

# 11 Marketing Options Beyond Social Media

Here are 11 external marketing opportunities to bring a steady flow of patients to your practice or medspa.

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Medspas and aesthetic practices need to bring a steady flow of new patients through their doors to remain viable. There are many ways to generate new patients. Most articles on patient generation today focus on the effective use of social media. But this is just one marketing avenue. This article will look at time-honored methods of external marketing outside of the realm of social media that should be part of a comprehensive marketing plan.

Proven marketing tactics for cosmetic practices and medspas include, marketing brochures, direct mail, electronic and print advertising, public relations, community relations and also special events. Do not overlook the potential of getting involved in your community through the Chamber of Commerce and other business networking groups.

In addition to your social media marketing efforts, here are 11 external marketing efforts to add to your repertoire.

1. Branding. Your personal brand consists of your ultimate vision or mission, the products and services you offer and how you communicate all of these elements to your target market. Your practice should have a consistent brand message and imagery that is used across all of your marketing efforts.

2. Public Relations. Public relations (PR) is all about positioning and persuasion. It is directed at an unfamiliar audience, in this case, potential new patients rather than existing patients.

PR differs from advertising in that it's earned rather than purchased. You need to convince media representatives to write a positive story or provide positive coverage about you or your practice. It is generally perceived by the public as more credible than advertising because it has been verified by an independent, trusted third party, instead of having been purchased by you. Another huge benefit of PR is that it's free.

To improve your chances of getting your press release published, you need to create a story or follow up on a hot news story. Position yourself as an expert so the media will come to you. For example, you might write about how challenging the job market is for those individuals over the age of 40. You would discuss how using dermal fillers and injectables can help a candidate look younger and, therefore, be more competitive.

You may also identify a top news story and offer insight into how it affects your market. For instance, if your local news outlet runs a story about obesity and your practice offers weight loss programs, you can offer information on how obesity impacts a person's health and ways to combat it, such as utilizing a program similar to what your practice offers.

Building good relationships with local media representatives can improve your chances of getting your press releases published. Consider holding a media day at your practice and inviting local media representatives for a facility tour. Hand out goodie bags with product samples and gift certificates for services. Have press kits available for the reps that include your service menu and bios of your providers.

Issue press releases when you have something newsworthy. Some ideas include:

Upcoming events that are open to the public  
A new technology or service that you are now offering  
Your charitable work or partnerships with local charities

3. Networking. According to a May 2016 article in the Harvard Business Review entitled "Learn to Love Networking," "...networking is a necessity. A mountain of research shows that professional networks lead to more job and business opportunities..."

Get out there and meet people. Attend community events. Educate people about what you do. Remember to be yourself. Don't recite a memorized sales pitch. Instead, relax and tell them what you love about your practice and why. Join the local Chamber of Commerce and attend their events. Introduce yourself and hand out business cards that offer a discount for a service or product. You should also call noncompetitive, complementary businesses and set appointments to meet their owners. Discuss opportunities to offer joint promotions.

4. Direct Mail. According to a 2019 survey by the Direct Marketing Association, consumers are 70% more likely to remember your business if they receive a direct mail piece and 82% of millennials trust a business immediately if it uses direct mail.

In this digital world, print mail pieces offer a less crowded marketing channel that can be used to your advantage. Identify zip codes with your potential patients' target demographics, do a series of mailings and track your leads. Send creative branded enveloped letters, oversized laminated post cards, brochures, newsletters and special coupons/gift certificates to these potential patients. You can also mail invites to your target attendees for open house and educational events.

5. Email Marketing. A monthly educational newsletter eblast or promotional sales email to a targeted list of potential patients can be effective. You can purchase email lists or work with complementary businesses and rent their customer lists. Offer incentives, such as discounts on products or services, to get new patients through your door. Consider promoting your virtual consults to prospective patients.

6. Billboards. Identify a nearby area with high traffic that fits your target demographics and purchase a billboard to get your message out and build awareness of your practice. Costs are based on location.

7. Attend Conferences & Events. Local health fairs and bridal fairs as well as medical conferences offer excellent opportunities to network. Even better, become a presenter or speaker at the event. This gives you credibility as an expert in your field, increases your visibility and name recognition and provides you with an opportunity to educate potential patients about your practice, products and services.

8. Offer Referral Incentives. Word of mouth is the best advertising for your practice. Incentivize your existing patients to refer their family and friends. Testimonials from happy, existing patients are also helpful in recruiting new patients. Be sure to include them in your website and in marketing campaigns.

9. Produce Content for Other Media. Blogging for websites that cover beauty and medical aesthetic treatments and writing articles for local media and trade publications establishes you as an expert in the field and increases name recognition for you and your practice. It also increases the likelihood patients will choose your practice over other lesser-known ones. Save time and expand your reach by repurposing your content for multiple platforms.

Consider self-publishing a book or booklet or have a book ghost written for you. Doing so further increases your credibility in the field, increases name recognition and increases the likelihood your practice will be chosen by potential patients over other practices.

10. Professional Referrals. Actively collaborate with other noncompetitive professionals and jointly refer patients to each other. Be sure to thank those professionals when they refer a patient to you. A handwritten note, a bottle of wine or a dinner at a trendy new restaurant are great ways to show your appreciation and keep the referrals coming.

Consider a "by invitation only" networking meeting and invite local complementary providers to an educational cocktail event.

11. Events. In-practice events should be a regular part of your marketing efforts. If you are intimidated by the thought of hosting an event, start by participating in a local health fair. Partner with a local charity or other local business and hold a joint event. Start holding smaller events at your facility. For example, hold an intimate wine and cheese gathering for your VIP club members and present information on your newest technology and services. Once your confidence has grown, hold a "bring-a-friend" event and offer special discounts on treatments to encourage your existing patients to bring in friends and family.

External marketing is a highly effective way to grow your practice and your bottom line. Developing an annual marketing budget and plan that encompasses a range of efforts will help ensure a steady flow of new patients seeking the services you offer.

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