

Rethink How You Market Your Practice During the Holidays



Winter can be the “gift that keeps on giving”—if you know how to leverage the season.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

>> The holidays are just around the corner. They seem to sneak up on us earlier and earlier each year! It is important to be in the best possible position to have a profitable year balance, regardless of what season or holiday is upon us. This, however, takes planning and confidently putting your practice’s face forward—not hibernating—to best overcome challenges presented by the hectic winter months.

Dermatology practices are not unlike other businesses and organizations in that traffic can slow to a trickle later in the year. Patients are pulled in numerous different directions: traveling, shopping, working ahead, organizing family commitments and visits, and so on. You can take many characteristics that might traditionally present a barrier to your business’s profitability and flip how you view them. By looking at these characteristics of the traditionally slow winter and holiday months through a different lens, you can see opportunities to grow your practice year-round.

1 There is no time like the present to give great skin (as a “present!”)

Gifts today are so much more than a “product” or “goods.” They are often experiences. And many gift-givers are seeking unique and meaningful gifts for their loved ones. Combining this with health and wellness is top of mind in the current environment. You have a tremendous opportunity to communicate dermatology services and healthy, glowing skin as the ultimate gift. This concept ties well to No. 2.

2 Introduce appealing “carrots”

If you are not already taking advantage of in-house loyalty programs, gift cards, or offerings to endear patients, now is the time to put a bow on that undertaking. You can link seasonal discounts to existing VIP or membership programs with deep savings to attract more patients during the slower, colder months. For instance, offer “double the points” to those patients/members who sched-



ule an appointment or procedure within a given window of time. These ways to sweeten the pot also play into the health care consumer’s FOMO (fear of missing out), which can be an incredible motivator. No one wants to miss out on savings, freebies, or what the Joneses next door are doing.

3 Ramp up your engagement

Work schedules may be in flux during the holidays. Combined with lingering COVID-19 infections and variants, some employees may be spending less time in the office and more personal “screen time” on their phones and social sites. Both your website and social platforms provide an almost ready-made way to connect with those patients. By signing up for treatments, newsletters, or simply “liking” posts, the engaged patient can enter into a holiday-themed giveaway or raffle for skincare products or services.

Get creative! You can encourage more back-and-forth with visitors to your site or social pages with contests. Depending on the timeframe, prizes for those followers who post everything from the “spookiest makeup” for Halloween to the most delicious-looking holiday decorations are fair game.

4 Play up the stress-relieving aspects of professional skin treatments

While the end of the year is undoubtedly a joyful time, it is also an undeniably stressful time. In fact, 61 percent of respondents in an American Psychological Association survey report that they are “often/sometimes” stressed during the holidays. At the same time, almost 70 percent of those surveyed experienced frequent fatigue. More than half (52 percent) of those surveyed also noted that they were often irritable throughout the season. So much for the most wonderful time of the year! Well, you can play an important role in restoring some balance.

Many of the services that you offer may have a “spa-like” component. Self-care is important during the holidays and especially through the pandemic. So, it is important to convey these benefits when “selling” or promoting treatments. In addition to providing respite to harried patients, you can also address how these negative emotions manifest in the skin. Patients may look as tired as they feel. Irritability certainly doesn’t help those furrows between the eyes. And we all know you have just the right product or technology to combat those “side effects” of the holiday season!

5 Market to the joyous aspects of the holidays

We can also flip the above notion on its head. The holidays are a parade of office parties, get-togethers with out-of-town friends, pageants, concerts, and other festive events to celebrate the best things about the season. Naturally, we all want to look our best, too. The social nature of the season lends itself to dermatology products, procedures, and expertise to support more rested, youthful, healthy, and vibrant event-goers. You also provide an important antidote to the “excess” that so often characterizes the holidays by marketing the likes of resurfacing, injectables, and other cosmetic services. When overindulgences manifest in the skin, your practice should be the first name patients think of to address the rosacea or psoriasis flares, soften visible wrinkles and pores, and inject moisture into a thirsty complexion.

6 Market to other aspects of the season

For much of the country, the later months of the year also mean a biting chill. If you are not producing content that “speaks” to timely topics and concerns

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associated with dry, itchy, wind-burnt skin, you are missing out and may be out of touch with what your consumers are looking for.

7 A new year is right around the corner. How are you leveraging it?

Once we “survive” the holidays, hope presents itself with the proposition of a fresh slate. Even the most cynical personalities among us feel a sense of renewal and the promise that positive change is afoot. Seize upon these emotions. Draw from them. Consider and communicate your role in renewing body, skin, and appearance and jump-starting and sustaining healthy habits.

GET READY TO SHINE

As with shopping for the perfect gift, do not wait to fight the crowds. Start now to avoid a “crowded” competitive social and marketing landscape and to “shine” during the darkest doldrums of winter. ■

Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for more than a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy dermatologists, with a team of more than 180 full time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you're looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren. You may also schedule a session at your convenience with the Senior Director of Marketing, Lila, by clicking ekwa.com/msm/ or simply sending a text to 313-777-8494.