You must be Sara. We’ve been expecting you. Welcome” “Sara, you have come to the right place. Dr Smith has performed that procedure x number of times so you’ll be in great hands.”

Your receptionist then offers coffee, tea, water, and restroom and directs the patient to where they should sit to be comfortable and then provides them with useful information that will educate them about their skin, the practice, special offers and news. Once the patient is settled, the receptionist then notifies the Practitioner, or Patient Co-Ordinator that the patient has arrived. **These are simple, low cost and are guaranteed to make someone feel welcomed.**

**EDUCATE VISITING PROSPECTIVE PATIENTS BY USING:**

- Videos of the procedure
- Videos of any training or talks you have given
- Digital photo frames showcasing your work
- Photo Album of before/after photos of the procedure they are interested in
- DVD of you, your staff, your practice & patient testimonials
- Forms to fill out ahead of time (complete them as much as possible for them before sending)
- Quality folder to hold the above materials

Ensure you have a testimonial album on the coffee table that includes:

- Patient surveys
- Testimonials, Thank you cards etc
- PR efforts (media coverage)
- Articles you’ve written
- Skills & Expertise
- Speaking Engagements
- Special Awards
- Personal: Family and Hobbies

**MAKE YOUR PATIENTS FEEL SPECIAL BY PERSONALISING THEIR EXPERIENCE**

We all have a story about the person who serves you in the coffee shop and doesn’t ever need to be told how you like your coffee? Or the take-away owner who knows exactly what you like to order on a Friday night? This type of experience adds value, and also instils an enormous amount of loyalty. Is there anything you and your staff can do to ensure your patients know that you not only pay attention to their preferences, but remember them and cater to them for each and every transaction? How can you proactively engage, re-engage and nurture your patients with new strategies they will respond to.

For example:

Less Impersonal vs. More personal

rather than a newsletter

>>> Personalised letter

rather than an email

>>> A direct mail invitation

rather than a brochure

>>> An interactive Website

less patient contact

>>> More one to one time with patients

The key word here is to PERSONALISE. Your patients want to feel special and they want a connection with you.
Show consideration. Do you or your team regularly walk patients to the door and open it for them as they’re leaving? If you have a waiting room and if some of your patients are older, do you have chairs that are a bit higher than usual and have arms on them so they are easier to get in and out of?

Show Appreciation. What do you do to show your patients that you appreciate them? After all, there are probably several other medical aesthetic businesses in your town or city that do what you do. Do you show the patients who choose to have their procedures with you that you value and appreciate their business? Feeling appreciated is an experience that is universally meaningful.

You could invite special patients to experience a “Special Offer Day” earlier than the general public or you could have an invitation-only event one evening and give “VIPs” an additional X percent discount. You could gift-wrap their retail purchases or periodically give them that favourite face cream they often buy for free. You could gift-wrap their retail purchases or periodically give them that favourite face cream they often buy for free. Most businesses have the chance to give gifts, but the key to getting special gifts is remembering. Always make sure that you let them know that you appreciate them.

Recognition is essential. Greeting your patient by name is a very meaningful and treasured detail that adds greatly to the way they experience doing business with you. Your receptionist should make sure she knows just who will be walking in the door next, and immediately greet them with eye contact, a smile and “Good morning, are you Mrs Morgan?” if she isn’t sure if it’s Mrs Morgan, or simply, “Good morning Mrs Morgan” if she is. Make sure they always know who is coming in for an appointment and make sure they are happy to see them. There is nothing more flattering and there is nothing that makes someone feel more special than receiving a warm, friendly greeting by name when walking into a place of business.

THE KEY POINT: A better service, means more engaged patients, spending more money, more frequently!

But let me ask you this: Would you ask a member of your team to phone your partner / spouse to ask them how they are today? You wouldn’t? Why not? Because it’s impersonal. You have a relationship with your spouse and you need to keep in touch personally. The same thing is true for your high spend patients. If you want them to return and refer, they have to feel cared for and cared about. If you go the extra mile, that alone builds mountains of patient loyalty because they’ll remember and tell their friends how caring you are.

Anyone can do the big things right: it’s the little things that differentiate one business from another and that influence patients to choose one over the other. Often, small-business owners cut out the little details when times get tough, and this is a big mistake. Attentiveness and recognition cost nothing, nor do personalisation and consideration. It is often the little details that patients recall even more than the product they purchased or the service they received. Little details that patients notice, and that makes them feel good about not only making the purchase, but making the purchase from you, is a significant part of the overall patient experience. Remember your own personal experiences and how they made you feel – good or bad.

Focus on Attentiveness: ensure you and your team become “masters of detail”: Your team are your eyes and ears, so train them to notice, and when it is appropriate to act on even the smallest pieces of information they observe or discover about a patient. If you know it’s their birthday, make sure you send a personalised birthday card (and voucher if possible) but also extend birthday wishes in person when you see them. If a staff member overhears a conversation in which one of your patients mentions they either like or dislike something, remember that within minutes, anyone who might come into contact with that patient knows about it. So make sure they only say good things about your business and the service they received!

Think about the little things that you could do, they don’t need to cost much – perhaps an extra £1 per patient; perhaps a warm drink and a biscuit, with a nice warm towel to heat you up in the winter? The procedure rooms could have heated couch, with a warm duvet during colder months. It may be nice to have a cold drink, a cool towel and a piece of fresh fruit upon arrival in the summer? If your patient has to wait more than 10 minutes perhaps a complimentary hand massage or something simple, to apologise for the wait and to make their experience a pleasant and relaxing one.
How can you manage the ‘magic moments’ as soon as your ‘guest’ enters your practice and how you can continue to monitor each and every contact point between the patient and the practitioner until the end of their visit? Don’t forget about the aftercare service they receive also.

How can you continue to make contact with your patient long after he or she leaves in order to encourage them to return if he/she or a family member or friend are ever in need of aesthetic procedure?

How can you create brand standards and protocols that everyone adheres to, so all magic moments are managed and they don’t occur by accident? Get together once a week with your staff to brainstorm. Call it WOW Wednesday and provide lunch. Then go over each step in your patient process and fine tune them so everyone who calls and visits you gets a WOW Patient Experience. Make sure you all really get into the details of exactly what your callers and your visiting patients are experiencing whenever they are in touch with you and think of ways to improve every step.

The more well-oiled your machine, the happier your patients will be, the more confident your staff will be and the more relaxed you’ll be knowing all the pieces to your practice are running smoothly.

1. Schedule a ‘brainstorming’ workshop with your team to discuss the above and discover what else you could all do to make sure every single patient has a compelling ‘WOW’ experience.

2. Remember your staff are your eyes and ears and the majority of the time, they will have better ideas than you do – so ask them, include them and communicate well!

3. What changes can you make that are low cost but high impact?

4. Study the first impression of your practice the moment you arrive and are greeted

5. Identify and manage all of the ‘magic moments’, then decide how will you make your patient experience more special

6. What will make sure your patients return and recommend you to their friends?

7. What are your internal patient care standards and protocols?

8. What are your brand standards that set you apart from the competition?

9. Have you communicated your standards to your team and to your patients, so that everyone knows what to expect from the moment they walk through the door, to the moment they return?
**TOP TIP**

*Study the magic moments where the ‘guest’ has contact and passes judgment on your business. Do this regularly, with a fresh perspective each time. Mystery shop your own practice regularly.*

**THE IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS**

*My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are….*

1. ........................................................................

2. ........................................................................

3. ........................................................................

*My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately*

1. ........................................................................

2. ........................................................................

3. ........................................................................

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STRATEGY NO. 3: TAKE GREAT CARE OF YOUR BEST PLATINUM PATIENTS
Because, If You Don’t, Someone Else Will!

To succeed in today’s competitive world, businesses must move away from the old mind-set of ‘us versus them’ and embrace those patients who choose their services, by ensuring their journey and experience will sustain loyalty and long term growth. Return patients and referrals are what make any business successful and without strong relationships and a committed patient in return, all you are doing is simply peddling commodities.

Patient loyalty is earned on the basis of each patient experience, not on the basis of reward programmes. As a consumer, any company who continually meets or exceeds my expectations can expect to have me as a customer for a very long time. If I have a long-term, favourable view of a company and something goes wrong, I’m more likely to look the other way. However, if I have limited experience or have been pre-conditioned by the marketplace that something might go wrong, I’m going to be a lot less forgiving, particularly if there are alternatives to doing business that are readily available to me.

Look after your best PLATINUM patients – Turn them into hordes of Loyal Fans (or Tribes, as Seth Godin calls them).

I’m sure you’ve heard that 80% of your profits come from 20% of your patients. It’s called the Pareto Principle and it works just as well today as it did decades ago. You want to learn who your top 20% of preferred patients are because they will be the ambassadors of your practice as well a great revenue stream with limited effort. Go through your database and look for those who have spent more with you, visited most frequently, referred more patients than others or who are very connected in the community. Now you want to put a “fence” around them to keep them happy, loyal, returning and referring.

So, how do you that? You make them part of your exclusive VIP Club. That means they get extra perks that others don’t (until they, too, prove themselves worthy of your Club). Give them an official VIP card that allows them things like: last-minute Botox appointments, a free makeover after every procedure so they can go right back to their everyday activities, a free monthly peel? Be creative, I’m sure you have many options.

The point is you want them to feel very special because they are part of your inner circle.

I promise they will brag to their friends about this VIP procedure and their friends will want to know how to become part of your “private club”. This club is very similar to the airline frequent flyer clubs. You have a much different flying experience when you are part of the club — you get on first, there’s plenty of room for your luggage, you get much more leg room, and so on. It’s a different industry, but the same concepts apply.

People like to be treated well and they like to feel special and many more will invest in that feeling.

Educate them on little things they can do right now to look fantastic. Motivate them to act now with a special offer and a tight expiration date. Encourage them to refer their friends so; they too, can look fabulous. Delight your patients and put a smile on their face by doing something special that they can share with a family member. Make them laugh, thank them in a big way for a major purchase, have a competition or a prize draw for something fun that they could share with family and friends.

Anything that is meaningful, memorable, fun, unusual and unexpected influence the way patients perceive you in general and feel about you in particular. These little details are so easy to overlook, so tempting to brush off as unimportant. But add a number of seemingly minor details together, and you end up with something of far more value than you would without them. Exceptional VIP patient service will put money in your pocket in increased earnings and maybe provide a referral for a friend or family member. Most of all it will keep the patients coming back for more.

The ongoing global recession continues to challenging for many aesthetic businesses thanks to online discount coupons, heavy competition, and less Internet traffic due to the sheer number of competitors and fickle aesthetic patients who show little to no loyalty. It is VITAL you protect and care for your best aesthetic patients so they don’t wander off. It’s also cheaper than spending a fortune finding new patients. It’s also more fun to work with patients who know, like and trust you than total strangers who are apprehensive.

A friend of mine recently had a Botox and wrinkle filler session with a plastic surgeon. He was great and my friend was well looked after, so all was well. Later that evening she did develop some bruising, which didn’t really surprise her as she was advised during the consultation it could happen. However, what did surprise her was an email she received minutes later from the practice
nurse who offered to do a quick laser procedure to help minimise her bruising if she had any. How great is that? My friend did go in for her little laser procedure and the bruising was significantly better. Not only is this fantastic aftercare, but my friend now knows about the nurse and the laser procedures, and she plans on going back for more! What a great way to show you care and promote ALL of your aesthetic services. If you don’t have a laser like this, make sure you do offer some cover up make-up (such as Lycogel) and make sure you call your patients after their treatment to see how they are – particularly if it’s their first time, or you are certain you did hit a little blood vessel.

Most practitioners wait for the patient to ask for the price after the consultation in order to build value. It is important to offer pricing before the buyer asks for it. Share it upfront and then show why the investment costs what it cost. This approach shows confidence, keeps the practitioner on the offensive and prevents unnecessary negotiating. Building certainty with customers is an art. Exceptional salespeople strive to master this skill and reap the rewards it brings. Remember; your intention is to serve your customers.

THE KEY POINT: What Does it Take to Be the Customer’s First Choice?

To get exceptional results in business, you must gain an understanding of people, what they want and not only build trust, but also certainty with them. ‘Old school selling’ was simply based on understanding the customer’s needs and building trust to close the deal. Today with information available everywhere, your buyer seeks third party sources to give them the certainty of what to purchase and how much to pay. Once a buyer has done their research, they still always buy products and services for one reason: to solve a problem. They need to be certain. No one makes a buying decision when they are uncertain. When a buyer is uncertain they stall the process.

Your goal then is to then determine that you have the right product or service to actually solve the buyer’s biggest problem. To do this, you have to get the buyer to trust you enough to talk to you about what they want to accomplish. You must show genuine interest with intention to serve the buyer and not just sell them. Salespeople often get lost in “selling” their product or service. This is a mistake and a waste of everyone’s time. Building trust is key to discovering and understanding your buyers’ motives. It requires knowing every step of your sales process and sharing it with the buyer. In your medical aesthetic practice, this is your consultation.

Building trust during the consultation: Start by introducing yourself with confidence, then explain your exact intentions, process and amount of time it will take. Lay out your plan clearly so buyers see your priority is to take care of them. Here’s an example: “Thanks for coming to see me today. My intention is to help you by: Figuring out the problem you are trying to solve, then suggesting the best solution for you and provide you with pricing alternatives. Then ensuring you confident about the solution.”

When providing the solution and pricing of a treatment or service, you must provide third-party success stories and supporting material as to why that solution is best for them. Social proof combined with a clear step-by-step plan moments after your greeting builds certainty and puts you in a different league. If you have a patient who is not yet ready to move forward, simply say “No problem. I would just like to get you the information you need so that you can make an informed decision. Then, when you are ready, I hope you will consider me.”

This creates a high degree of trust because it shows you have nothing to hide and you are more than willing to provide information knowing the customer wasn’t ready to purchase that day. When showing your price, always show how it compares to others, particularly if you know they are going to look at lower priced competitors. You could say, “You can go to the new company and save yourself £50 or you can go to the other one and save another £70.” Then show them (don’t tell them) actual things; your experience, your client testimonials and exactly what you can do for them that the competition is unable to do. Don’t forget to show them those patient stories we spoke about earlier in the report (you know the ones – where they had a bad experience for the sake of saving a few pounds and realised that you pay for what you get).
Remember......Patients are the CAUSE of your work, not an interruption of it (can you believe I had to remind someone of this once?!).

What can you do to ensure that your patients are treated like PURE PLATINUM?

- It is the patient who PAYS your wages
- Inadequate service is unacceptable
- Going the extra mile must be the norm – not the exception
- Give the patient more than they expect
- Get it right first time every time

Remember Every Satisfied Patient Will Tell One Other Person, but Every Dissatisfied Patient Will Tell Eleven Others

Please take a minute out of your busy day to:

- Thank your patients for their loyalty
- Thank your referrers for directing new patients to you
- Thank your staff for representing you professionally
- Thank your suppliers for taking good care of you
- Thank your family for putting up with you (this last one is optional!)

My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are....

1. ................................................
2. ................................................
3. ................................................

My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately

1. ................................................
2. ................................................
3. ................................................

Date Completed: ................................................
STRATEGY NO. 4: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TIMES YOUR PATIENTS RETURN AND REFER

You are leaving money on the table if your patients don’t realise everything you offer. I guarantee if they don’t buy from you, they will buy from someone else. Make sure you have the right strategies in place so you never hear the dreaded words “I didn’t know you did that” after you find out they had it done by your competitor.

