



Advertising

BRANDING

-WHY YOUR BRAND MATTERS-

Strategy

Make your summer project refreshing and revitalizing your Medspa or aesthetic practice's brand.

By Cheryl Whitman

It's the time of year when Mother Nature launches into warmer temperatures. The new season of renewal, a time to refresh and reorganize and the perfect time to revisit rebranding and grow your brand extensions! As I stated in my book, *Beautifully Profitable, Forever Profitable*, "Properly managed, your brand is likely to be one of the most valuable assets of your practice. A compelling and memorable brand can create the kind of patient loyalty that strongly manifests itself as a preference; strong enough to overcome intense competition and price differences."

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What is a Brand?

Oxford Languages defines branding as, “the promotion of a particular product or company by means of advertising and distinctive design.” Wikipedia says, “A brand is a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that distinguishes one seller’s good or service from those of other sellers.”

While both of these are correct, I prefer the Shopify definition: “Branding is the process of creating a distinct identity for a business in the mind of your target audience and consumers.”

Your brand represents who you are and what you do. It defines the essence of your medspa or practice. A brand is the identity of a company as defined by its products, services, names, terms, designs and symbols in order to identify and differentiate it. (Think the Nike swoosh logo and the “Just Do It” tag line).

Why is Branding Important?

Branding benefits can be summed up in three words: recognition, reputation and recall. There are several reasons why branding your medspa or practice extensions is important, but perhaps the most important of these is that branding gives your practice a competitive edge. This is true because branding affects consumer behavior. People often purchase branded products for status, they perceive a branded product to have lower risk than a generic one and are more likely to promote a brand they like to their friends. Having a brand identity can help you build your reputation and attract the clientele you want and it can increase the overall value of your practice.

Creating Your Brand

To create your brand, you can begin with the 4-P’s of marketing: Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

Product/Service:

Begin by understanding your product/service itself. What is your product? What does it do? Who would benefit from it? How does it compare with competitive products? How is it different (better) than competitive products? What are its qualities, its unique selling proposition (USP)?

Price:

Price is what your patient is willing to pay for your product/service. Price is based on both the real and perceived value. It must also take into consideration



competitors pricing, supply costs, etc. Pricing can play a huge role in the success or failure of a product because it also affects the product/service’s perceived value. You must decide whether or not you want to appeal to the masses or a select upscale market. If you choose to economy price a product, it may give the impression that it is of lower quality. Discounting a product may make it seem less desirable than it was previously, or the lower price may make more clients willing to try it. Setting an upscale or premium price may give the impression of higher quality, or that it’s a luxury item. It may also price many potential customers out of the market. On the flip side, many consumers believe a higher priced item is superior, so setting a higher price may actually increase demand.

Place:

Place defines where your products can be purchased and how they are displayed. Place could be within your practice, through another retail location or online. It also determines how your merchandise is created for display. Placement must be consistent with your desired product image. Locations should be close to your entrance near the desk and in each room. Medspas and practices should have multiple displays and testers.

Promotion:

Promotion is how you communicate to potential users that they need your product/service and that it is appropriately priced.

Using the 4-P’s of marketing will help you as you design your brand. Spend time considering each aspect.

So, get started:

To create a powerful brand for your practice, review your unique selling proposition (USP). It defines what you have to offer your clients and how your potential clients will view your practice. As you refine your USP, keep in mind that there is a lot of noise in the environment competing for

the attention of your potential patients. On a daily basis, an average person is exposed to over 3,000 commercial messages, each vying for their attention.

Consumers trust brands and are more likely to buy a brand they know. When you hear the name Coca-Cola, you immediately think of a refreshing soft drink. You are much more likely to purchase a Coke than a no-name store brand cola. When you hear the word Charmin, you immediately think toilet tissue. The power of a brand is that the mention of its name produces immediate recognition in the mind of the consumer. Consumers are faced with thousands of decisions each day, and research has shown they take short cuts to make decision making easier. Purchasing brand names they recognize is one of those short cuts. The more you can get your brand name in front of them, the better. Using your brand name across all aspects of your practice helps do this.

Recognition – people will come to know your brand and recognize it. People often make repeat purchase based on brand recognition.

Recall – a strong brand helps keep you top of mind for your clients.

To reach your target market effectively, your brand message must be consistent and narrowly focused. The message must resonate with the wants and needs of the buyer (your prospective patient), not those of the seller (you). Therefore, your branding should focus on the results and benefits your practice provides.

Your brand must be unique and authentic. It must be true to what you do, not promise something you cannot deliver.

Reputation – patients will associate your practice's reputation with your brand.

Focus your brand exclusively on your target market. Identify who your potential patients are and design your brand to appeal to them. Use a sharp shooter approach rather than a shotgun blast. Consumer trends says Gen-Z, a generation of trend setters, has \$360 billion in disposable income, and their influence is here to stay. Gen-Z's view skin care as an essential part of their self-care, and they're interested in understanding what active ingredients are right for their skin type and what services they should be having on a regular basis to prevent wrinkles and aging. Using a survey or focus group to gain further insight is a good next step to gather data and explore their online behavior and social engagement to find out what platforms they spend their time on, what they're doing and why.

Factor in the 4 Pillars of Building a Brand

Once you have begun to flush out the critical components of product, price, place and promotion, it's time to apply what Tony Pec, Co-Founder of "Y Not You Media," calls the 4 pillars of branding: uniqueness, influence, trust and relevance.

Uniqueness is differentiating your practice/product/service from the competition. You want to stand out from the crowd. Doing so will help create brand loyalty.

Influence means having the ability to sway your patients in one direction or another. To be influential, you must have earned the trust of your patients. We'll talk about trust next. