

Blog Posts – a series of 3 educational blog posts for medical spa owners

Online Marketing that Works - a 3 Part Series

This is the first in a 3 part series on effective online advertising.

Despite the technical mumbo-jumbo, marketing your business online is not complicated. If yours is complicated, then it's time to rethink your online marketing strategy. It doesn't matter whether you are a medspa or a car dealer, you can use online marketing to effectively boost your business. I have consulted with hundreds of business over the years, and the prevailing issue that I come across again and again is that business owners start spending money on their website and online advertising without having a solid goal in mind. Begin with the end in mind, and work backwards from there. You cannot have any hope of succeeding if you don't have a specific, measurable goal for your online marketing efforts.

There are only two real functions of online marketing, and **chances are good that your current website accomplishes neither**. If so, you are wasting money. The first function is lead generation - new patients / clients coming to your business ready to hand over their money in exchange for your services. The second function is to market additional services to you existing patients. Now in this sense, I use the term "marketing" loosely, because marketing to existing clients usually resembles educating them about your services, offerings, advantages, strengths, and doing it in a way that makes them ready to come in for more. Does your existing website truly educate people?

One of the main principles we share here at the Medspa Marketing Institute is the concept of the marketing funnel. The marketing funnel is your lead generation system, and it's a series of marketing steps that turns prospects into patients. The second major system we teach is the patient profitability pyramid (PPP). The two go hand in hand. You get new patients into the business via a well thought-out marketing funnel. Then, once they become patients, you use the PPP to get them back into your spa or practice, buying additional services - ideally more expensive services.

Your website and online marketing efforts are a component of both of these systems, but a single website cannot fulfill both. So, you may need to entertain the idea of having multiple websites - one for your lead generation efforts, and another to support your patient profitability pyramid. That may sound like a lot of work, but it's really not, it just takes a bit of planning, and being strategic with your marketing efforts.

The next installment in this series will discuss how to create websites (or modify your existing sites) to effectively generate leads, or get your existing patients spending more money. Until then, happy marketing!

Effective Online Marketing, Part II

This is the second post in a three part series on effective online marketing.

If your website is not capturing your site visitors contact information, you are making a critical mistake. After all, most visitors to a medspa website will NOT book an appointment right there and then, unless the site visit is coming at the tail end of a very strategic marketing strategy, and you've put an irresistible offer in front of their face.

But for most websites, visitors are there because of the results of a search engine (Google) search looking for a particular spa, a spa in their area, or a medspa in their area that offers a particular treatment that they are searching for. If your website is the one that they find, there is a very good chance they will poke around your site for a minute, then leave. That is because it is very difficult to make an online sale in a single visit.

You must "court" your potential patients, build a relationship with them, and market it to them over time, with some kind of "drip" marketing campaign then gives them more information about the treatment they were searching for in the first place, and why you are the medspa they should choose to get it.

And the only way to do that is to capture their personal contact information by putting an opt-in form on your site. When they fill it out, they will go into your prospects database. Let the courting begin! But wait, why will they fill it out, you ask? The answer is that they won't unless you give them an incentive. You must offer them some kind of (perceived) valuable incentive for doing so. A free report, free samples, an offer of a "special deal available only to our members", etc. People will give up their personal contact information all day long as long as they feel they are getting something of value in return.

So come up with something valuable, and offer it on your site, but only after they fill out the opt-in form. It's that simple. The "autoresponder" list building services such as "AWeber" that provide this are very moderately priced. This only costs about \$20 bucks per month to build a prospect database.

What you do next to convert them from prospects to patients will be the topic of the next post in this series.

Until then, think about ways to establish a long-term relationship with your prospects, and what kind of offer you can make to get them calling to book an appointment.

Reputation Management for Medspas

This is the third post in a three part series on effective online marketing.

Proper medspa marketing must take into account "reputation management". As I was doing research for a client yesterday, I Googled their spa name and found numerous consumer reviews about their spa. While almost all of the reviews were 5-star, there was one that was a single star, and it leapt right off the page! As it turns out, the post had been made by a disgruntled former employee, and it was not

the first time it had been done. Discussions with the client revealed that the owner actually practices pretty good “reputation management” practices, but I know they are the exception.

Because of the proliferation of social networking sites and consumer review sites (such as Yahoo, Yelp, Kudzu, etc.) it has become very easy for consumers to spread the word on which business they like, and don't like. However, most medspas have not yet begun to get their arms around online marketing and social networking issues. It is important for a medical spa owner to understand that managing the commentary floating around the internet is a responsibility they should be aware of. While you cannot function as Internet police and get rid of every review that isn't perfect, you can take action to get malicious or bogus reviews removed from review sites.

One excellent tool to be aware of is Google Alerts. Google Alerts allows you to set up a notification for certain keywords, so when Google indexes a page that references that keyword, you get notified. It's an excellent idea to set up a Google alert for both your business name, and possibly your own personal name if it's not a very common name. (www.google.com/alerts) If someone praises or slams you on the Internet, you will get notified via email within a day, and you can react accordingly. It is also a helpful tool to stay abreast of industry news and a good way to spy on your competition.

There are also paid subscription services such as Chatter Guard (<http://www.chatterguard.com/>) that will help you with this task. On their website they mention “recent studies confirm that over 60% of online shoppers and travel planners visit and seriously consider peer-written reviews prior to making their online purchase”. That's a large percentage, and it's growing.

So do yourself and your medspa a huge favor and begin to be aware of your reputation online, and be proactive in improving that image!