

Effectively Market Your New Medical Device

The purchase of a new laser or other device can be an effective marketing tool, if you present it the right way.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

The purchase of a new laser or other device can be an exciting time for your dermatology practice. Of course, it takes a big bite out of your budget, but it also expands your options and keeps you at the forefront of modern medicine. It can also be an effective marketing tool, if you present it the right way.

CRAFT YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE

One of the most common mistakes dermatologists make is trying to promote the device instead of the benefits. If you are talking about the technical specifications of your latest laser, your audience probably isn't listening.

Patients want the latest and greatest; they expect your practice to keep up with ever-evolving technology. However, most of them don't actually know what that technology is. Terms such as pulse lengths, diodes, multi-modal functionality, or dual wavelength mean very little to most patients.

Think of it this way: When you go out to dinner, you don't want to wait for hours, be served cold food, or eat something that tastes like it was sitting under a heat lamp. Yet, you probably aren't interested in the technical specifications of the kitchen equipment. That is because you are in the role of the consumer, so your priority is the quality of the result and your experience.

When promoting a new device, go light on the technicalities, and focus heavily on patient benefits. Most importantly, tell patients why this technology is better for them. Explain what sets it apart from existing options. Is the procedure faster, more effective, or less painful? Does it address a previously untreatable problem? Design your marketing message to answer the questions that patients really have.

SPREAD THE WORD

As soon as you commit to purchasing a new device, notify your marketing department or company, so they can begin creating promotional materials. Make sure they know the

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brand and model of the device, what procedures you will perform, and when you will begin using it.

Use multiple platforms to announce the new device, and create a buzz.

- In-office. Have brochures or other materials available in your office. Of course, you and your team can also tell patients about your new device when you see them. One-on-one conversation is often the best sales tactic.
- Telephone message. For good customer service, the time that callers spend on hold should be minimal. However, you can make use of that time with a short message announcing your latest procedure or special offer.
- Website. Device manufacturers often provide brochures, text, or other promotional materials. This content should not be used directly on your website, because surely it will already be on the internet and many other places. Duplicated content will harm, rather than help, your SEO (Search Engine Optimization). Instead, have your team create original, search engine friendly content based on this material.
- Email. One of the best markets for a new treatment or procedure is your current patient base. Loyal patients are often eager to try something new from their trusted

dermatologist. They are also an excellent source of referrals. Make the message exciting, encouraging readers to tell their friends.

- Social media. Post promotional and educational material about your new device. Encourage engagement by inviting people to ask questions. Monitor your social accounts closely so that you can answer promptly.
- Events. You can promote your newest technology, as well as other services and products, by hosting a skincare event. Include features such as demonstrations, question and answer sessions, guest speakers, free product samples, special discounts, and door prizes. Have plenty of business cards and product brochures available.
- Traditional media. If you are expanding your services, hosting an event, or anything else newsworthy, send out a press release. For maximum exposure, it should be written in journalistic style, based on facts, and free of promotional language. Don't forget to add your contact information and a short bio.

REACH OUT TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

When adding a new treatment, consider referral opportunities. Connect with hospitals, general practitioners, and doctors of other specialties. If your services are especially unique or advanced, you may even receive referrals from other dermatologists.

In addition to your current associates, you can expand your contacts through conferences and other professional

events. Simply attending can provide networking opportunities. Giving speeches, teaching a class, or even hosting an event can help establish you as an expert on the topic.

You can further expand your network by reaching out beyond the medical community. For example, you could speak to a fitness club about sun safety, including the latest technology for repairing UV damage. Or partner with a local pediatrician to hold an educational event for parents about infant skincare, prevention, and new treatment options.

EDUCATE YOUR TEAM

Effective marketing can catch people's interest and prompt them to call your office. What happens next will depend on the training of your front office staff. Imagine someone excited about the potential of your new wrinkle treatment. The person calls and asks if this device will get rid of those stubborn lines. Now imagine how quickly the excitement will fade if the caller receives a lukewarm response, or the receptionist doesn't even know about the device.

Your office staff needs to be well informed about all of your services and promotions. They should be able to answer basic questions about procedures, and foster enthusiasm. This is especially true of new treatments and devices, because people are quite likely to call for further information.

Of course, staff education should also include your clinical team. The additional cost of classes, seminars, or other staff training will be minimal in comparison to the benefits. You can avoid problems, improve patient satisfaction, and increase clinicians' confidence. Specialized training is also an excellent selling point, so be sure to mention it in your promotions.

Lastly, follow-up and analyze the results. Ask patients for feedback, either informally or through a questionnaire. If patients are dissatisfied, you can identify and resolve problems quickly. If they are happy, you can promote the procedure's high satisfaction rating. Be sure to inquire about why they choose the procedure, and use that information to optimize future marketing campaigns. ■

Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of dermatologists. With a team of 180+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps dermatologists who know where they want to go, get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call 855-598-3320 to speak one-on-one with Naren.



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