

Neuromarketing: Six Principles to Help You Reach New Patients and Grow Your Practice

Neuromarketing can help you reach new patients and grow your practice.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

Dermatology is one of the fastest growing fields in medicine today. With an aging population—a significant percentage of which relies on cosmetic solutions to look young—the demand for dermatologists continues to rise. At the same time, dermatology is also a very competitive field. So, in order to reach new patients and grow your practice, you need to utilize new and successful marketing techniques. This is where neuromarketing can help you.

WHAT IS NEUROMARKETING?

Neuromarketing is based on an analysis of consumer behavior at a psychological level. It studies the cognitive and sensorial responses of customers to various marketing techniques and the decision-making process based upon which they buy things. It strips down all the assumptions and theories on consumer buying pattern and focuses only on the primal instincts and biological mechanics that drive the customers to do what they do.

The principles of neuromarketing are scientifically proven to be effective, and they work better than most old-school marketing techniques. These principles are utilized by many entities today—from individual marketers to large organizations—to successfully cater their products and services to their target customer base.

Ahead are six neuromarketing principles that you can apply to retain your existing patients as well as find new ones.

SIX PRINCIPLES

Appeal to Emotion, Not Logic. Dermatology health issues can affect a person's confidence and make her/him feel uncomfortable about the way s/he looks. So it is important to let the patient know that you understand the negative impact of the problem, how it affects the patient, and why they seek treatment.

You can then tell the patient about the treatment options available and how they can benefit from it. Again, the emphasis should not be merely on the physiological process of treatment. You should let the patient know how they can benefit from the treatment and the positive impact it can have on their confidence.

By doing so, you can show the patient that you have empathy and that you view them as a human being with real problems, not merely as a customer who is seeking a service. It helps the patient to develop an emotional attachment with you as well as the services you provide.

Reciprocity. People have the innate tendency to repay debts and pay back favors due to societal pressure as well as deep-rooted feelings of gratitude, altruism, pride, and even guilt. The feeling of reciprocity is common in people across different cultures and from different walks of life.

The best way to apply the reciprocity principle in your practice is to offer something of value to your patients, such as a free consultation for your first-time patients, a discount on your services, or anything else that could benefit your patients. It can create a strong sense of allegiance



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in them and make them feel like you have both established a relationship, at which point they will be compelled to visit you the next time they have a problem rather than seek services elsewhere.

It should be noted, however, that the reciprocity principle only works when the initial offer is made as a kind gesture

without any expectations. People do not like to be manipulated, and if they view your offer as self-serving, they might feel offended and lose trust in you.

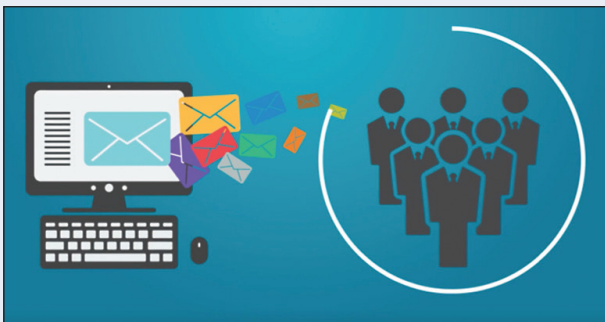
Framing. A dermatology product or procedure, when seen in isolation, might sometimes seem expensive. What about the benefits that the patient can enjoy for years to come by using the product or by undergoing the procedure? Once the long-term benefits are factored in, the price might no longer seem like an issue. This is why framing matters.

Instead of positioning yourself purely as a dermatologist, you can position yourself as a service provider who can make your patients' lives better. The patients should realize that everything you offer—from the medications you prescribe to the procedures you recommend—is intended to make them look and feel better on a physical and psychological level. Framing your message the right way can help you win over your patients' confidence and trust completely.

Flattery. Humans are hardwired in such a way that they feel happy when someone flatters them, even insincerely. People do not always use cold, hard logic while buying things. In many cases, they do so because they like the product or service or the person who offers it.

So, how do you do use flattery as a dermatologist without affecting your status as a respected professional? Start by appreciating the patient for consulting a trained expert for

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their problem instead of trying ineffective home remedies, like many people do. Tell them how a particular treatment or procedure can benefit them and help them improve their health and looks. Identify a key attractive feature of the patient and explain how a procedure or service can emphasize the positive while improving a potential detrimental aspect of their appearance.

You have to, however, do this in a nuanced manner so that you do not come across as overly needy or desperate. The best way to do it is to offer your expert opinion with a sprinkling of sincere flattery.

Scarcity. It is a well established fact that if a particular product or service is “scarce” or in short supply, people are more likely to buy it. This is because the fear of missing or losing something is often stronger than the desire to gain something.

You can apply the scarcity principle in your practice by offering limited-period offers for your patients. It could be a complimentary consultation, a discount, or anything else that can create a sense of urgency in your patients and drive them to act on their impulses.

Social Proof. Humans are social creatures, and their behavior in most cases is determined by societal norms. A person is more likely to do something if those around him/her do so. The same principle applies to consumer behavior, as well. If a number of people buy a particular product or service, it acts as “social proof” and drives more people to follow in their footsteps.

You can create patient testimonial videos and upload them on YouTube and your social media accounts. Watching real people talking about how they benefited from your treatment can act as a powerful driving force for other people to consult you for their own problems.

A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR PATIENTS

At the end of the day, creating a positive experience for your patients should be your number one goal. In addition to it, you can apply the aforementioned neuromarketing principles to develop a strong bond with your patients, reach new patients, and grow your practice successfully. ■

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