Update your telephone ‘on hold’ message to tell callers about your latest treatments and to promote latest offers every month: “Introducing xx, or we are now offering xx, or ask us about xx”. Display eye catching before and after photos on digital photo frames to inform patients in subtle and visual way to begin a conversation. Use ‘coffee table’ albums full of before/after patient photos of other patients who have got great results. You can use the manufacturer’s photos at first but make sure you start collecting your own photos and build up your portfolio. Include as many different skin types as possible so all prospective patients can relate to their own skin concerns. Include patient testimonials as it’s more compelling for a patient to tell another patient about their own experience.

Place mirrors everywhere. Strategically place of a big mirror at the desk, the more the patient is reminded of what bothers them the more they will buy. Have a sign at the front desk that says ‘ask me about financing or affordable monthly payments’. Include calculators on your website to bring figures down to a more palatable number.

Use your manufacturer’s marketing supplies of posters, brochures and other tools made available to you. When you can, have your own customised materials as well. It is also a good idea to turn your business card into your working networking card. Do that by adding your services to it so any patients can give it to their friends and family. You could go one step further and have business cards made up with a special First Time Offer to be handed out to prospective patients.

Add a subtle questionnaire for patients to complete while they are waiting. Use “WHAT BOTHERS YOU” as the heading – wrinkles, crepey, skin, thread veins, or a tired and dull complexion? The point is to help them identify what bothers them – this helps them stay with you for ALL of their skin concerns and not go elsewhere.

Computer imaging and skin analysis should be a part of your consultation and not sat in a corner. Nothing is more compelling for your patients to visually see their own skin damage and concerns as well as the results they can expect. Pictures really do say a thousand words and nothing is more compelling than seeing your own skin concerns. The right system will also record skin conditions and results, which helps to educate your patients.

Gift certificates build word of mouth referrals as well as your database. Offer beautifully-designed gift certificates by setting up a display at your checkout that includes a gift bag and tissue along with a sign that says, “Need a Quick Gift?” The busy aesthetic patient who is paying their bill and has their purse open will appreciate the convenience and could add it to their order.

Ensure your staff feel part of things and set aside time to treat them to your most popular treatments. They will be your best waking and talking testimonials. Use name tags, professional uniforms, badges promoting new procedures, t-shirts on fun Friday – get them involved so they don’t feel they are pushing it and the clients don’t feel like they are being sold to.

THE KEY POINT: Grow your practice one patient at a time.

It’s a slow and steady growth over years rather than instant gratification that builds growth and a sustainable business. Every single encounter with a prospective patient is vital to your success and the growth of your practice.

To understand how, let us take a look at the lifetime of one of your patients: Her name is Amanda, she is 36 and concerned about her sun damage. She’s got wrinkles around her eyes and sun spots on her face. Amanda makes an appointment with you, which goes well. During the consultation, you find out that she works for a large financial institution and comes from a big family. You treat Amanda with her first laser treatment and then introduce her to Claire, your skin care consultant, who sells Amanda sun block and a night time moisturiser.

Your receptionist takes the payment and books in Amanda’s 2nd laser treatment. Amanda has dinner with friends that evening and mentions her treatment. Amanda makes an appointment with you, which goes well. During the consultation, you find out that she works for a large financial institution and comes from a big family. You treat Amanda with her first laser treatment and then introduce her to Claire, your skin care consultant, who sells Amanda sun block and a night time moisturiser.

At work, Amanda is getting compliments on her clearer-looking skin and tells her close friends and colleagues about you. Amanda then attends a family wedding and her sisters and Mother want to know what she’s been doing since she looks so great. She tells them about you.
The following week, your practice books consultations with two of Amanda’s colleagues and with one of Amanda’s sisters and Mother who want to come in together.

Amanda’s colleagues get Botox and one of them signs up for the same laser treatments Amanda is having. One of Amanda’s friends also books a consultation. You send Amanda a thank you note and voucher with business cards and that reminds her to give your number to another friend. Amanda’s sister buys a complete product line and books a course of laser hair removal. Amanda’s Mother also buys products and books a skin peel.

Amanda attends her monthly business women’s luncheon where, again, people commented on her clear skin and, again, she told them about you. One of the ladies asks if you would be willing to talk to the entire group at next month’s luncheon. Amanda says she will ask you. Amanda visits you for her last laser treatment and wants a little wrinkle filler in her nasal labial folds as well as plumper lips. She also asks you if you would speak to her women’s group next month. The attendance will be 60-80 women, so you say yes. At Amanda’s women’s business lunch, your staff hand out your practice brochure and business card, as well as your latest newsletter with a special offer. Your talk goes well and you show many before/after photos from the simplest skin care to full make overs. You are lightly funny, connect with the women, and they ask you so many questions, you have to cut them off and offer them a complimentary consultation to discuss their personal concerns.

That week, you receive more than 12 telephone calls from Amanda’s business group. Your receptionist books 7 consultations. One of the attendees is a reporter and wants to interview you for your local newspaper. Another of the attendees happens to work at the local radio station and wants to talk with you about participating on a panel of experts at their upcoming health event. Another attendee owns two exclusive spas in your area and wants you to participate in their upcoming charity event to raise money for breast cancer. It is attended by 1,000 prominent community leaders (including the ‘ladies who lunch’), fundraising wives. The media is there and you provide a gift voucher for the prize draw and also take the time to network with the other powerful people in your community.

Amanda regularly visits her hairdresser for a cut and colour. Amanda’s hairdresser comments on how great she looks so they discuss you and cosmetic enhancement in general. Amanda’s hairdresser wants to meet you and perhaps display your business cards in her salon so she can refer her clients to you since they ask her about this “stuff” a lot. Amanda will bring your cards and your practice brochure to her stylist on her next appointment.

You keep in touch with Amanda over the years with newsletters, email messages with special promotions on products and skin care treatments, open days, invitations to in-house seminars to learn what’s new, as well as personalised thank you notes/complimentary skin care treatments for her referrals throughout the years.

Fast forward ten years – Amanda has since married and has two children. She continues to return to you for facial rejuvenation. Fast forward another ten years – Amanda’s children are grown and out of the house. Amanda has been running a home business but is ready to enter the work force again but it’s competitive and she wants to look and feel her best. She returns to you, yet again, for facial rejuvenation. And, so on and so on and so on….

So, in Amanda’s lifetime, she has been worth more than £20,000 to you personally and another £30,000 in untold referrals to your practice. The above patient scenario speaks for itself. The aesthetic patient that feels bonded to you, your staff and your practice will become your walking/talking testimonial to people they come in contact with throughout their day and throughout their lifetime.

These patients are your practice advocates and should be treated like pure platinum. Don’t take them for granted. Acknowledge and appreciate them for what they are – your cheerleaders who keep coming back to you again and again and bring their friends, family and colleagues.

That’s how you grow a successful aesthetic practice for the long haul.
Unleash the untapped potential in your database.... You are sitting on a goldmine without even knowing it – focus on your client database if you have invested in the right software package – then divide it up by those who are loyal, those who visited and never booked and those who you never saw again. Fickle and emotional – life changes, things change people change. So stay in touch with them at all time.

- **What about that untapped potential in your current database?**
- **What could YOU do / your business do to bridge the gap and see your patients every month, so they become loyal to you and start referring their friends and family to your business?**
- **What can you do to tempt away the patients of your competitors?**

The bottom line is that consumers need to feel safe, reassured, and confident that they are coming to the right medical professional – use your experience, your skills and everything that you have worked hard for and trained for as your differentiator, the public WANT quality experienced medical professionals – not a beauty therapist for advanced anti-ageing procedures. So the bottom line is it’s easier to acquire patients from practices as they are low hanging fruit than to find new patients who aren’t spending money on looking and feeling better.

Part of the solution is to offer a mid-price solution that will slot in between the £80-100 range, something results driven that will convert your existing patient base into more loyal frequent spenders.
THE IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS

My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are....

1. ........................................................................

2. ........................................................................

3. ........................................................................

My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately

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PART TWO

9 STRATEGIES

STRATEGY NO. 5: INCREASE THE AVERAGE SPEND OF EACH PATIENT

Do you want to ‘Go Large’?

There are three main ways to increase your average order size; the first one is to raise your prices, the second one is to upsell your patients to a high end treatment or service and the third is to cross sell complimentary products and treatments. Many practice owners can be nervous about raising their prices, especially in today’s economy, so the most effective ways to increase revenue are upsells and cross sells.

As consumers, we have all had experiences of up-selling and cross-selling. Think McDonald’s when they ask if you want fries, or if you want to go large? Many high street newsagents in the UK are offering special offer bars of chocolate at the till and they know that if they don’t ask you if you want to buy, it can be a disciplinary procedure (particularly if someone from head office carries out a mystery shop on their store).

SO HOW DO WE GET OUR EXISTING PATIENTS TO START USING MORE OF OUR SERVICES? JUST SUGGEST IT TO THEM!

SELLING SERVICES

* Recommendation is the quickest way of selling treatments and services, particularly from personal experience.

* The perfect time to recommend services is when you have a client in the treatment room.

* Your conversation should be focused on what you can do for them and how you can make their life easier.

SELLING RETAIL

* Retailing starts at the beginning of the service and not at the end.

* Retailing is ‘educating’ patients – people love to shop and want the feel-good factor.

* Ensure that all of your team has very thorough product and treatment knowledge.

* Research the individual needs of your patients carefully and fully.

* When done well, retailing enhances the image of the seller, the practice and the buyer.

GOOD SELLING

* Knowing the products and services available

* Listening, asking questions, showing genuine interest

* Using the client’s name

* Empathising (putting yourself in the client’s shoes)

* Recognising body language

* Identifying needs, helping patients reach decisions

* Highlighting the benefits and features

* Being enthusiastic

* Congratulating your client on their purchase, e.g. ‘You’ve made a good choice – I’m certain you’ll find that works well for you’

VS BAD SELLING

* Arguing or telling the client that they are wrong

* Interrupting the client

* Hard selling

* Threatening the client, e.g. ‘It will go up in price next week’

* Blinding patients with science

* Insisting that the client buys the Product

SO, HOW CAN YOU.......

1. Help your patients to spend more and

2. Help your patients visit your practice more often, to spend their money more often

Why does putting your focus on these two things work so well? Because of the following:

- You will educate your patients better, so they understand the benefits AND SEE THE VALUE of what you’re offering them.

- You will connect with them as human beings, so they REALLY know how much you care.
- You will focus on delivering what you promise to them on a consistent basis.

This is fine in theory, but here are some practical steps to follow to help you do it.

1. **Prepare the Team:** To create a successful shift in client buying habits you first have to create a successful shift in the thinking and behaviour of your team. You want your patients’ buying behaviour to change ... but if your team and the culture of your practice doesn’t change to support it, you simply won’t see consistent growth in your average bill.

   So, how do you shift the thinking and behaviour of your team? First of all at a team meeting sit down with them and paint the big picture. Tell them about your change of focus from finding new patients onto improving the performance of existing patients and why you’ll be measuring average bill and patient visit numbers closely in future. In other words show them that following your plan is the easiest, most effective and most fun way to secure their future pay rises and create increasing job satisfaction! Then hold a brainstorming session to encourage your team to come up with good ideas for increasing average bill and the frequency of client visits. Take their ideas, work with your team to test and polish them and you’ll be amazed at the results you see.

2. **Add a Silent Sales Team:** once your team and their ideas are ready, you can introduce their secret helpers ... ‘Your Silent Sales Team.’ I bet you didn’t know you could have one ... your silent sales team members come in many disguises. They can be disguised as mirror stickers, flyers, posters, window displays, newsletter articles, blog posts, and pages on your website, videos posted on You Tube, your website and on Facebook.

   As you’ve probably realised your silent sales team is the marketing collateral you create to generate interest in the treatments and services you are offering your patients, if they trust you enough to spend more. Most practices don’t do enough work on their silent sales team or if they do they do it badly, or they do it blandly… this is an expensive mistake.

3. **Make Impulse Buying Easy:** Garages, Chemists and Supermarkets are masters at this, but there’s no reason why your practice can’t take advantage of the same principles. What are we talking about? We’re talking about all the impulse buy items they put within easy reach of their customers as they stand at the till waiting to pay. They put them there because they know that their customers are more likely to choose something extra at the time of paying than any other time in their visit. We’re talking about tapping into basic human instincts here ... so what could you stock? You could even ask your patients what they’d like you to stock! Just make sure that whatever you choose is well displayed and within easy reach.

4. **Add Premium Versions of Existing Services:** This one is simple and very effective. Create a tiered pricing structure for your treatments and services, by adding premium or luxury levels at a higher price. Give them **ADDED VALUE** with extra time, higher quality ingredients, attractive extras, give them what you feel is right for your patients, just make sure it gives them **ADDED VALUE**.

   The final touch is to create an exciting name for your premium or luxury services ... and charge more for them! By the way, the secret to getting this right is to make the **ADDED VALUE** of the more expensive options look really obvious. In other words give them what looks like loads extra for not a lot of money. You’ll be amazed by the number of patients who say yes, if you promote this properly and it all adds up to higher average bills.

5. **Introduce New Non-Competing Services:** This is an obvious strategy, but it needs to be thought through properly. If you want your patients to spend more, you’ve got to give your patients more to spend their money on. If they’re already buying their skincare from you and you simply give them a new brand or variant to buy instead it’s not going to make a massive difference.

   BUT ... If you give them a totally new product or service to buy that doesn’t compete with or replace ANYTHING they are currently buying then it’s win-win for you and your client. The important thing to remember here is that if you want someone to buy something totally new that they haven’t tried before, you have to sell it in a different way. You have to talk about the problem your new product or service solves and the price your patients are currently paying in lost time, lost money, living with stress or feelings of insecurity because of not having an answer to that problem. In other words sell the pain of the problem and they’ll happily buy your new solution to their pain. Try and sell the solution without building the pain of the problem first and your results will probably be disappointing.
6. **Create ‘Price/Time’ Menus:** Some practice owners have recently been having a lot of success creating what I call price/minute menus for their patients and they’ve seen their average bill figures soar because of it. First they make or create versions of services that can be delivered in 20-30 minutes. They then create a menu of 6, 7 or 8 of those services and say to patients “you can pick any 3 treatments for a set price of X” (with X being a figure they are happy with for an hours work.)

Patients love the choice, control, certainty and added value an offer like this gives them and they will buy. By the way, the real beauty of this offer format is its flexibility. Patients can choose different combinations to suit their needs and every few weeks you can change the items on the menu, change the number of items on the menu and change the price you charge for the hour.

Remember … Every time you change something you just give your menu a different name and patients feel like you’re giving them a new offer … even when you’re not!

7. **Create ‘Improved Result’ Packages:** This is another simple one to implement. The results of nearly every service you offer will work better and last longer if your client follows the right aftercare regime. This would normally involve your patients buying aftercare products to take home. We all know that only a percentage of our patients will take us up on our aftercare recommendations, but we can increase that percentage substantially if we include the aftercare products in the service price. Obviously we can’t afford to give the products away but we can create a ‘full service’ package with its own package brand name and a fabulous silent sales team to promote it, that offers your patients conspicuously good added value. This means, if you want them to spend more, you and your team have to create real **ADDED VALUE** propositions … Then get the help of your team and your silent sales team to bring the added value to your patient’s attention. One final tip. Keep things simple. If your added value offers get too complicated or you have too many on at the same time your patients will get confused and confused patients don’t buy!

**LET US LOOK AT SOME FIGURES OF AN IMAGINARY ‘AVERAGE’ PRACTICE.**

Let’s pretend it has 500 patients and these patients come in 4 times a year. Let’s also pretend your patients stay loyal for 3 years and spend £250 per visit.

This means on ‘average’ every client is worth £3000 in turnover to your imaginary practice.

