



marketing

TO AN ANTI-AGING CLIENTELE

watch out
baby boomers,
here we come

TO MAKE OUR LIVES LESS COMPLICATED WE are drawn to simple solutions and lists as sources of information and advice. Research has shown our attention span is getting shorter and shorter. Even public television's premier educational program, "Sesame Street," is based on providing snippets of information with fast changing topics and images to hold a child's attention and increase retention. The same is true today for adults who are in increasing numbers seeking results oriented solutions for their aging skin.

Simply put, a successful anti-aging marketing campaign designed to attract patients and clients is a series of activities with the goal of communicating information about a product or service. The campaign's purpose is to attract the attention of a target audience and translate that interest into a sale. A marketing plan organizes these activities in a coordinated manner, with each initiative building on the last to create a comprehensive strategy. ➔

BY ROB AND CAROL TROW

Client feedback

Focus on your most profitable clients. Review your current client list and determine which clients are most valuable to you. You will be surprised what a small percentage of your clients actually contributes to the majority of your profits. Those who spend very little may be a distraction and may even cost you money when you figure in time and effort. Ask your



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premier clients why they use your services and purchase your products. They may be better able to point out factors that can play a major role in shaping your marketing initiatives. The more you know about your current clients, the more you will learn about yourself and what actually works.

Targeted marketing dollars

Market to your existing customers first. Offer them programs such as a free product with a service or procedure you are looking to introduce or expand. Add a free upgrade to a service as a special offering and change it monthly. Create a frequent visitor program—for a specific number of services offer a free treatment or a significant discount on a major service. Offer the last treatment in a series for free if paid in advance.

Promote by educating

Conduct periodic educational seminars for current and prospect clients. Involve your vendors to help structure the event, provide speakers if necessary and raffle prizes, as well as welcome gifts and the like. If a vendor does not behave as a strategic partner, switch.

Advertise the event to your clients, in local newspapers, on the radio and with zip code specific direct mail. You can often trade advertising with the media for free services that they can give away to their clients, listeners or as employee incentives. Bartering is an accepted practice.

Seek out vendors or an allied service provider to speak, as he/she will benefit from addressing your audience as well. Topics can include the latest advances in noninvasive cosmetic procedures, updates on breast cancer screening and treatment—basically, any issue that would be of interest to your clientele. You will be amazed at how many noted professionals will offer to speak at your event at no direct cost to you.

Present useful, informative and credible information on selected topics. These events should not be commercials for a given product or service.

Establish a network of referrals

Create cooperative programs with like minded professional practices and businesses. These could include physicians, such as OBGYNs, plastic surgeons or dentists, chiropractors, gyms, wedding photographers, fitness studios, schools and colleges as well as neighboring businesses. Think out of the box. For example, you can host local networking events at your location. Many professionals would welcome an event to meet other professionals in their neighborhood for business and personal reasons. Why not become a vehicle for bringing people together? The benefits to you will be great.

Offer last minute specials

We all know most days there are open appointments. If every open slot is filled, both you and your staff will benefit. After all, what is the cost of having a client occupy an empty treatment room? Not much. Create a last minute special list. Have your front desk staff makes clients aware of these opportunities that carry with them special

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rates. Make sure that the clients know they will only have a two or three hour window upon which to show up. Communicate that these openings are rare. In essence, you are setting up a cancellation list much as other professionals have done.

Contact local companies and branches of large corporations in your area and offer your treatments at a special rate, as rewards for employees.

Get involved with charities

Contribute to and become active in local charities that attract your target audience—it is the right thing to do, to give back to your community. Adopt an organization to support and encourage your staff to do so as well. Being active in an organization, especially one that attracts those who are current or potential clients, will spread your good name and result in increased business. Donate services and support plus volunteer as much as is feasible for you and your staff. Givers receive and get back more than they give—be generous in spirit and deed.

Contact info, vital

Collect client information, especially e-mail addresses. Without an accurate database of client information for communication, you are losing out on a myriad of opportunities. You cannot run a service business today by just opening your door and waiting for clients to come to you. E-mails, periodic newsletters, special incentive communications and colorful postcards or birthday cards containing a certificate for a free gift are just a few examples of how you can stay in touch. Call every client after they come in and ask them about their experience and level of satisfaction. If there was an issue, you now know it and can take corrective steps. Asking people for their feedback represents creative marketing as well as a quality assurance effort.

Whether you like it or not, your competitors are reaching out to your clients as well. If you need support, advice or even having articles drafted for you, seek help from your strategic partners. If they will not help, find those who will. Do not forget, your suppliers benefit from your growth and success so ask them for support. But, be reasonable as well.

Encourage sales

Establish your services and products as business incentives. Contact local companies and branches of large corporations in your area and offer your treatments at a special rate, as rewards for employees. These can be for sales goals, to be used by real estate agents for referrals and new home buyers or by mortgage companies who look to reward those who refer clients to them. In essence, use motivational offers for anyone who looks to find ways to show their appreciation to an employee, client or referral source. What better way to show praise than to give a wonderful treatment as a special thank you. Plus, the individual coming in for that service may well become a new client if you meet or exceed their expectations.

One-to-one promotions

Marketing one-to-one is a simple and no cost effort that works. The principle is that by emphasizing a person-to-person interaction with a client, you will create a better relationship that yields client loyalty and referrals. Take the time to learn about those to whom you and your staff provide services. Train your staff to do the same. Remembering details about each client such their preferences and family

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creates a level of familiarity that leads to return visits. Everyone likes to feel they are appreciated and heard. Make a special effort to remember the details, or write them down and review them before the client walks through the door.

Market solutions, not problems

Marketing requires an ongoing commitment. Create familiarity, trust and consistency. This is not a one shot deal. If you are going to promote your offerings, make your plan and continue it. It is like meeting payroll. One time efforts are a waste of time and money.

Focus on specific market segments as well: new mothers, pregnancy, anti-aging, smoker's skin and the like. Offer signature services and protocols with the help of others that create the image of you as the solution and expert and that coming to you is special.

Ask yourself every day what it is that you have done to grow your business. If the answer is nothing, make a resolution to not let that happen again. Any marketing effort can be enhanced by engaging the services of a professional who is knowledgeable and experienced in targeting programs to your specific, desired target market. You cannot and should not be all things to all people. Decide who and what you are, what makes you special and tell the world—or at least your neighborhood. ■

***Rob and Carol Trow**, his wife, own DermaConcepts USA, the eastern U.S. (excluding metro NYC) distributors for Environ® Skin Care. Rob's background includes two decades in higher education as a faculty member, administrator and business consultant. He has been in the skin care field for more than ten years. Prior to her involvement with Environ® Skin Care, Carol served as an RN, director of marketing for Professional Service*



Business Development and operated her own consulting firm focusing on practice development. Rob is an authority in the business of skin care and has authored articles for professional publications. He speaks frequently on current and emerging topics of interest to medical spas, estheticians and physicians.