

MedEsthetics®

BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR PRACTITIONERS

January/February 2018 \$5.00

Volume 14, Number 1

medestheticsmagazine.com

The Impact of Diet on
Acne and Skin Aging

FADE OUT:
Most Effective Melasma
Treatment Protocols

Gerald Goldberg, MD
On the Power and Joy of Transforming Lives

Plus:

- ❖ Premvia Hydrogel Matrix
- ❖ Compounding Pharmacies



EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Seven strategies to create a memorable patient experience.

Excellent customer service is the cornerstone of small business success. In the medical aesthetics industry, this extends beyond delivering the results or products that were promised and deftly handling complaints. Cosmetic patients also expect a positive and memorable experience with your practice.

Here are six ways that you and your team can deliver an experience that meets or exceeds expectations.

1. GREET PATIENTS LIKE FRIENDS

The patient experience begins with the first phone call to your practice. Medical practices often use automated

phone systems with a maze of departmental prompts that callers must sit through before reaching a receptionist. You can impress prospective patients from the get-go by having a warm, friendly, human voice answer every call. When patients enter the practice, train staff to greet them by name.

2. LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE

The little things often make a big difference in creating a happy patient. Offer your patients an easy way to reach their providers, such as a cell phone number or direct email address. This is a small gesture that exceeds expectations.

3. REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

Part of creating a memorable experience is removing distractions that take away from the experience—and that includes dust and clutter, which patients are sure to notice. Keep the waiting area clean and free of clutter with comfortable seating (and short wait times). Make sure your retail shelves are dusted and fully stocked at all times.

4. DON'T MAKE EXCUSES

Every person makes mistakes, but few people own up to them. If you make a mistake, apologize and offer an immediate solution. Train staff members how to handle angry or dissatisfied patients, and then empower your employees to address complaints immediately. By turning a mistake into an outstanding customer service moment, you can transform an angry, unhappy patient into a cheerleader for your practice.

Are there areas in the process where patients often become frustrated and short-tempered? Re-examine that process and think of ways to improve it. Eliminate any steps that don't add value to the practice or are not necessary for patient safety and care. Continually ask yourself—and your staff—how you can improve the patient experience. Following consultations and treatments, reach out to patients to be sure their experiences were positive.

7. GIVE THEM MORE FOR THEIR MONEY

There are always competitors in the marketplace. What sets your practice apart—and adds to a positive patient experience—is the value you create for your patients. You do this not by lowering prices but by ensuring they get the best possible value for their money. For example, keep patients "in the know" by hosting educational seminars

*The best business advice often comes from patients.
Pay attention to what they say during
phone calls, consultations and visits.*

5. REWARD LOYALTY

It is common sense but not common practice to be appreciative of your patients. Do not take them for granted. They are the lifeblood of your business. Surprise and delight loyal patrons with an occasional free gift or treatment. If an existing patient refers a friend to your practice, send thanks with a handwritten note, gift card, phone call or even a thank-you email. Also consider implementing a loyalty program that allows patients to gain points for products or procedures purchased, and referrals they make to your practice.

6. LISTEN TO YOUR PATIENTS

The best business advice often comes from patients themselves. Pay attention to what they say during phone calls, consultations and visits. Ask them for suggestions on how to improve your business. Don't become defensive if you hear something that is uncomfortable; instead try to view things from the patient's perspective. Evaluate what you learn, and act to implement needed changes.

about the products and services you offer. Offer a range of treatment options to accommodate a variety of patient budgets, and bundle services into treatment packages with a discount over the à la carte price.

Stay abreast of new developments in the aesthetics field so you can offer patients the best treatment options for their concerns and lifestyles, and be willing to refer the patient elsewhere if you are not the right person to deliver the desired treatment. In these cases, explain to the patient why you believe this is the best option.

Keeping your patients happy and exceeding their expectations requires focus and effort, but it pays off. Make it a point to review your services and processes regularly, and make improvements often. ME

Cheryl Whitman is founder and CEO of Beautiful Forever, an aesthetic business consulting firm that helps physicians identify and execute new business strategies aimed at improving their practices' bottom lines. Contact her at 877.772.6334, Cheryl@beautifulforever.