£250 per visit x 4 visits a year x 3 years = £3000 and the combined turnover from all 500 patients will be £1,500,000

So now we know your patients are worth £1,500,000 let’s look and see what happens if you try and grow your turnover without adding any new patients to your practice!

Let’s start by looking at what happens to your turnover if each client spends £300 instead of £250:

**If would go up to £1,800,000!** That’s already £300,000 more … and when you work it out you’ll find it’s the same increase you’d get if you found 1000 new patients spending £300 each time they came in!

That’s amazing isn’t it … and which would be easier to do … find 1000 new patients or increase your average bill by £50?

Now for the next step … what happens to your turnover if your patients visit 5 times a year instead of 4? Your turnover now goes up to well over £2 million!

500 patients x £300 per visit x 5 visits a year x 3 years = £2,250,000

**This is an increase of £450,000 … and it’s the same increase you’d get if you found 1500 new patients!**

Again let’s ask the question which would be easier to do … find 1500 new patients or increase your average bill by £50 and attract your patients into your practice 1 more time each year?

**YOU KNOW THE ANSWER BY NOW!**

Finally, here’s the real mind blowing question … What happens if your patients stay loyal for 5 years instead of 3 as well as spending more and coming in more often?

Your turnover from the same 500 patients EXPLODES to a whopping £3,750,000!

500 patients x £300 per visit x 5 visits a year x 5 years = £3,750,000

That’s £1.5 million more … and the same as finding 5000 new patients …

**I TOLD YOU IT WAS MIND BLOWING!**
Think about it. Think about what you’ll do to persuade patients to spend more and come in more frequently.

You’ll probably decide to educate your patients better, so they understand the benefits of what you’re offering them.

You’ll probably decide to communicate with them better as well, so they know how much you care.

You’ll probably decide to focus on delivering your promises to them more consistently as well.

Now ask yourself these two questions...

“If I do all this are my patients more likely or less likely to stay loyal for longer? “MORE LIKELY OF COURSE”.

“If I do all this are my patients more likely or less likely to recommend my practice to other people?"

Make it easy for your patients by offering them payment plans: Offer your premium priced aesthetic procedures and treatment plans into easy monthly instalments. Making it easy for your patients to put money down today to lock in their commitment and then make payments to you every week or month is well worth it if you have prospective patients who want what you offer but can’t afford it or don’t want to spend their money all up front. This ensures they visit several times and gives you the opportunity to bond with them and it also helps ensure they receive the best result possible. Otherwise, there’s a chance you told them they needed 3-5 treatments over a period of time, but they only ever came in for one treatment and never returned but told their friends it didn’t work. They also stay loyal to you, they are grateful you gave them a way to get what they want and you have a patient on the books rather than a prospective patient who visits other practices to see if they’ll help them.

Offer treatment ‘bundles’: Give your patient choices of packages that cross-promote comparable products and services so they decide which package to go with rather than decide if they should do it at all. The point here is to introduce them to other comparable services you offer since an aesthetic patient is most likely interested in lots of different treatments that keep them looking their best. Here are some examples...

- Free underarm laser hair removal with leg laser hair removal package. The reason being if the aesthetic patient has hair concerns on one part of their body, they most likely have it on other body parts.
- Buy 4 and the 5th treatment is free – Free is always a good word in promotion.

- Buy a facial package and get laser hair removal for half price.
- Every 4th visit they receive a free product and that introduces them to your product lines.

THE KEY POINT: One of the challenges for any business is how to increase the average sale. Understanding spending shifts can help us to meet that challenge. Traditionally, spending habits fall into three categories:

- Need to buy/need to have – this would include staple items
- Nice to buy/nice to have – favoured brands or treats
- Must buy/must have – products and services with strong emotional needs attached to them i.e. aesthetic treatments, the latest gadgets, cars or holidays

Consider your spending habits – what are your treats and your must-haves? Now, consider your practice services from the patients’ perspective. How can you create a ‘must-have’ feel for key profitable services?

Human beings are herd animals and are often influenced by the majority. If we are missing out on something everyone else is doing, we subconsciously seek it. Talk to your patients about which products and services are popular; make them feel they need to be a part of something. Celebrities remain a major driving force behind client decisions. Use visuals of celebrities of various ages to underpin suggestions and create ‘must-have’ thoughts.

Put services into context by giving specific examples of how they have benefited other patients. Relate the story of the lady who came in fed-up, treated herself to xx, and went out looking and feeling fantastic.

Increasing ‘nice-to-have’ purchases: These are usually impulse buys – we’ve all thrown a little treat into the supermarket trolley that wasn’t on our list, and we can convert this idea into practice services. Popular price points for impulse buys are under £20-50.

Here’s some suggestions of how to promote ‘nice-to-haves’: Use the team’s ideas to create a treatment menu, offering a selection of service treats. To keep the cost down, these services could be carried out by less experienced team members. Use terms such as ‘spoil yourself’ on these menus. Use Twitter to update patients on this month’s express service treats. Ensure the team is showcasing a range of nice-to-have services and use these living examples as talking points to increase sales.
What proven methods can you use to increase your revenues per patient without resorting to ‘pushy selling’ or making your team feel uncomfortable? What lessons can you learn from corporate giants to give your patients what they want while you increase your revenues?

Use a spreadsheet to create a matrix of the treatments and services you offer and then see which ones are performing well, not so well and not at all. Then work out which ones are the most profitable, which ones you can easily promote without them having an impact on your current staffing levels and then devise a marketing campaign to maximise all treatments and services. Create campaigns with treatment bundles that maximise results but minimise your outgoings.

Write a simple script that all members of staff can easily use to upsell and cross sell treatments and products that feels authentic and not too pushy.

My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are….

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My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately

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STRATEGY NO. 6: INCREASE YOUR AUTHORITY AND CREDIBILITY

Shout from the rooftops! Don’t be Shy

The Keogh report states that a one day course isn’t enough to start offering aesthetic services – so shout about the qualifications, skills and experience that you do have. Don’t be shy. Ensure your patients KNOW you are compliant with the latest legislation (even if it hasn’t been passed by the Government yet!) by keeping them informed of what you are doing. At the same time, ensure your team understands and communicates your differentiators.

You could include your medical association and qualifications on your website, your business card, your letterhead, your brochure and everywhere else your patients will see it. Make sure that your patients not only see testimonials from other patients but also from fellow practitioners who sing your praises. Go above and beyond your competitors.

Highlight your values, what makes you unique, your qualifications, experience and skills in a positive way – have framed certificates, a folder with patient testimonials and before and after photos – take the time to show this to new patients – to build the credibility and trust quickly (please refer to ‘Mistake No. 2 for more ideas). “Sell” your experience about the procedures and services you can perform that others cannot.

You could go one step further and become a Published Author. In order to find success in private practice, practitioners must find ways to stand out from their competitors and show prospective aesthetic patients that they are the best providers for specific cosmetic procedures. One of the most effective ways to demonstrate your comprehensive knowledge of and dedication to your specialty is to write papers, articles, reports’ or even author a book.

If you do decide to write a book, think of it as a prestigious calling card. However, do keep in mind that writing a book is generally not a money-making project, but there are many intangible, yet crucial reasons for a medical aesthetic professional to write a book, among them are: credibility, believability, achievement of expert-status, name recognition and differentiation from competitors. Or as Daniel Priestly calls it – ‘A Key Person of Influence’ (which is a great book by the way and perfect for this).

So, where to begin? Very few people become authors and with good reason. Writing a good book, finishing it —and then marketing it—is hard work. To increase the odds of finishing your book, break it down into achievable steps. What questions or concerns will your finished work answer, and how? Start by making a list of your section headings such as, “Fillers vs. Facelift” or “When Injectables are not Enough.” Then, make an outline and work from it. An outline is basically a table of contents. Once you have the basic topics mapped out, start expanding the ideas.

Next, determine who will write the book. There are two options: You can write it yourself or you can hire a freelance writer—known as a ghost-writer—to write it for you. A ghost-writer is paid to write the book either for you or with you. His or her name does not appear anywhere in the finished copy. Should you choose to write the book yourself, commit to writing small sections of 500 to 1,000 words each day. This is your contract with yourself to complete the task. Using a ghost-writer often is more practical for busy practitioners and practice owners. One challenge to address with ghost-writers is how to convey your voice and your personal approach to the writing. One suggestion is to make recordings of how you work, key insights, new ideas and treatment approaches that you used. This will help the writer get a sense of your voice.

Writing a book for consumers requires a different approach than writing papers or presentations for other practitioners. First, you’ll need to speak in layman’s terms. Before-and-after photos, patient testimonials and anecdotes to which the reader can relate will also serve to draw consumers into the text. Make sure you include professional and personal pictures of yourself. This will help readers get to know you and convey that you’re a personable, approachable individual.

One purpose of your book is to attract new cosmetic patients to your practice, so don’t forget to include a call to action. You can include a “Get to Know Us” gift card in the book, or offer incentives to encourage readers to go to your website to learn more about you and the services you offer. You could even guide them to a simulation treatment programme on your website where they can virtually ‘try on’ specific procedures and see what the results could look like for them. In addition, you can detail your experience with injectables or surgeries in a strategic way that motivates the patient to compare your experience to others.
PART TWO

9 STRATEGIES

Make sure you include a medical disclaimer to ensure that your audience understands that you need to consult with and see each patient individually before you can recommend a treatment programme. Make it clear that your book is simply an educational tool for the would-be patient to learn general information about cosmetic procedures.

Remember your medical qualifications alone set you apart from those treatment providers who aren’t healthcare professionals, so capitalise on that.

Getting Your Book into the Public’s Hands: Book publishing and distribution is changing and becoming much easier for ‘anyone’ to publish their own book. Publishers are printing fewer titles, they rarely give advances and many struggle to market many of their titles. High street book chains are no longer the largest outlets for book sales, and they also are struggling financially. Because of this, publishers have become increasingly selective. You must learn how to send out smart queries and do the research required both to craft the idea—or angle— of your book and propose it effectively to publishers and booksellers.

The fastest route is to work with an agent who has the contacts you need to take your book from idea to print to market. You can find publishers and book agents by searching online or by referencing The Writer’s Market (www.amazon.com), which is published and updated annually. You can also find agents and publishers who specialise in the medical and medical cosmetic arena by looking at other books in your field. If you have a favourite Doctor authored book, look at the credits in the front of the book. Most authors thank their agent and publisher. Then, send the agent a note relating why you feel he would be the best individual to represent you and your work.

If you’re not getting a response from publishers or agents (or feel they’re not necessary to help you reach your target market), it’s easier than ever to self-publish these days. A quick search on the Internet will provide a wealth of information on self-publishing. Whether you decide to use an agent or self-publish, be sure to buy an International Standard Book Number (ISBN, www.isbn.org), and have the number and barcode printed on the back of your book. It looks more professional and allows you to offer your title on amazon.com and books.google.com.

As a new or first-time author, getting retailers to stock your book can be challenging. Competition for shelf space is tough, and coveted spots are reserved for high-profile authors. Chain stores want to see a proven track record of sales and a solid marketing plan. However, there are ways for new authors to get their books onto the shelves of bookshops. Talk to your local bookshop owner or manager about selling your book. Many stores have a “local authors” section and they may be willing to add your title. You can also apply to a bookshops acquisitions department directly. Criteria differ among bookstores, so be diligent in providing all information required to help them make a decision.

Online retailers: Amazon.com and Google.com are the biggest online booksellers. They offer unparalleled, online marketing platforms to help people find your title. They can also spread the word about your new book to consumers who search for similar topics. If you self-publish your book in Kindle it is a very simple, quick, low cost effective way of getting your book to market. Send copies to your patients and colleagues and ask for reviews. This will help Google to rank your book higher in its listings.

Marketing Your Book: Now that the book you’ve been working so hard on is finally published and on book shelves, it’s time to start marketing. Start by developing a sound marketing plan. Ask yourself: Who is my audience? Why is it important for this audience to read my book? What differentiates this book from others in this genre? Why am I qualified to write this book? How will I promote this book? How much will I spend on marketing my book?

Answering these questions will help you customise your promotional plans to reach the right target audience with a solid, confident message. There are several avenues through which to market your book.

Don’t forget your personal network. Do your friends and family members know you’ve written a book? If not, don’t be bashful. Tell them via phone, email or in person, and encourage them to share the news with everyone they know.

Social media. As a practice owner, I’m sure you’ve spent time building a network of patients, colleagues and other community members on social networking sites like Facebook.com, Twitter.com and LinkedIn.com. If you leverage these technologies and your established bases to get the word out. Offer giveaways in return for comments, connections or retweets, and ask your followers to spread the word. As with procedures, word-of-mouth is an effective and inexpensive marketing tool for authors.
**Press releases.** Authoring a book firmly establishes your expertise in medical aesthetic procedures, so make sure you include it in all press releases. Compose several releases detailing different procedures performed in your practice and discussed in your book. In addition, create press releases for events including the initial book launch, speaking engagements, book sale milestones and special offers for specific groups. You can then submit these to free and paid PR websites such as

- www.prweb.com
- www.prnewswire.com
- www.freepr.com

**Author’s website and blog.** Create an author’s website—linked to your practice website—that is devoted to your book, and try a blog site—such as WordPress—where you can blog about relevant topics to garner additional web traffic. Don’t forget to include a Media section on your author’s site so reporters and editors know how to contact you for interviews.

**Book signings, seminars and talks.** These are great opportunities to sell your book. To stage an event at a local bookshop, speak to their PR / Media Manager.

**THE KEY POINT: Communicate your mission, your charter, your code of conduct**

The Keogh report recommends that you adhere to a code of conduct, so if you haven’t got one in place – talk to your team and think about a mission statement and a code of conduct that doesn’t just cover insurance, complaint handling but that also includes how responsible your business is. It doesn’t need to be long – just make sure everyone knows it, communicate it with your team – get their involvement and buy in.

Better yet, address the issue head on! Write a special report called “5 Things You Should Know About Your Aesthetic Practitioner” or “The Truth about Injectables” and then write it with a slant that would be only favourable to your business and you. Then offer this special report in your advertising, your promotional materials as well as your Website to attract your preferred patients.
### Action Points

What topics could you write about that will increase your credibility and profile? Submit articles and get your writing going by doing it in bite size chunks.

### Top Tip

It’s not an easy task to write, publish and market a book, but that is why it will help you stand out from the crowd. Completing your book will not only provide you with a sense of personal and professional accomplishment, it may very well translate into a stream of new patients for your practice.

**My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are…**

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**My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately**

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STRATEGY NO. 7: BUILD AN ICONIC BRAND

Branding is the promises you make and the promises that you keep. Increase your brand to increase your sales, but always make sure you keep your promise. You don’t have to be the best – just do what you say you will do. The ‘old sales style’ was product led and sales person led. Today, the ‘new sales style’ means that nothing is sold until it is BRANDED. An iconic brand is a patient experience first and a product or service second. The experience is everything from the initial contact through to every touch point (i.e. if it’s a physical product, opening it, unwrapping it, the whole experience). The OUTCOME should be infectious, addictive and the consumer should WANT to do more of it.

When properly managed, a practice’s brand is one of its most valuable assets. Building and promoting a unique identity—known in marketing speak as “branding”—is a technique all businesses and individuals can use to effectively market themselves and their services. As a medical practitioner, your personal brand sends a clear, consistent message about who you are and what you have to offer. It sets you apart from every other practitioner in your specialty and can help position you as a niche expert.

BEFORE YOU START, IT IS BEST TO GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHY YOU ARE IN BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF.

The main reason that most people decide to work for themselves follows three common themes: “I started my business because I believed I could make more money working for myself than being someone else’s employee”; “I wanted more freedom over my own time now and in the future”; and “We believed that being a business owner was the best way to create balance in our lives and more choices for our families”.

