

ARE YOU IGNORING YOUR MOST LUCRATIVE MARKET ?

The most overlooked and possibly most lucrative market is your current patients.

By Naren Arulrajah



What is your marketing goal? Most dermatologists and plastic surgeons give the same answer. Their top priority is to acquire new patients. Although patient acquisition is essential for practice growth, it is not the only way to increase your bottom line. The most overlooked and possibly most lucrative market is your current patients.

Cosmetic consultations as sales opportunities. In many ways, patients seeking an elective procedure are just like other consumers. They shop around, compare prices, look for better quality, and consider their options. The cosmetic consultation is often the deciding factor. If the person is not convinced that your practice is a good choice, he or she will go elsewhere.

Your cosmetic consultants need to be knowledgeable clinicians, but they also need to be effective salespeople. They should have a warm and friendly demeanor and convey empathy. While it is important to provide information and present the procedure in a positive light, it is equally important to listen. People want to be heard and understood, they want their concerns to be discussed rather than dismissed. During a consultation, the patient expects to be the center of attention, so avoid interruptions or distractions.

Selling additional services. Imagine a patient that schedules an appointment for liposuction. Despite having a great experience at your office, the person later goes to a dermatologist across town for laser tattoo removal. Why? Because he or she did not know your practice offered that service.

The scope of dermatology and plastic surgery is immense, and it is virtually impossible for one practice to offer everything. Patients are likely to assume that something is unavailable simply because they were unaware of it. There are several ways to market additional procedures to your patients.

- Make sure that your website lists all services and procedures that you offer. The content should explain not only the clinical details, but also what problem it addresses. Many people will search for a condition, such as wrinkles, rather than a treatment such as dermal fillers.
- Send out a newsletter at least once a month. Email marketing is one of the best ways to stay in touch with your patients and promote lesser-known treatments.
- Provide in-office promotional materials. Offer brochures, information sheets, and other patient handouts.
- Use your on-hold phone message to educate people about your range of services.
- Get social! Your practice should be active on the most popular social media networks and encourage patients to follow. This is a great medium to discuss your current offerings, and announce new ones.
- Pay attention to patient conversation. If a Botox patient mentions frustration with stubborn love handles, use the opportunity to suggest liposuction.

Don't neglect patient referrals and reviews. Even when acquiring new leads, your current patient base is a rich resource. Word of mouth is the best advertisement you can have, and social media allows people to spread the word far and wide.

One simple and surprisingly effective way to get more reviews is to ask. Try sending a post-treatment email with instructions for posting a review on your preferred network. Also include information about your referral program (if you don't have one, consider implementing one).

Most importantly, focus on customer service. Providing a good patient experience and quality results is the best way to keep people coming back, and keep them talking about your practice.



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 and plastic surgeons. With a team of 180+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps doctors 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.