

Are you Carrying the Right Products? A simple checklist.

By *Carol and Rob Trow*

Your spa and practice can be beautiful and the personnel wonderful, but if your products are not what your clientele want or don't produce results that they see, your homecare sales will be poor, client retention will be dismal, and your aesthetic practice will falter.

For that reason, your product lines need to be chosen carefully, then, evaluated yearly. First, research your clients' service desires, possibly through a survey, and then look at your product line (s). If you purchase relaxation or fluff and buff products and your clients want serious, anti-aging home care, or vice versa, you've missed your target. It may be important for you to find a new line or add an additional one.

Second, if the line doesn't fit the demographics, age, income and sex of your clients, the persons presenting them to the clients will not succeed in sell through. You must carry lines that meet your client's needs not yours or that are a favorite of an aesthetician or two. All too often products are selected based on familiarity. We frequently hear that a line was selected solely because it was used in a school or a staff member likes it.

Third, if the treatment goals of the clients are not met by the professional services and homecare products, the products will stay on the shelves and service upgrades will fade into a distant memory. Always listen to the goals of your clients and choose a product line that will support your staff in helping clients achieve or exceed their skin care expectations.

Fourth, Seek out lines that have appropriate back bar, professional products that are more intense and stronger for use in office/spa treatment protocols – not just larger sizes of retail products. You need to offer something additional in the cabin. What does it say to your client's if the products you recommend for home care are different or at odds with those you use in your professional treatments.

Fifth, you must also look beyond the products themselves to the company and its staff that are providing them to you. Make sure the line you select has an unparalleled record as a strategic partner not simply as a supplier. Here is a list you should use in evaluating the business support you must get from your new business partner. While not every line can meet all possible types of support, they should be able to guarantee you that they will provide the vast majority to you and your team: extensive education and training, marketing and open house support, trade out – buy back programs for the line(s) you may be replacing, newsletter assistance, promotional and collateral materials, before and after pictures, no questions asked returns, technical support, protocol development and signature treatments, menu assistance, client seminars, no minimum orders, seasonal incentives, participation in employee incentives, discounted employee purchase programs, drop shipments to clients in the event your client is traveling, at a second home or need something that you do not at the moment have in house.

Sixth and potentially critical to your financial success, select products that are not on every street corner and are distributed in your interest. Seek out those not readily available in department stores, catalogues, drug stores, and massive on line retailers. You put a great deal of time and effort in recommending home care products – you must make sure your clients and patients come back to you for products and not get it from someone else or price shop them. You lose out as does your staff, whom has spent time analyzing a client's skin and educating them on a specific product or regime.