Many people run successful businesses, but when they are asked about their current reality in terms of financial opportunity, freedom, and balance most of them felt they were simply not reaching the goals they had set out to achieve. Instead, they said “I’m not making the money I want”, or “I want less stress”, or “We don’t get to take the holidays and family time we need”, or “I want to exit”. Time, money and freedom are essential, but what are the real reasons for being in business? Let us start by giving you some food for thought about your REAL reasons for being in business....

All businesses understand ‘how’ they do what they do (their treatments, products and services etc), they talk about everything they sell and provide, they become product obsessed, or technology obsessed, but they never really understand ‘what’ their patients really want (the fundamental intellectual property and rocket juice that sits at the heart of the business and what makes their customers are really ‘buying’).

It is rare that a business will actually say: “We provide what a customer needs and wants”. Most businesses say “we have great products and a quality service, - so let’s get some clients”.

Very few businesses really understand the ‘why’. It’s a pity because the ‘why’ is where the power is. If you aren’t getting the results in your business that you expect, hope and feel you deserve. Why is this? Are you simply peddling commodities? Is there no difference between your practice and your competitor across town? If you think about all the most successful businesses, the ones people would most like to work for, they all have a strong and well understood ‘why’. It’s this ‘why’ that staff buy into figuratively – and customers buy into literally.

To differentiate your practice and build a brand, you must really understand the needs of your patients and the outcome of their experience: both from a tangible and intangible perspective: For example the tangible treatments and results you provide mean that lines are softened and complexions are more radiant. However, it is the intangible results they provide to your patients that really matter and make the difference: improved confidence, self-esteem and an inner glow. The intangible outcome of their experience.

Charles Revson, the Founder of Revlon Cosmetics summarised this well back in the 1930’s: “In the factory we make cosmetics; in the drugstore we sell hope.”

Apple understands why it exists in its bones and has invested huge amounts of time in instilling this belief in its staff. This ‘why’ is distinct from ‘what’ it does. Apple believes that everything they do challenges the status quo. It believes in solving problems for people through great design. Making and selling computers is just ‘what’ it does. This fundamental belief in a ‘why’ drives everything the business does – it creates the context for all the decisions the business makes. Go into any Apple store and you’ll see the outcome in powerfully motivated staff who love working there and believe passionately in the product they sell – and communicate that passionate belief to customers.

Compare Apple to Dell, a company with a clear understanding of ‘what’ it does but not ‘why’ and shows how this limits them. Since Dell has a clear ‘what’ (make
and sell computers) and Apple has a clear ‘why’ (solve problems through great design) customers will only buy computers from Dell whilst they’ll buy computers, music and telecommunications from Apple. And they’ll make every purchase decision when buying Dell partly on price (since it’s a rational ‘what’ choice) but price hardly features when buying Apple, which gives Apple a very healthy margin and a massive valuation.

**THIS IS THE POWER OF POSITIONING – THE POWER OF AN ‘ICONIC’ BRAND.**

Remember when Bill Gates said “We will put a computer in every home and in every office across America”. But do you remember what happened when Microsoft stopped thinking like an iconic brand? They went from constantly innovating to simply wanting to double their turnover and that’s when everything changed for them. It was no longer about their customers, it was simply about the bottom line.

**THE MOST ‘ICONIC’ BRANDS SET THEMSELVES UP TO SERVE CUSTOMERS.**

Disney – To make people happy
Sony – To experience the joy of advancing and applying technology for the benefit of the public
Nike – To experience the emotion of competition, winning and crushing competitors.
Google became iconic as they wanted to redefine how people use the web. They succeeded.
First Direct redefined banking for customer convenience and provided a 24/7 banking service for the convenience and ease of their customers.

**PROTECT YOUR BRAND AT ALL COSTS**

First of all, in business, your brand everything. Seventy percent of reviews written on Google are BS, made up, or maliciously done by your competitors trying to destroy you. When people search online, they don’t try to look for the best in people…..rather they will try and look for anything negative that will sway their decision to not buy. It is weird, but negative reviews create affirmation for people to not take action.

Most people who take to the internet to post negative reviews are doing so because they don’t feel listened to. So, if your practice is receiving too many negative reviews then look at your complaints handling and communication and take immediate steps to make sure your patients are listened to and communicated with on a regular basis.

Anyone who would resort to making up fake reviews so that they can hurt any person, company, and brand is not only bad karma but simply not ethical. No one reports the good news that it was dismissed, they report only the bad. Good news doesn’t make the news. If it bleeds it leads……as they say in the news world. We are a society that strives on negativity rather than stories of success and significance. What does this mean for you? Well, you need to protect your brand.

I have heard dozens of people across many industries who have had their name combined with scam / fraud / complaints.com purchased by a competitor who then built a BS website making false allegations. The person or company is defenceless because the website has a hosting programme in another country and there is nothing you can do except cry and see your reputation and brand equity wash away along with your business. When your kids, friends, family and future business prospects all Google you, this is what they see. Bad reviews climbs fast in Google and good reviews doesn’t really get read. So you have to protect your brand, it’s almost suicide if you don’t.

Remember the saying: “the higher the monkey climbs the tree, the more of his ass is exposed” which is a downside of fame and success, big or small. Everyone always says, ‘this will never happen to me’, until it does. You must take preventative action now, because if someone does attack your brand, you will have some seasoned websites and track record to defend yourself against any attacks.

**REMEMBER, IN LIFE ALL YOU HAVE IS YOUR NAME, REPUTATION AND CREDIBILITY, AND IF YOU DON’T PROTECT IT, IT WILL WASH AWAY.**

**What should you do?**

1. Buy a domain for a review site and get a testimonial from every patient you can, then spread them out among all your websites. Keep your best ones for your review site. DO NOT MAKE UP FALSE REVIEWS. It is not only unethical, but also could haunt you later in business and life. If your patients don’t wish to participate, or you choose to do nothing and put no testimonials up, that’s fine, but it’s worth keeping them under your control.
2. Always address any negative review in an appropriate way. Keep your cool and do not disclose any confidential information. Apologise publically if you can and say that you will be glad to meet with them face to face. Be polite, diplomatic and helpful and never engage in any tit-for-tat. If you do offer a refund, ask them to sign a confidentiality agreement to make sure that no further negative reviews are posted. If you are suspicious that a negative review is coming from someone who is not a real patient, then look at the review websites Terms and Conditions and ask them to remove the review if you can prove they are not a real patient.

Do what you can to supress any negative reviews by making sure your positive reviews dilute them.

3. Use a free WordPress blog; it will give you maximum SEO. All you have in this world is your name, credibility and reputation. What gets put on Google tends to stay there forever and can haunt you for years without the proper SEO strategy. It used to be that bad news would have a lifecycle of 1-2 days—not with Google; it follows you like the plague.

4. If you are having many negative reviews, then you need to take a good hard look at your business and perhaps get legal or PR experts involved. Buy xxsccam.com, xxfraud.com, xxcomplaints.com, and yournamexx.com.

5. You could also consider signing up your children’s and grand-children’s names. Dot coms are becoming very valuable and there are people who snap up other people’s names in the hopes that one day they will buy it from them. You may not think you need them now, but one day they may be an author, entrepreneur or the next Prime Minister.

THE KEY POINT: So, why should you brand your practice?

It is difficult for patients—on their own—to determine the objective professional skill and quality of a given practitioner. Instead, they typically determine who is right for them based on their perception of their personal and professional brand. One of the quickest ways to jumpstart the creation of your brand is to identify that one thing by which you would like to be known.

Branding begins with your practice—the physical space, including the design and decor—and extends to your staff communication and dress code, as well as your “bedside manner” in dealing with patients. It also includes your outside communications, such as your website, social media presence, PR campaigns and even your advertising. Also, remember that YOU are your brand—so if you are always late— you will be the person who is always late, which is not a positive brand. Your brand lives in other people’s minds, so think about what people really think about you and what they really say about you? Be RADICALLY different to any other company. Set yourself up to ignore the competition. Google have no enemies, but Microsoft and IBM think that their enemy is Apple. You don’t have to have an enemy although it can be powerful if you KNOW you can do a much better job than them.
PART TWO
9 STRATEGIES

THINK ABOUT YOUR MISSION, WHAT IT IS THAT YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR, THE REASON YOU GET UP EACH DAY. REMEMBER, UNLESS YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR YOU CAN’T DESIGN YOUR PRACTICE TO SERVE CUSTOMERS FIRST.

• WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR? CARING AND COMPASSIONATE? TECHNICALLY PROFICIENT? THE BEST IN YOUR FIELD IN A CERTAIN PROCEDURE? OR A GIFTED ALL-ROUNDER WHO CAN “DO IT ALL”?

• WHAT ARE YOU UP TO OTHER THAN MAKING MONEY? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO RE-DEFINE/RE-CREATE?

• WHAT WILL MAKE YOUR LIFE WORTH LIVING? WHAT LEGACY DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE?

• WHAT CULTURE DO YOU WANT TO INSTILL WITH YOUR STAFF? EVERYBODY IN YOUR BUSINESS SHOULD FEEL THE SAME.

• WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF YOUR BRAND EXPERIENCE?

• WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT CUSTOMER SERVICE WHAT WORDING DO YOU USE? WHAT STORIES HAVE YOU COLLECTED?

• WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT IN STAFF MEETINGS? HOW ARE PEOPLE REWARDED? HOW EMPOWERED ARE YOUR STAFF?

Make sure you move away from COLD, ONE SIZE FITS ALL, to an individual experience.
THE IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS

My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are....

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PART TWO
9 STRATEGIES

STRATEGY NO. 8: DECREASE YOUR COSTS

In today’s economic climate, all businesses need to increase efficiencies, without spending more and decrease their costs without it impacting on their customers. So, if you are serious about paying your overheads without worry, supporting your current lifestyle and generating extra capital to secure your future, there is ZERO TOLERANCE for waste, mistakes, sloppiness, indifference, stupidity, squandered leads and lost patients because you didn’t have the time nor the interest to see and deal with it.

If your constant worry is the overheads, you know that your fixed costs aren’t going to change – but what can you do – whether you are full or empty – is to manage those overheads that have to go out every week, every month and every year. Are you breaking even? Are you always the last to get paid? To help you manage your cash flow as accurately as possible and avoid as many peaks and troughs as possible, make sure you know exactly what is due out and when by forecasting everything that is due: wages, tax bills, supplier bills etc. Then think about what you can do in advance to prevent the troughs on the closing balance sheet so you don’t run out of cash and can’t pay a bill; for example you could bring in more sales earlier by running a fixed time promotion that is low on overheads but high on returns, or you could pay bills later by negotiating preferential payment terms to suit your forecasting.

What about your team? Have you noticed how much your appetite increases and you order whatever you want on the menu when someone else is picking up the bill? That same way of thinking happens in your business when your staff doesn’t have a clue or a care about how much things cost to run a practice. Consumables such as office supplies, printing, cleaning supplies, and medical supplies can run out of control if nobody bothers to monitor or be accountable for processes and overhead costs.

NEGOTIATING WITH SUPPLIERS

You don’t have to be slick to get what you want in a negotiation, just well-prepared. As a practice owner or manager, it’s inevitable that you will need to negotiate. Whether you are leasing a new building, working out a partnership agreement or working with a vendor to obtain a new piece of equipment; developing basic skills in the art of negotiation can help you protect your interests and get the best possible deal for high-ticket items. The most important thing to remember when negotiating is that both parties want to “win,” but both parties also want to walk away with a signed deal. When negotiating with an individual, their individual needs, wants and desires must be satisfied in order for the negotiation process to be successful.

Step 1: Know Your Facts: The first step in a successful negotiation is to make sure that you have your facts in order, that is, you have done your “due diligence.” In many cases, the other party may be more educated in the subject matter of your negotiation, and this requires you to be convincing. Avoid opinions or assumptions. Focus on hard facts.

Second, you must always know the level of authority you are dealing with. You don’t want to spend an extreme amount of time in the due diligence phase trying to educate someone who ultimately does not have the power to make a final decision. Investigate the parties or company you are dealing with to ensure there have not been any adverse actions against them in the past. You might find hidden facts and/or agendas that you were not aware of and it may be too late to back out once the contract is signed. Part of your initial due diligence involves understanding all of the aspects of the proposed deal that’s on the table for negotiation. In the case of a buildings lease, there are several components to consider beyond the square footage cost and lease length, and each of these must be well-defined from the very beginning.

- What is the fair market value of the property?
- Who is responsible for the utilities—such as electric, water/sewer and telephones?
- Who is responsible for the maintenance fees?
- Who is responsible for the rates?
- What is the minimum term of the lease, and are there guaranteed renewal options?
- Is there a cancellation clause, and if so, what are the terms and conditions?
- Are there restrictions for the hours of operation, including nights and weekends?
- What are the security deposits, and are there any non-refundable fees?
- Are you allowed to operate your type of business in this facility, and are there any competitors that might restrict you from doing business there? Register with your local council.
• Are you allowed to build or add to the facility, and do you have to restore it back to the original condition upon your departure?

When negotiating for equipment purchases or leases, there is often not a lot of room to negotiate. Try to find out if there are different financing options, either directly from the vendor or indirectly via third-party financing. You could also open a line of credit where you may only have to pay back the interest, while still maintaining the balance until it is paid off. This can be less expensive, since you don’t have to pay additional taxes for the lease. The following are additional areas that should be part of your negotiation:

• Always ask to “test drive” the equipment. Ask the sales rep to bring the device to your facility so you can operate it and get a feel for it.

• Is the manufacturer’s warranty adequate or do you want to negotiate for an extension beyond the offered warranty?

• Can the warranty be transferred if you sell the equipment before the negotiated warranty expires? This can be sticky, but sometimes it can be negotiated into the deal.

• Is there a warranty or extended warranty for parts or labour? Read the fine print carefully.

• Are the charges for delivery included in the upfront costs or are they extra?

• Are you responsible for shipping costs when you have to send the equipment back for repair?

• Will you get a “loan” piece of equipment when your unit is out of service?

• Try to negotiate additional consumables in the deal.

Ask the supplier to explain what finance is available and make sure you understand the differences between leasing and cash / bank loan purchasing. To give you an idea: leasing is tax efficient as you won’t actually own the machine until the end of the lease, so you don’t pay tax on it until it’s an asset. You can also claim back the equivalent of the interest – subject to the value of your tax book. If you decided to buy a new piece of equipment with cash or a bank loan, it will need to go straight on your books, which means it depreciates quickly and it can take years to write it off. It also means you would pay tax immediately (so it’s not very tax efficient at all).

If you are operating a brand new business, your leasing rate won’t be as favourable as an established business, however the advantage is that you can carry over any tax on the equipment into the 2nd year of business. The majority of people think that bank finance will cost less but banks quite often use lending secured on the house of a director. Also, it’s harder to get a bank loan today. Another option is ‘hire purchase’ but this is also classed as an asset from day one so it’s also not very tax efficient as the VAT is paid up front, as you will own the machine from day one.

If a supplier says they can offer you the piece of equipment ‘interest free’, then make sure you break down all of the figures and really look into exactly how much is paid back and what the terms are. The chances are it’s not really interest free – you usually end up paying the interest in hidden charges, or the only businesses that get agreement for interest free are “A Class” businesses that have been established for some time and who have a good credit rating.

Often when you negotiate for capital equipment, you will hear that there is a set standard in the industry. Do not be afraid to alter the standard terms and conditions, and never settle for the explanation that it wouldn’t be fair to the other practices’ contracts. Every negotiation must stand alone. Once you have determined what you want out of the deal, you must be willing to compromise, if necessary. Sometimes you have to give something up in order to solidify the negotiation and move forward in a positive direction.

Remember whether to analyse how quickly your new piece of equipment will MAKE money – make sure you only buy established, tried and tested INCOME GENERATORS with proven track records and marketing support.

If the other party comes back to you with a deal that is not acceptable, always counter offer. You have nothing to lose. When making a counteroffer, you want to make clear that you were put off by the original offer. Frown, flinch or twitch to show the other party you are uncomfortable. He will pick up this sign immediately.

I recommend hosting the negotiations in your own facility, as it will give you a better comfort level. You have the option to excuse yourself, go for a quick break and then come back to negotiating. The ball is in your court. However, sometimes it not a bad idea to negotiate on your opponent’s turf. It shows respect and removes the excuse that the file is “back at the office.”

AESTHETIC BUSINESS TRANSFORMATIONS

9 STRATEGIES
**Listen to your instincts:** Once you are in the midst of negotiations, it’s natural to feel as if you have to win this and get your new building, device or partner, but try not to be married to the deal. If you feel you are being pressured or you feel the deal just isn’t right for you, walk away. There is always another deal in the future. Not all are worth pursuing. We all want to feel successful, but entering into a mediocre contract will haunt you. If something else becomes available, you are already committed and may be unable to afford the new opportunity. If you’re using a third party to help you negotiate, insist on exclusivity and make sure there is no back-end compensation to your consultant. He has a fiduciary relationship with you that should never be violated.

Before concluding any meeting, phone conversation or written documentation, you must summarise everything. Once you have a final consensus, always insist on putting terms and conditions in writing, signed by all parties— as the legal process for breach of contract does not support verbal communication. Written terms are also helpful if disputes arise in the future regarding the agreed-upon terms.

**THE KEY POINTS: Here are some effective methods of reducing overheads and expenses**

If you use only one company for all of your practice supplies, you are probably paying too much some of your monthly supplies. Ask them for volume discounts, or discounts if you pay within 30 days. I know that many suppliers can and will be flexible, but the key is to ask, be creative and to negotiate where you can.

You could also develop an inventory management system and reduce the amount of stock on your shelves (although not so it affects your practice and patient demand). For example if you use expensive supplies, only order these items when you are going to use them. This avoids tying up your cash flow in costly inventory. A great example of this is Dell. They used to have billions tied up in stock for use during 45 day work turnaround. They initially reduced it to 7 days but now they have one hour’s worth of stock ready to use. Mind you, this won’t work quite in the same way for aesthetic practices, but I’m sure you get the point! Your best bet is to re-order stock weekly, which may mean more in delivery charges, but ultimately result in less stock that is sat on your shelves.

If you accept credit cards, do your research to find out who may reduce their process charges to get your business. When you pay your bills, use your credit cards to receive points and airline miles.

You could also consider renegotiating your lease if you accept an extension and are then able to reduce your monthly rent. Remember there are some towns and cities that will help by lowering your rates.

Make sure you always avoid costly overtime and only allow authorised overtime.

You can avoid using expensive temporary staff by cross-training your staff to fill in when your team are absent or off sick.

You can also introduce an ‘Absence Management Policy’ which helps to manage this process and ensures that everyone knows where they stand on sick pay and other entitlements. *(If this is a particular problem in your practice, then please get in touch directly as I can help you with this.)*

**Use a great accountant.** Don’t allow them to become complacent. Choose an accountant who has your best interests at heart and not one that is stuck in a rut, just doing the basics. Make sure they are tax wizards, who will ensure that your business is as legally tax efficient as possible. Change to accrual accounting for true reflection of every single piece of financial activity. If you are growing rapidly and spending a lot of money on new equipment and staff, then make sure you use ‘common sizing’ as it’s easier to see the effects of your spending as a percentage on your P&L.

Don’t just rely on the accountant, make sure you know all of your facts and figures in detail so you understand the health of your business. Use your management accounts to make management decisions, not just at the end of each year, but monthly. Remember, financial literacy in business is the most important skill to master, so you need to understand your accounts. This is not just because of the legalities but also just as importantly it means that you can make informed decisions that will increase profitability and decrease your costs.

**Bottom Line:** Most practitioners are maxed out and seeing as many patients as they possibly can and don’t keep track of their management accounts. However, nearly every practice has an opportunity to reduce overhead expenses. It is an effective way to boost your bottom line.
You could introduce something fun as a way to control and even cut down on those costs. Have a staff meeting and announce a fun staff competition. Call it the “Cutting Costs Competition” or similar. Then set the rules in the way that they will work best in your practice and have a tight deadline date to keep everyone motivated.

For example, you could say for the next month, you are setting up a cost cutting suggestion box in the lunchroom and then make up some simple to complete entry forms. Collect the forms all month and then have a staff meeting the following month where you read each entry and the entire team decides on who wins. It is best to have multiple winners and prizes for the “most money saved” and “the most creative” and “the funniest”, etc.

The point is to get your staff thinking about how much things costs and to care about the bottom line. It’s also a fun way for your staff to re-connect with you and each other.

Once you have verbally solidified any new deal to your satisfaction, stop talking. Otherwise you will end up talking yourself out of the deal.

My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are....

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My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately

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STRATEGY NO. 9: RUN A TIGHT SHIP

Minimise White Space and Maximise Your Appointments

For most medical aesthetic businesses the busiest time is Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Is that true for your practice? Are you quieter the rest of the time? What can you do to manage your columns and your appointments to maximise your time and minimise gaps? I know of a number of businesses who don’t just have a receptionist, they have a ‘White Space Minimiser’ – someone who loves talking to patients, who loves being on the phone and who loves thinking of creative ways to fill up those quiet times.

If you run a practice / clinic, or have another practitioner who works with you, perhaps the best way is to have a policy that says ‘no walk in’s’ during your busiest times and perhaps even a minimum price point or a surcharge to optimise the busiest days. You could introduce incentives to even out the flow during the rest of the week – for example – if you have a gap in the diary, why don’t you call your patient to see if they can come in earlier and receive 25% discount from a (low cost to perform) procedure? There are a number of low cost but high impact things you can do to make to generate flow to the quieter times.

If you don’t have a designated receptionist then make sure there are rules around practitioners changing patient appointments to suit them. This simple strategy will make sure that of your patients aren’t clustered into your three busiest days or evenings. Proactively managing your appointments / diary could make you thousands of pounds extra per year. Make sure this area of your business is water tight. It will make an enormous difference. If you don’t have a receptionist or you are an independent practitioner, make sure you never miss a call – outsource it to a call answering service, whatever it takes to make sure that a potential patient does not go elsewhere.

There’s another simple way to give yourself a 10-30% raise this year and it won’t cost you anything. No, it’s not a new patient advertising campaign and it’s not about raising your prices. It’s easier than that. It’s about plugging up the holes that are costing you a fortune in missed revenues and wasted time due to mistakes and sloppy processes.

A medical practitioner’s time can easily be divided into practice time, time that they could or should delegate, and wasted time. In order to determine the practitioner’s productivity, you could conduct a time and motion study for just a day’s worth of patients. Work out how many patients are seen on average in an hour and work out the number of minutes per patient. Look at actual practice time, time that could be delegated, and wasted time and then work out where increases in productivity and the bottom line of the practice could be made.

Ideally invest in practice software to compare your performance regarding revenues, productivity, utilisation and patient satisfaction of your practice. There are a number of cloud-based applications that will help doctors identify and quantify areas where they can improve practice utilisation or sustain a marketing advantage.

The bottom line is that no longer will it be necessary to reward practitioners because they “feel” they are the largest producer in the practice. Now you will have objective data not only comparing each practitioner to one another within the practice using a current, up-to-date, unbiased, data base.

Reduce the number of no shows: There’s probably not one medical aesthetic practice that hasn’t experienced the impact of no-shows leading to empty slots in your appointment schedule, resulting in a decrease in productivity and a loss of income. It doesn’t have to be that way. We are going to look at a number of solutions to keep you appointment book full and your bottom line fat. No shows are different to cancellations. No shows are very costly and must be avoided. Cancellations create additional work for your team but generally don’t cause havoc with your schedule or severely impact your bottom line.

First things first is to check the source of the problem and determine why so many patients are not keeping their appointments. Routinely review all of the files of patients who didn’t keep their appointments and then ask your patient coordinator or nurse to contact the new patients to determine the reason for the no-show. You may learn that there are a number of no-shows who are repeat offenders. Calculate the number of no-shows occurring on a weekly and monthly basis. If you see the numbers drift up, do a more thorough analysis to identify the problem. This proactive solution will help you keep the problem to a minimum.

Let patients know the importance of keeping their appointments: All patients should be told the first time they contact your practice that the time is being held for them and that you request a 24 hour cancellation.
You could solve the problem by giving repeat offenders the last appointment of the day, so as not to cause a gap in your schedule or “down time” for the practitioners in your practice. New patients who fail multiple appointments with no notification could then be asked to seek treatment elsewhere.

**Charging for no-shows:** A number of practices try to discourage no-shows by charging the patient for the time. This is a tough love approach that I would discourage. This policy sets a sour tone, the charges can be difficult to collect and you may find some patients will leave your practice if you start such a policy. The best advice is to ask for a deposit in advance, particularly for those procedures that require a large amount of time to be blocked out. This approach is slightly harder for consultations only, as many practices today offer free consultations.

The bottom line is that you are a medical professional and your time is valuable.

**Preventing no-shows can be a proactive process.** Look at your systems and scheduling processes. Check the access to your practice for new patients and patients with urgent follow up appointments. Identify the obstacles that prevent patients from keeping their appointments. Make every effort to be on time for your patients letting them know that you respect their time. You will be rewarded by patients respecting your time and you will have a more productive and profitable practice.

**DEVELOPING PROTOCOLS FOR EVERY DAY ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES**

We believe that developing protocols for day-to-day activities in your office and your practice will improve the efficiency and productivity of your practice. Begin by looking at those procedures that are performed multiple times throughout the day or multiple times each week. You will find that most of the processes in your practice are repetitive. Examples include answering the telephone, making appointments, moving patients from the reception area to the treatment room and your regular procedures. If you have a number of treatment rooms and practitioners who move rooms frequently, make sure there are standards in place so that all of the instruments and equipment that are needed for the treatments are available in the room without exception, so no delays take place when you enter the room to begin the procedure.

One additional idea would be to have a card that a patient completes along with their consultation form. This card should simply say “What three questions would you like to ask the doctor today?” You will be amazed at how many patients will complete this part of the card and hand it to you. You now can ensure the doctor is fully prepared to answer their questions during the consultation, which will avoid call backs for unanswered or forgotten questions.

**Next, create a routine.** Develop a written step-by-step protocol for procedures that you want to streamline, for example: making sure there is no down time between placing the patient in the treatment room and the time that the patient is seen by the practitioner. Once the protocols are developed, it is time to institute the routine. This requires adding the protocol to your office staff manual. Then the new protocol should be discussed with all of your staff. This can often be done at your weekly staff meeting. You want to get their buy-in on the new protocol and listen to their comments and suggestions before implementation.

Finally, you want to follow up and analyse your results. This means tracking the performance of your protocol and determining that the process results in improvement and patient care. In order to make this process effective, you need to inspect what you expect. You might also consider rewarding the staff in some small manner for goals achieved and accomplished.

The bottom line is that properly introduced protocols gets everyone (patients, staff and practitioners) on the same page. Protocols have the potential to increase the effectiveness and productivity of your practice.

**THE KEY POINT: It’s time to plug the holes and go back to the basics**

- Hire solid, dependable staff who show up every day
- Have protocols clearly stated so your practice runs like a well-oiled machine
- Be so efficient, you can see more patients per day
- Answer your phones so you don’t waste time playing phone tags with patients
- Revisit the three R’s: Re-booking, Recall and Regenerate.
**Re-booking** is old news, but there are still many practices with rebooking as low as 30% or 40%. So if your practice had, say, 100 clients for the week, you rebooked 35% that simply means that after a few cancel, you’d be left with about 30 clients booked in. Where would you get the other 70 clients from in a hurry? You’d have to rely on new clients or casuals, and the chances are you wouldn’t get 70.

**Recall.** If they don’t rebook, put them on a recall reminder. If you’re using a computerised system, this is easy, otherwise you can send out SMS reminders a couple of weeks before they’re due: ‘Just to remind you your next appointment is due at xx. Give us a call so we can schedule your appointment’ It’s easy and simply great service.

**Regenerate.** Contact anyone who has not visited in the past 6 months. They are considered ‘lapsed’, and from our experience you can easily get 30% of these clients back with a simple letter or even better, a phone call.

**Do these three things every week.**

Consistency is the key. And if you’re busy thinking - ‘I know all this.’ Ask yourself - are you doing it consistently?

Knowledge is not power. It’s what you do with knowledge that’s truly powerful.
Brainstorm with your staff to determine all the little holes in your practice and processes that cost you time and money. Then celebrate with the money saved.

**Ask your patients for their feedback:** There’s probably no easier way to demonstrate the approval or lack of approval from your practice than to ask the patients. There are many ways to survey your existing patients about their experience with your practice. I find the easiest is to give every patient at the time of his / her visit a card that asks six questions:

1. Were you able to make an appointment in a timely fashion?
2. Was the staff cordial and helpful?
3. Did the practitioner see you within 20 minutes of your appointment?
4. Did the practitioner answer all of your questions?
5. Would you recommend our practice to your family and friends?
6. Are there any other suggestions that would improve our services to you?

Of course there are surveys, suggestion boxes, and mystery shoppers that can be used to evaluate your practice. However, the answer to these six questions will be the most valuable, cost effective and useful to evaluate your practices patient satisfaction. I hope you will give some thought to the topic of patient satisfaction and its importance in making your practice managed care friendly.

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**THE IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS**

My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are....

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My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately

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BONUS STRATEGY NO.10: BUILDING YOUR A-TEAM

The Right Staff Are Critical To Your Success

Setting up the right team to represent your medical aesthetic practice is imperative to the success of your business. The team you surround yourself with can make or break your practice. Getting the right team players on board is difficult and ever-changing but vital to your success.

Most aesthetic practitioners have challenges with their staff:

• Their staff do not care about their practice like they do

• Their staff are not converting prospective patients into paying patients. (In fact, often they chase patients away)

• Their staff do not know how to promote the practitioner as the best choice to the patients

SO, DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TEAM IN PLACE?

And, do they know their main job is to promote you and your aesthetic services and that starts with impeccable patient service? It’s imperative every staff person who works for you knows exactly what is expected of them. The right team are critical to your success and what if they aren’t pulling their weight? Are they going off sick all the time? Perhaps targets aren’t being met, or some team members aren’t upselling like they should be – you’ve even heard the odd story from one or two patients who said that staff are sending them elsewhere when they know there is a better deal on? Certain team members always have something to complain about: not being paid enough, targets too high, prices too high.

If you’re not sure if you’re surrounded by team players, hold a friendly staff referral competition. Keep it short and simple. Give your staff refer-a-friend cards with their name on them so you can track their efforts. Use business-size cards since they are inexpensive to print and your staff can conveniently carry them with them during their daily lives. Now for the next 30 days, they should refer their family, friends, hair stylist, gym buddies, club members, etc. Whoever has the most referrals come in for an appointment within the 30 days wins the grand prize which should have been on display in the lunchroom the entire month to keep them motivated. You want to make this a great prize such as an iPad, flat screen TV or whatever. But here’s the point; you’ll find out whom your team players are and if you have staff that didn’t bother to participate; I suggest you find new staff.

You know the team members you do wish to have on board: They are the first to arrive (outside of you) – last to leave – last to take a lunch if someone else is not running on time. They are responsible for their own schedule, the first to work hard to fill in gaps, the first to hear the stress when a Practitioner isn’t busy, they are responsible for all paper work, they can operate a computer system that many doctors don’t even log on to ... AND THEY always have a smile on them, no matter how busy they are...

However, this is a lot to expect, so your staff need to know that they are supported and respected and NOT ‘just’ a receptionist or patient co-ordinator. Let them know you need them, thank them for doing their job well, knowing that if they don’t yours suffers as well. Make sure all of your team, including the Practitioners support them. All of this is essential for a happy, productive environment. Remember your patients deserve a calm friendly non-stress experience.

Where can you find the right team players? Good candidates are everywhere good service is provided. Think outside the box. Look for new receptionists / patient co-ordinators at the high-end restaurant you dine at, at your exclusive hair salon, retail boutiques, the department store cosmetic counter or anywhere else quality services and products are sold. Talk with the well-groomed, well-trained staff that understand the importance of awesome patient service and find out if they are interested in making a change. They’ve already demonstrated they know how to treat customers so they are most likely going to treat your aesthetic patients with the same quality service.

It can take a lot of time and money to train the right person to fit into a front desk position. Train them correctly and encourage their growth. It is hard work at the front desk – hearing other staff laughing and talking with the doctor or each other and feeling like they are too busy to take part.

The whole team should acknowledge and understand just how important the front desk position is. They are usually receiving the lowest pay but the highest amount of pressure.

SO HOW CAN YOU FIND AND KEEP LOYAL STAFF MEMBERS?

Let us refer back to an earlier example of an organisation that not only looks after its ‘guests’ but its staff. Why are the employees so loyal to Disney? Disney executives believe in MBWA or ‘Management by Walking Around’. Disney executives are commonly seen walking around the rides and exhibits. They talk to the guests and the
employees. They ask questions and they find solutions to make everyone’s experience including that of the employees a positive one. Everyone at Disney is on a first-name basis and they wear only their first names on their uniforms. It is in the training manual that all employees are to wear their name tags at all times. When Michael Eisner, the highest paid CEO in America, was noted not to have his name tag on while walking in the park or “on stage” he was reminded by one of the employees that he was “out of uniform.” You see at Disney there is no double standard. Everyone, even Michael Eisner, follows the rules.

Everyone in Disney adheres to Walt Disney’s philosophy of success which he expressed in just two words, “Quality and Pride.” Every employee takes pride in the “set.” In the Disney parks everyone is expected to pick up litter and rubbish. Also Disney makes it easy to keep the place clean as there are colourful litter bins nearly every 150 feet in the park that are emptied on a regular basis so they are never full. The walkways are also full with beautiful flower beds, shade trees and benches.

Disney believes that extensive training of the cast members is a key to the employee commitment to quality and pride. Every new employee including the street sweeper has four days of training before he or she is considered ready to “go on stage” in front of the guests, so that all cast members are able to answer most questions that are frequently asked by the guests. All cast members know where everything is, when it starts, and how long the waiting time is. It all gets back to the Disney philosophy of friendly, smiling cast members who are always ready to help you and make your Disney experience a memorable one. Disney managers and executives have recognised the necessity of knowing what their guests are experiencing, thinking, seeing, touching, and smelling. Which is why every executive and middle manager will spend several days each year as a cast member to understand the feelings of both the front line cast members and the guests.

Is it possible to transfer the magic of Disney from the world’s most famous theme parks to almost any service industry, including healthcare? The comparison between Disney and healthcare may not match in all areas and many even say “far-fetched”, but there is one thing for certain: when a guest comes to a facility, people react most favourably if they are treated with respect, and if their expectations are exceeded; they will tell their family and friends about their positive experience, and more importantly they will return.

So take a little “Pixie Dust” and put sparkle into your delivery of aesthetic treatments and services.

What lessons can your practice borrow from Disney?
First, Disney leads by example. Most Disney executives come from within or from the bottom up. Disney has a rigorous selection process for all its employees. No one is selected after a single interview. Employees that don’t work out in the job they were given are seldom dismissed. Disney assumes the person was right but the job was wrong and they are retrained for another position. Those employees that do a good job are promoted within the organisation. Consequently Disney reports one of the lowest employee turnover rates in the entertainment industry.

Make sure your employment process is also very selective. Ensure that every applicant watches a video on the philosophy of your business and the expectations for all the employees. When some candidates learn about the dress code and the team member philosophy, they may not pursue their application any further as it may not be right for them. One of the most important things that attributes to the success of any top performing practice is the ability to transform all of the right staff into a dream team of A Players. It all starts with a strong vision of leadership...

However, there’s an important difference between “leadership” and “management”. Management is a bottom-line focus: How can I best accomplish certain things? Leadership deals with the top line: What are the things I want to accomplish?

In the words of Business Expert Peter Drucker: "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." If you are “managing” the people who work for you, then you only have “staff”. But if you provide leadership and vision, then your team gets aligned with YOUR purpose. They will LOVE working for you and making you money, because they know it’ll affect THEIR lives as well.

Introducing a bonus / incentive structure will help with this in several ways. First the employees are involved from the very beginning and you have a “buy in” as it is their programme and they have agreed to the goals and the objectives. A practice that decides to implement a bonus or incentive plan needs to: Plan it carefully, communicate it clearly, ensure measurable objectives and involve staff in the planning process. While these may seem easy and obvious, each one can be difficult to accomplish. The climate of the organisation, the attitudes of the employees and the commitment of the business owners to reward staff play key roles. Careful planning of the bonus programme may prevent having to change it in the future. Better to implement a plan in slow, carefully developed steps, considering future
growth of the practice, than to try to change what has already been established. A bonus tied to productivity is probably the best way to use monetary motivation to enhance your practice.

**Do you know why your employees leave?**

Here are the most commonly reasons why your staff may move on:

- Lack of recognition and appreciation (huge one)
- Lack of leadership from the management
- Lack of understanding of their role
- Not feeling part of the team
- Not getting along with other staff
- They lack clear job descriptions
- Work is not meaningful
- They feel as though they are not contributing
- Feeling stressed and overworked
- Higher salaries and benefits
- There is no career path or training plan

**THE KEY POINT:** Finding good people is only half the battle. The other half is retaining them.

Building a team starts with goals, roles, and reviews. However, they are looking for leadership and encouragement from you. Keep it simple. Tell them what you expect from them, give them the training they need, listen to their input, give them goals to strive for and, by all means, make them feel part of the team. Here’s a simple thing to do that carries a lot of weight: say “Thank You” every night to every team member as they walk out the door. You’ll have a better chance of them walking through the door again in the morning.

There are times when your staff may burn out from overbooked scheduling and demanding patients, so it’s easy for them to feel overworked and under-appreciated when working at a fast-paced busy practice. Rather than deal with them leaving and you scrambling to replace them which is costly and time-consuming, prevent problems before they get to that level. Here are a few strategies that work:

**Staff Lunch Meetings:** Once a month (weekly is better) have lunch catered in and get your staff together for a fun meeting. Talk about what’s going well, what could be better and open it up for suggestions on how to turn your practice into the best of its kind. Staff will perform better when they are part of the team and you listen and hear them and their suggestions.

**Work as a Team – Celebrate as a Team:** You want staff to share fun memories with each other and not just see each other as colleagues in a busy, stressful environment where there’s no time to chat and relax. At least once a year, hold your annual staff party where they can let down their hair.

**Friendly Staff Competitions:** Hold regular competitions based on all sorts of categories and pick judges and/or have the staff judge each other. Make it fun but challenging and make the prizes good enough for them to go for it. Display the prizes in your lunchroom, i.e., flat panel monitor, iPad, trip, gift certificates – whatever motivates them. You need the visual for them to see every day to keep them motivated to try their hardest to win. The more your staff feels part of your successful team with valuable input, the more effort they will put into seeing you succeed and the better they’ll feel about themselves and a job well done. The various categories could be:

- the friendliest to patients
- the most helpful to practitioners
- the best money-saving idea
- the most punctual
- the most likely to __?__

**Cross Training all staff to cover sickness and absenteeism:** Every practice has had the experience of having an employee call in sick or go on holiday which leaves the remaining staff stressed trying to fill the void of the absent employee. Some practices resort to hiring temporary employees but this seldom fixes the problem. One effective solution for this problem is cross training, or teaching employees to function in various positions in order to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the practice when one or more employees is absent. This is a technique that can be used by any practice regardless of size. Cross training your employees will create a smooth running practice even when an employee must be absent from the practice.
Cross training is teaching an employee to do a different part of the practice’s work. It is good for the practitioners because it provides more flexibility in managing the efficiency of the practice when employees are absent to get the job done. When it is done well, cross training is good for the employees as it teaches new skills, makes them more valuable, it can fight any Boredom / stagnation in their current role, it offers a learning and professional development opportunity, it can rejuvenate your team by improving an understanding of the different departments and the practice as a whole, which leads to better coordination and teamwork, improves overall motivation, leads to the sharing of organisational goals and objectives, as well as providing ideas and suggestions for improving the processes within the practice. Sending people to work in another role at a moment’s notice is not what cross-training is about. This has to be an effective planned process. Employees must “buy” into the idea, be encouraged to give feedback and make suggestions for improvement. Staff meetings can be used to share lessons learned. When employees think “the grass is greener on the other side of the lawn” they soon realise that maybe it isn’t after exposure to other job roles / departments.
Think carefully before you select the employees to be cross trained. Some people like to learn new things; some are more comfortable sticking to what they know. Ask them if they are open to cross training. Some of your team may mention that they are interested in how to make their practice more efficient as well as more profitable. Some may say that marketing or technology is not their hot button. Using cross training techniques to make the practice more seamless, more efficient, and less stressful means that others can fill in and allow every patient to have a positive experience every day and every time they pass through the portals of your practice.

Conduct an anonymous staff survey to really find out what your team enjoy, or don’t enjoy about working at your practice. Ask for ideas and input about improvements and then get everyone involved to ensure buy-in and engagement.

My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are….
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2. ........................................................................
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3. ........................................................................
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My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately
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   Date Completed: ...............................................

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BONUS STRATEGY NO. 11: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NEW PATIENTS

Leaving the most expensive strategy to last!

One of the biggest challenges in this industry is the constant need to acquire new patients, increase patient spend and add value so that patients become loyal and more frequent visitors, building a long term relationship so that you see them more than once than every few months for a corrective procedure / course of treatments. You could spend a lot of money on trying to attract new patients to your business – do you know how much it really costs for you to find, educate and attract new patients?

Marketing is all about education. The point is to stay in front of your patients as well as your prospective patients. Because, when they are ready for aesthetic enhancement, they are going to look for answers and you better be there for them. The majority of effective marketing campaigns don’t just sell products; they sell the benefits and the overall experience to the consumer. Marketing is not an easy discipline to learn, however if you put some effort into learning the principles, you will outperform your competitors. The more practice and knowledge you have about marketing your business, the stronger you will become at protecting your business.

If times have been more tough than usual lately, I’m sure you are feeling the urge to cut down on your marketing and advertising efforts and lay low, but please do resist that urge!

If your practice isn’t as busy and as profitable as you would like, it’s actually time for you to increase your promotional efforts to avoid dips and inconsistencies in your aesthetic patient flow. Let your competitor’s lay low while you actively engage in attracting new patients and re-engage with old ones. You can even attract your competitors’ patients while they are being ignored by your competitors due to cost-cutting measures. Aesthetic patients go to the medical practitioner that they know, like and trust. They get a consistent experience every time, a consistent result, and have a relationship both with the practitioner and the practice team that keeps them coming back for more and bringing their friends with them.

YOU CAN’T BE EVERYTHING TO EVERYBODY

With the overwhelming number of marketing messages in the media, you could easily spend a fortune trying to be everywhere they are (online and offline) and that is very expensive, tiring and ineffective. Rather than market your practice to the entire world, why not focus on the most likely candidates for aesthetic rejuvenation and ensure they fit your ideal patient profile.

To effectively market your business to your idea patient profile, you must know everything about them: their likes, dislikes, where they ‘hang-out’ (online and offline), your local area competition and exactly how to tailor your message to their different needs. Think about each segment you are appealing to and give them an age (within a ten year range). Is your main target patient male or female? What are their habits? What do they do? Where to they go? What is their routine? If your target market is of working age - What kind of salary are they making? Does your product suit these earnings? What motivates your target market? Not just to buy, but in their lives. Are they highly competitive? Are they in trouble due to the recession?

This may seem like excessive detail, but by painting a detailed picture of each person you are targeting (creating your Avatar in marketing speak), you’ll be able to create powerful, targeted marketing campaigns to draw them in and make them want to buy from you. You’ve heard the saying, “You can’t be everything to everybody.” There’s great truth to that. So cater to the group you consider your ideal patients. Learn their demographics and needs. This is important because only a certain percentage of the population will purchase medical aesthetic / cosmetic enhancement procedures, products or treatments. By promoting your marketing efforts to the right niche market, you’ll be more productive. You won’t waste your effort, time or money by throwing out your message to just anyone and believe me, I’ve seen many business owners do this and throw thousands, tens of thousands down the drain!

Now you just need to be where they are. Find out by asking your patients in this demographic what social media they prefer, what they read, listen to on the radio, which websites and blogs they frequent and so on. It’s a much better use of your marketing budget because they are more likely to want your services.

Due to the most recent evolution in consumer behaviour social media has become the best medium for marketing aesthetic treatments. So it’s up to you to find creative ways to get their attention. Why? It’s simple – your target market of potential cosmetic surgery patients are on the social networks. They are connecting with friends and family, spending countless hours researching things online and asking people for recommendations and referrals. Unlike your website where they might visit and exit just as quickly, people who are active in the social networks stay there for long periods of time at once.
Which is good news for you and your advertising efforts.

Aesthetic patients are web savvy and they do most of their research online before they even call your practice to get more information or book a consultation. The more you educate your potential patients via blogs, articles and educational marketing messages, the more chances you have to start earning their trust. Once they see you as the expert and valued potential partner for their procedure, they will feel comfortable calling to book their initial consultation.

The great thing about advertising via the social media networks is that you really get to determine how much you want to spend on your campaign. Your advertising spend can be more effective if you choose networks that target your ideal patient. Just remember that just like traditional advertising, you need to track your campaigns and determine which ones are the most effective for you so that you can maximise your advertising efforts.

**HOW CAN YOU MAKE SURE YOUR NEW PATIENT IS RIGHT FOR YOUR PRACTICE?**

It is widely accepted that in large practices, there will be a practice manager, or a patient co-ordinator who assumes the role of pre-screening new patients. However, it is the real consultation between the patient and the practitioner who will be carrying out the actual procedure that is the most important part. It is all about building relationships that are right for both you, your patient and your reputation.

When considering a treatment to a patient who is new to you, you need to concentrate LESS on the profitability of the treatment and MORE on making sure the patient is right for your practice, both in terms of managing their expectations and ensuring they don’t feel rushed into a decision. Never under-value or under-sell your experience, or the treatments and service that you provide and never over-sell too many treatments or something different to the one they came in to see you about.

By making sure the consultation is a two way process, both parties can make a fully informed decision about whether to go ahead now, or whether to wait. Remember you shouldn’t expect to close all consultations and treat every patient for a number of reasons: price, medical conditions, expectations and whether both parties like each other. Always ensure you keep an ear open for previous dissatisfaction – you have every right to say no (tactfully, diplomatically and honestly) and now is the time to nip it in the bud if they aren’t the right patient for you.

On this one business occasion, I would say that it is right to trust your intuition as it is usually more correct than not. It would be advisable not treat an unrealistic and over demanding patient than deal with them for life. Once you treat a patient – you inherit them – good or bad!

**MAYBE NOT NOW, OR NOT YET BUT ONE DAY WHEN THEY ARE READY.**

When a prospective aesthetic patient takes the time to stop what they’re doing, pick up the phone and make an appointment, blocking time out of their busy calendar, as well as fight the apprehension of talking about their concerns for the first time; this is someone who has emotional needs to fill. Mainly they’re not feeling good about themselves so they believe looking good will make them feel good, which is true. They are looking for confidence and you can give them a big dose of it by treating them like they are special, by listening to them and by assuring them you understand how they feel and you can make it better.

As much as your business is about medical skills, it is much more about feelings and addressing them so patients choose you over all the others. In today’s competitive climate, it’s all about the quality of the patient experience rather than just the sheer quantity. The “churn and burn” theory is no longer viable since it’s getting much too expensive to advertise that way. If a prospective patient has taken time out of their busy day to come and meet you and ask questions, it’s your job to do everything possible to help them make a great decision.

There used to be a one step process when you promote your services and urge the audience to act now by calling you. However, as we all know, consumers are getting bombarded by media and advertising every minute of every day, so it is getting increasingly difficult to their attention from this type of advert, let alone an actual response. I personally know many business owners (including myself in the old days!) who still make this mistake today – costing tens of thousands of pounds in wasted advertising spend. The most important thing to remember at this stage is that….

*The audience doesn’t know you so they don’t trust you yet.* So it is asking a lot from them to see your ad, pick up the telephone and visit you for a medical procedure they hope they get a good result from, with a practitioner they hope will look after them – once they have made this mistake today – costing tens of thousands of pounds in wasted advertising spend. The most important thing to remember at this stage is that….
patient can feel more comfortable contacting you to learn more rather than to book an appointment they might not be ready to make.

Your aesthetic patient is often an inconsistent decision-maker because they base their decision on emotions that are subject to change. You may or may not know what triggered a patient’s “no”; they might have gotten price shock, perhaps they had no idea of the possible side effects or the downtime involved, or maybe they were simply not in the mood to commit. However, just because they said no to you today does not mean they will say no forever. Most likely, they are saying “Not Now” or “Not Yet”. Think about it – if something bothers a person about their appearance, it doesn’t just go away as time goes by. More often, it continues to bother them and eventually they decide they must act. The goal is to get prospective patients to raise their hand to say they are interested. Maybe not now, or not yet but one day when they are ready.

The best strategy is to keep in touch with these prospective patients via in-house events, patient newsletters and special offers so they return to you, and ONLY you, when they are ready. You can increase conversion rates by getting back to the fundamentals: ensure your prospective aesthetic patients go through each step of your process so they are most likely to say yes at the end of it. Make sure that every touch point in your business is a well-oiled machine with no shortcuts and ensure that the prospective patient is comfortable, informed and compelled to move forward from step to step.

YOU ONLY HAVE ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

I am still surprised at how many businesses take their telephones so lightly. They either don’t answer in a friendly tone, they don’t answer at all because they don’t have a receptionist, or they’re at lunch and many just don’t bother to ask us any questions to bond with the prospective patient. Did you know if you lose just one aesthetic patient per day and that patient was worth £2,000 lifetime value to you (which is very low by the way), that adds up to £528,000 PER YEAR?! Isn’t that amazing? Isn’t it worth it to you to make your phones a priority? The prospective patients you spend so much time, money and effort getting to call you is wasted if they never get past your phones.

HOW TO CONVERT A PHONE ENQUIRY INTO A BOOKING FOR A CONSULTATION

Have A Positive Attitude: Having a positive attitude goes a long way. It may sound obvious but it’s important. Patients can smell negativity from miles away and can even sense it over the phone and it is a major turn off. So if you do nothing else, make sure you sound upbeat and positive at all times when you are dealing with patients. You will notice a difference in how they react to you and your practice. Provide your receptionist with specific scripting and a protocol to follow, so she / he knows how to professionally bond with the caller and ask for the appointment.

Make sure there is a friendly greeting and you ask who is calling: Good morning / afternoon. This is _______ with Doctor (name) _____’s practice / practice. We are now offering _________ (procedure, procedure or product) How may I help you today?

Bond by Asking Questions: May I ask whom I’m speaking with please? I’d be happy to answer your questions. May I ask how you heard about us? Sure, I can help you with that. It’s a very popular procedure with our patients. Shall I give you an idea of when you can meet with Dr Smith, or do you have any questions?

Attach Emotion to the Problem and Solution: Make sure you get your caller emotionally involved. If they say they want to look younger, ask them how looking younger will improve their life. You want them to “feel” the benefits of your services. Ask, how long has this bothered you? How do you feel about that? Why are you finally ready to do something about it? What’s prompting this? Do you have an event coming up, wedding, holiday or other time constraints? What’s going on in your life that’s making this a priority? What has held you back from moving forward before now? How is this affecting other parts of your life? How do you envision this improving your life?”

Qualify them, so you know where they are in the process: How much research have you done? Have any of your friends had this done? How was it for them? Ask them what they already know about the treatment / procedure? (Is it accurate and up-to-date?)? What is their time frame: When were you thinking of having this done? Are they shopping around? What are you basing your decision on? What are you looking for in a doctor? How are you going to decide which practitioner to choose? Who else have they spoken to? How was that? What else can I tell you that you don’t already know?

Dr Smith is very popular and typically booked two weeks in advance; however, I see we have one opening left on xx. Would that work for you? Dr Smith performs those procedures on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Which of those days works better for you? Would it help if I gave you 2 or 3 possible days and times you could have this done? Let’s check to see when you could have this done to give you an idea (if they don’t object, keep going).
**It’s all about “when” they are booking, not “if” they are booking.**

**Close Appointment with a Question:** How does that sound? Does this make sense to you? Can you see how this would help? What do you think? Is this what you had in mind? Are you ready to move forward and finally take care of this? Did you want a morning or afternoon appointment? If you’re interested, we have an appointment free this (Friday at 10) or would you prefer another day? Is there a particular day of the week you’d prefer?

**Get Contact Information and Book Appointment:** I would be happy to send you information about our practice. Would you prefer I post or email it to you? The package should include all or most of the following:

- Welcome letter with handwritten comments
- Description of the consultation process so they expect to spend time with you, your staff and your office (the more time they spend with you, the more perceived value)
- Info on procedure they are interested in
- Patient testimonials in story-form
- Before/after photos with good results
- Practice Brochure
- Meet the doctor:- Career highlights

**OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS**

**Repeat back and respond:** What I hear you saying is... does that sound right? It sounds like you think..... Is that right?

Is there anything else? (Keep asking to find all the hidden objections). Sara, I know how you FEEL. So many of our patients FELT the same way you do. But what they FOUND, was they were so happy with their result they wished they had done it sooner. Sara, I can tell you, I had it done and I couldn’t be happier.

**Nudge using questions and attempt close again:** Of course Sara, please do have a think about it but I might be able to save you some time if you tell me what you’re thinking. Now you mentioned that this has bothered you for years so is waiting going to help? I can see you’re hesitant and all I can say is that so many of our patients come back to visit us after their treatments and could kick themselves for not having done it sooner because they feel so much better about themselves. Sara, you seem a little confused. Please tell me what you’re thinking and maybe I can help.

**Negotiate and Attempt Close Again:** Our prices are based on Dr Smith’s years of skill and expertise. Because he’s performed this particular procedure more than X times and our patients have been so happy, we’re confident you’ll get a result you’ll be happy with at a fair price. Sara, Dr Smith does not discount his prices because they’re very fair for the skill and experience you’re going to get; but what if I could get Dr Smith to include an xx product for free. Would you be willing to put down a deposit?" Discounting medical treatments is not like any other discounting because skill, knowledge and expertise are needed so you get a result you want. Saving a few pounds by going to a discount doctor could end up costly you dearly. Look what this patient told us... (Make sure you have a patient story handy). **Sara, we all know cheaper is not necessarily better but please do whatever you feel most comfortable with.**

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A SHORT AND LONG TERM MARKETING STRATEGY**

If you do not currently have a live marketing plan, now is a great time to start. However, the best habit to get into is to make sure your plan is in place by October, for the following year. Taking the time away from your day to day business to put a plan in place is essential for your future growth and success. It doesn’t have to be a long document, just quick, effective and simple. Just get something done – anything is better than nothing. Involve your team too, as it’s amazing how many people have different ideas about marketing because we are all consumers.

Think about where you want your business to be next year. What did you do well last year, what can you improve upon this year? Carry out an audit, speak to your team, your customers and find out what areas you did well and which need improvement. Don’t just think about marketing, but practice capacity, conversion rates, competitors, marketing spend and ROI. Also think about the treatments and services you provide and how well they fit your target market. Remember not to be all things to all people, fit your treatment portfolio to the patients to you want to attract.

Drawing up a marketing strategy enables you to thoroughly analyse and plan how you will market your business and put’s in place all the groundwork and information you need to get going. Your strategy will depend on where you want your business to go, in
terms of growth, turnover and profit - it forms part of your overall business aims. Use your marketing strategy to achieve the following:

- **Bring in new patients**
- **Increase sales (from existing patients)**
- **Improve patient loyalty and get existing patients to buy more**
- **Introduce a new treatment or service**
- **Increase your market share in your local area(s)**
- **Establish and build your brand**
- **Launch an advertising campaign**
- **Launch a PR campaign**
- **Encourage word of mouth referrals and recommendations**
- **Retain existing profitable patients (i.e. those that buy more than one treatment)**
- **Make patients feel more valued (by providing value added service)**
- **Offer existing patients exclusive offers**
- **Ensure your business continually evolves and remains innovative, fresh and new**

**Market analysis:** The size of your local, National and Global market, how quickly it is growing, the customers and their spending and lifestyle habits.

**Competitor analysis:** Always look at what your competitors are doing and try and work out how you can ‘steal’ their market share and how to ‘use’ their failings to your advantage. Research and monitor both direct (local) and indirect (National) competition and how they compare with you on every aspect of sales and marketing (their customers, their brand, price, convenience of location, marketing channels, and so on).

**Think of this example:** You would think that a big supermarket chain would want to open a new store far away from a rival branch. But if you are Asda looking to create a foothold in a Tesco area, the worst thing you could do is take a premises miles away from an existing store. The best place to open your store is in fact next door. If customers can’t find what they want in Tesco, they’ll go to Asda. When looking at your competition, however, it’s important to compare apples for apples. Look at your relevant competitors. Think local.

**Company analysis:** Your overall business objectives, how you are going to achieve them, your strengths and weaknesses and those of your products or services.

**Positioning:** How you compare to your competitors for each of your customer segments - are you the fastest, do you have the most experienced Doctor in the county, award winning customer service or value added extras that no other business provides? These are your Unique Selling Points (USPs).

**Try to be truly unique:** Don’t just say “Great customer service” as everyone will say that. What else? Don’t just say that you and your practitioners “are really experienced” as most patients expect that you know what you’re doing. You need to work out what’s different about your business.

**Benefits for your ideal patient:** From your USPs, draw out what benefits your product or service offers to your patients. These may well vary between your various customer segments. You need to look very closely at what the consumer actually sees: Think of this example – we know that while Starbucks sells coffee, the benefit to the customer is a place to relax and have a chat with a friend or colleague or to work with your laptop and not be asked to move on after 20 minutes.

**Communication:** How you are now going to communicate the benefits of buying your treatments or services (again, this may well vary between your various patient segments).

**Objectives:** What you hope to achieve, both long- and short-term. These need to be quantifiable, measurable, realistic and with deadlines.

**Results and Return on Investment:** Include exactly how you are going to monitor, track and analyse every aspect of your marketing activities and campaigns. What metrics will you use to decide if it needs changing or pulling completely?

You are likely to hit bumps along the way, which is why your marketing plan must be flexible and live. Monitor and track everything to make sure that all of your marketing activities are producing a ROI (return on investment). Adjust budgets and plans as and when needed, remembering to adjust all other sections of your marketing plan that will be affected, and your
overall business budgets - you may need to spend £200 extra on one part of your marketing plan, but that £200 will have to come from another marketing mix budget. Never overlook the knock-on effects of minor changes.

As pricing, market conditions, economic conditions, your local competition and other factors change, you’ll need to adjust your plan to accommodate them - whereas your strategy could well remain the same. Your plan should also include a section for every treatment, procedure and service you offer: this should include the specific pricing strategy, details of all materials, appropriate practice data, before and after photos, case studies and testimonials.

For both your strategy and your plan to be useful, you need to closely monitor the results of marketing activity, and be ready to adapt both as necessary. Long-term strategies build your brand awareness and your practice. Short-term strategies create a temporary, immediate revenue boost by giving patients an incentive to purchase now. By implementing long- and short-term marketing strategies, you can gain immediate revenues while building your reputation and practice.

Every business owner faces the same dilemma: the balancing act between tactical approaches to marketing for short-term profits, versus the more strategic approaches that bring in longer term profits and credibility. For a company to survive and grow for years, you must begin to think strategically. This creates long-term branding and success because you tend to focus on things that add more value to your customers lives. To explain, here is an example:

It’s December 5th and you’re “just” shy of hitting your yearly target. You want to hit that goal no matter what, so you decide to hold a 50% off promotion for the Christmas season. The promotion allows you to hit your goal. You’re happy, your employees are happy and your customers are especially happy. They just paid 50% less for your treatments / service! But in that happiness lies a major problem. If you do this too often, your customers become accustomed to your discounting. You lose your credibility and positioning power in the marketplace. They will literally stop buying until you run another promotion. Let’s compare that with a more long-term, strategic thought process.

INSTEAD OF DISCOUNTING, YOU RAISE YOUR PRICES.

In order to make sure your conversions don’t plummet, you add more value by including a few extra bonuses that don’t cost you much in terms of outlay. You may not hit your income target for THAT year, but you’ll set yourself up for much higher income, long-term.

Taking this approach also provides multiple, unseen benefits, including...

1. **Better Positioning** – Every person should want to be perceived as the No.1 leading expert within their industry. And what do all experts have? Treatments and services that are priced higher than other people in the marketplace.

2. **Higher Perceived Value** – The more you pay for something, the more you value it. People who pay £1k for an old car will have no problem running it through a giant mud pile or over a curb knocking the wheels. Do you think someone would do that with a brand new Ferrari? With higher prices comes higher respect and appreciation for what they paid for.

3. **Higher Quality Buyers** – One trend I’ve noticed is that the higher priced you are in the marketplace, the higher calibre of buyers you will attract. This means more opportunity for higher end treatments / services, less complainers, and less refunds.

Increasing prices *(for a strategic reason)* is just a single example of tactical versus strategic thinking. It is an important one because it’s one of the fastest ways to increase your net profits... if you do it right by adding more value in order to increase your prices. With that said, I understand that sometimes you need to resort to tactical, short-term thinking simply so you can pay the bills for that month. However, do not fall into that trap. Do what you must to survive, but always keep “strategy” clearly focused in the back of your mind and begin to act strategically instead of tactically.

**HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO BOOST YOUR PRACTICE**

You’re NEVER too old to evolve. While it takes courage, time, commitment and new thinking, it’s vital if you want to stay relevant to your preferred aesthetic patients. If you don’t want to be seen as “Old School” stop doing things like boring name-recognition ads, yellow page ads and radio spots. There has never been a better time to leverage these marketing tools to build your credibility, educate new prospective patients and enhance your brand: blogging, an interactive Website, YouTube Videos, Twitter and your own Facebook page.

I’m not suggesting you drop everything to learn social media but do either outsource it to someone who specialises in it or turn the job over to your staff who love this new world. If you do it right, the world opens up to you and your audience is endless and viral.

The key to using social media correctly is to educate your audience. No one likes to be sold to, but they do
want to learn. So the more educational pieces you can provide, the more time people will spend on your page learning about you and the procedures you offer. There is one important aspect of social media that cannot be ignored – the ability to share your content. If you produce really good content, your readers will want to share it with their circle of contacts and refer them to your website. This expands your reach quickly and helps to move more prospective cosmetic patients through your sales funnel quickly. One of the biggest challenges of social media is maintaining consistency. You must add content 3 – 5x weekly on each of your social media sites so that you are seen as an active user and get the benefit of search engine optimisation with fresh content. Therefore, it is best to limit your activity in a handful of social media outlets so that you won’t spread yourself too thin.

Resist the urge to try to do everything yourself and hire someone who understands social media and can help you with your aesthetic practice marketing. They can create and optimise your profiles, consistently add content and keep on top of the conversation to help you build your credibility online. This will go a long way to converting website visitors to prospective cosmetic patients and get them in your office for an evaluation.

Everyone wants to know the quick answer to, “Which is the best social media site for me to advertise?” There is truly no one answer to this question because this is largely dependent on how you want to advertise your practice and of course, who your ideal patient is. The first step to determining the best social media networks for you is to keep it simple. It is better to be very active in a few rather than spreading yourself too thin on many sites. Quality is more important than quantity. Besides, you can’t be everything to everybody. You are a specialist and you have a very specific niche for potential aesthetic patients. So determine the top 3 social networks they are most active in and start there.

Here’s a quick list of the 3 most popular social networking sites to help you get started:

1. **Facebook:** arguably the biggest and most popular. The best thing about Facebook is that you can select a very specific demographic for social media advertising so that it only displays to your targeted audience. As with all advertising, the key is to determine which ads work best for you and stick with it. Test different versions of your ads to find the top 2 – 3 so you can rotate them to keep them fresh. Increase Facebook Engagement with Questions, Polls and Unique Content

Reach more Facebook users by embracing some of Facebook’s more unusual features such as questions, videos and events which will make your posts stand out better in people’s news feeds.

2. **YouTube:** adding video to your marketing strategy is a smart move. Videos are indexed higher by the search engines because the current trend is that people would rather watch a video than read. Video gives you the perfect opportunity to educate your prospective patients and start the relationship with them by showcasing your personality. Make sure your website and contact information is prominently displayed so that it’s easy for people to take action and contact you.

Why not start by doing a poll on topical feature that’s in the media? For example, why not ask people who they thought was the best dressed person at an MTV event or what their guilty pleasure is? Have fun and put yourself in their shoes. What would make you go, ‘Oh! Well I have to have my say…’ or tell people about something that’s going on in your locality that apply to them too. Let us know how you get on in the comments section.

3. **Twitter:** use this social networking site to share your content to attract visitors. When you focus more on educating your followers rather than selling to them, you are laying the foundation for a strong relationship that will build over time.
While these are the top 3 social networking sites, there is one more area of opportunity. Make sure you research your local opportunities to add to the mix. Establishing your presence via local social networking channels is one of the fastest ways to gain credibility because you are building a community. You have a vested interest in helping your community flourish so the more you can demonstrate your commitment, the more receptive they are to your message.

THE DANGERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

It is now very common for all prospective patients to research practitioners online, so make sure that you consider the impact your social media, comments, photographs and posts will make. Regular status updates that include drunken photos, comments about getting no sleep will create a very unprofessional image of you and make the patient question if you are the right practitioner for the job. It could also cause an insurer to question liability if anything ever happens about an adverse event.

Use social media in a careful and planned way, as errors of judgement could not only cost your reputation in front of regulatory bodies and the media, but could also result in your practice being sued for thousands or even millions. Always make sure you are fully aware of guidelines issued by the appropriate governing professional bodies (GMC, NMC and GDC), all of who have published their guidelines on the use of social media for their particular discipline.

If you are considering the use of patient photos to create a gallery of before and afters of your work, be very careful to achieve fully informed consent in advance, without putting your patients under any pressure. Be particularly careful with any images taken on mobile phones. Also it pays to be aware of any patients sharing any other patients and putting confidentiality at risk. In addition to this never, ever post any information or comments about individual patients that could break confidentiality and put your profession at risk.

Finally, when you use social media, make sure you guard the privacy of your family as well as possible. Do not mix your family and professional life and keep boundaries if a patient tries to connect with you. As we all know it is very difficult to remain completely anonymous and remember the GMC regulates the Doctor as a person, not just as a healthcare professional; a fitness to practice hearing can arise from social media at any time.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) AND MEDIA EXPOSURE: HOW TO GET YOUR BUSINESS INTO THE PRESS

Become a Media Darling: Getting the attention of the media does not occur by luck. It requires time, attention to details, and demonstrating that your message is valuable to viewing, listening, or reading audience. Anyone in healthcare public relations and marketing—from providers, to hospitals, to medical organisations and manufacturers—knows that capturing “free publicity” is increasingly difficult these days. Competition for space is fierce, and the news industry and media itself is changing rapidly. Typical of this media metamorphosis, there are fewer newspapers and the surviving media outlets have smaller staffs and resources. Internet news platforms, on the other hand—with websites, blogs and even social media—have exploded. The “traditional” publications are scrambling to find a digital format that retains an audience and a revenue stream.

Public relations is about helping to make people aware of your business and make it stick in their mind so that when they need to buy from the industry in which your business operates, they think of your practice first. However, with no budget to hire a swanky public relations agency and no experience of running a PR campaign, how do you compete with the big boys?

TOP TIPS WHEN DOING YOUR OWN PR

Target: Personalised press releases go a long way in making connections with the media. If you’re contacting a journalist out of the blue, make sure your product or service are relevant to them. Then give an example of why your product fits in well with their publication. A generic press release without the journalists name and no mention of how your product suits their industry will almost certainly be put in the bin. Know your subject, keep to the truth and understand the market and philosophy of the publication or media you are dealing with.

Be social and follow: Social media is obviously a brilliant way of getting your brand in front of potential customers and it gives you a platform to engage and connect with them. Your followers and customers can be instrumental in shouting about your treatments and services. If you’re doing your own PR, you need to know how to get journalists to take notice of your business. That means knowing how to put together interesting and relevant press releases, building up a useful network of media contacts and realising the great advantages of an unusual stunt.
WHAT JOURNALISTS ARE LOOKING FOR:

• First off, you need to understand what makes news - news. If you know what makes journalists tick, you'll be a lot closer to giving them a story they can use.

• It needs to involve something new, innovative, unusual, rare or unexpected.

• It must be a very recent occurrence, or there have been a new development. Old news is not news!

• Quotes make a great story: make sure someone can give comments or further detail on the story.

• Rags to riches stories or unexpected changes in life direction are good.

• Any socially-aware or environmental angle to your business is hot news right now. No one’s going to write about you because you’ve decided to buy an eco-friendly boiler and recycle your paper - it needs to be bigger than that. Although do be aware that journalists will often give more time to social enterprises.

• A completely new, highly innovative procedure should do well if it’s interesting to the public.

• If you’re targeting local press, you need a strong local angle - either that your business is rejuvenating or benefiting the community in some way, or that it’s set to achieve lots.

• Awards won at a national level also often warrant stories in local papers.

• Everybody loves the underdog. If you can position yourself as a new upstart set to compete with huge, multinational companies, people will warm to you - if you get it right without seeming cocky or unrealistically hopeful, that is. Think of Richard Branson in his early years.

JOURNALISTS GET OVERWHELMED BY PRESS RELEASES EVERY DAY. THESE GUIDELINES WILL HELP YOURS STAND OUT:

• You need to frame what you want to say as something interesting to them - use your USPs.

• Create an angle if necessary. Tailor products and treatments to promote publicity. If you can’t find an angle, offer a deal or discount to readers. You may at least get a couple of lines of coverage from that. Remember to include details and deadlines for the offer, and how they can find your premises if they need to.

• Always, always, always keep your angle in mind. Always ask yourself: What is the story here and why would the reader of this publication want to hear about it?

• You have to make a journalist’s life as easy as possible, put yourselves in their shoes – what is newsworthy?

• Build the story in your press release and to support what you’re saying, put in lots of statistic and quotes they can use. This means they don’t have to spend time researching and have a ready-made story - which they’re far, far more likely to use than a less developed press release.

• Include references for the stats and facts you use as footnotes to the press release, citing other publications or documents.

• Never rely on Wikipedia for reliable stats - use proper journals or corporate-branded research, or stats from newspapers, and hyperlink to the source at the bottom of the release.

• Your press release should be no more than a side and a half of A4 long. Journalists are always short on time.

• Write an introductory paragraph of a line or two, usually in italics, at the beginning of the release - this sums up the story before getting into it in more detail.

• Be clear and engaging. Don’t use jargon. Get someone to read through and approve your press release to make sure it makes sense and it’s interesting.

• Make sure your use a really punchy title for your release - something that needs a second look and sounds unusual and exciting - a bizarre statistic, a really unusual statement or a provocative question.
• Attach pictures by email where relevant, but do not send large pictures unsolicited in-case it clogs up their inbox! A great picture can be enough to sway a publication to use your story, and will definitely catch a reader’s attention.

• Contact details are an absolute must - give your full name and mobile number.

• Notes to the editor are usually put at the bottom of a press release, and explain the nitty-gritty of names and events mentioned in the release.

• Explain fully what your business does (where in the main text of the release you may just have mentioned the business name, not what it does, so as not to interrupt the flow of your copy).

• Include your business logo in the top right-hand of the page.

• If you sponsor or organise a survey which produces interesting or newsworthy results, you can get your business name into a story as being the source if the research.

• Survey your customers or use a market research, branding or PR consultancy to organise the research.

• Include the exact numbers of people questioned and the results in the ‘Notes to Editors’ section at the bottom.

• Make sure your survey is related to something relevant to the publication or recent news. Targeting a trade magazine can often work well for this approach as you can provide useful customer feedback readers of the magazine would want.

Sending your press release to the right person

• Collect as many contact details of journalists as you can who deals with ‘health, beauty, special features etc

• Keep a database of all email addresses and phone numbers.

• Find them and follow them online – on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook

• Flattery will get you everywhere!

• The best way to get your press release noticed is make an effort to build relationships with journalists. For local journalists, try to meet them at networking events, then follow with an email saying it was nice to meet them.

• Call the journalist(s) or send them a message via Twitter to say you’re sending the release to before sending to let them know it’s coming and to build in interest before they’ve received it.

• Send it by email, then follow up by calling them a couple of days later to see if they’re using it - but do it under the pretext of seeing if they need any additional information. Never annoy them by over chasing and always respect their schedules.

• Remember to use all available media outlets - online blogs, social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Pinterest) websites and email newsletters are good media outlets as well as local papers, national papers, B2B magazines and specialist and consumer magazines.

Silence is not a rejection: If at first you don’t succeed, then try, try and try again. Like everyone else, journalists are busy people. Even though they may not have replied to your first press release it doesn’t mean they didn’t like your start-up. Every time you have a new angle, you should drop them another email, as you could get in touch just when they need a good story what they are looking for. Timing is important, but making yourself a ‘pleasant pest’ can be the most effective approach - just remember the emphasis should be on ‘pleasant.’ Remember it’s a constantly changing, fluid environment – what is newsworthy one minute, won’t be the next! Don’t be offended as space can often come up at the last minute. Be patient, it will be worth it in the end.

Show off your clips: Ensure you use your website to show off all of your media coverage and even help to get more press. You should have a media page that includes photos, videos and contact information in addition to your press articles and clips. This will make it easier for other journalists to get in touch and it shows them examples of how your business has already been covered. Having a media page can also impress customers and will result in them trusting you more, as it helps to build ‘social proof’.

SO WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO NOW, TO WIN NEW PATIENTS?
Look at your business with fresh perspective – every day: Try to put yourself in your patients’ shoes and drive-by or walk-by your location. Does your business stand out, or does it blend into the surroundings? Do you have prominent, clear signage that identifies your core business as a medical aesthetic practice? If possible, consider posting additional permanent or temporary signage near your location to catch more eyes.

Today’s consumer is inundated with advertising messages like never before. Open your local newspaper, listen to your local radio stations and watch your local TV news stations and I’ll bet you see your competitors are promoting themselves as the best, the cheapest or the most up-to-date. Surf the Internet as well. “Google” a Botox treatment and see thousands of choices pop up. As you probably know, that kind of exposure is usually not free. More likely, those media messages came and high rankings on search engines often come from expensive PR Agencies and SEO specialists all working for hundreds or even thousands of pounds per month. See the PR section on how to get this type of exposure for free.

Low Cost Marketing Ideas to Build a Client Base from Scratch:

- Promotional evenings
- Targeted lunches
- Networking events
- Joint ventures such as fashion shows, charity talks and fundraisers
- Regional seminars that cover numerous outlets
- Regular information based seminars and webinars to attract the public into your practice outlets on an informal basis (i.e. how to care for your skin)

The best inducement is a free service or product as everybody loves to get something for free and free is the best offer you can make. Use something with a high-perceived value with little cost to you and your business. A free place at a Skin Care Seminar, a free chemical peel or a free skin-care product works very nicely. In the long run, by providing this free treatment to existing clients can pull them back into your practices and can be much cheaper than one advert that is not guaranteed to bring in any clients at all!

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

Identify businesses that already sell their products and services to your ideal client base and develop interdependent relationships / strategic alliances with local gyms, salons, hairdressers, boutique owners etc. For example: 19-30 age groups may be reached via a local gym but the over 50 age group may be reached through up-market boutiques. Remember the different target groups may have the same desire for improving their appearance but each target group behaves differently, shops and frequents different establishments and have different lifestyle choices. It is your job to know your target group, where to find them and how to communicate with them, so go out into your community so they know you exist. Get to know the neighbouring businesses that share your same demographics.
## Consider the following points....

**Awareness:** People need to be aware of you, your treatments and services. People do business with people not because they have the best product or service but they do business with because they know, like and trust you. You need to brand and position yourself as the best medical aesthetic practitioner in your area.

**Education based marketing:** This is actually one of the most effective marketing tools I’ve ever discovered. Most business owners want to hold things back because they are afraid people will just use the information they have provided and go elsewhere. To prevent this from happening, you need to turn yourself into the authority so people automatically run to you instead of your competitors, without a second thought.

**Action:** One of the biggest weaknesses I see in people’s marketing or negotiations skills is that once they build a relationship with their prospective patients, they’re afraid to tell them what to do next and how to do business with them. People need to be led and they are looking to you for that leadership.

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### If you can’t show the people the immediate benefits of doing business with you, prospective patients will wait and hold off and most likely never buy from you. So we need the answer the BIG question in business.... WHY YOU?

### My Top 3 Takeaways from this section are....

1. 

2. 

3. 

### My Top 3 Actions I am going to implement into my business immediately

1. 

2. 

3. 

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*Date Completed:*
THANK YOU!

FIRST OF ALL, IF YOU GOT TO THIS PAGE THEN WELL DONE AND A BIG THANK YOU FOR READING THIS VERY LONG REPORT!

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE IT WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES.

I HOPE YOU FOUND THE CONTENT USEFUL AND INFORMATIVE BUT MOST OF ALL, I HOPE YOU WILL USE SOME OR ALL OF THE STRATEGIES IN YOUR OWN BUSINESS AND CONTACT ME WITH YOUR SUCCESS STORIES.

IF THIS ALL LOOKS LIKE TOO MUCH TO DO YOURSELF, THEN PLEASE DO GET IN TOUCH TO SEE HOW WE CAN HELP YOU TAKE ACTION, OR EVEN TO SEE IF WE CAN DO IT FOR YOU!

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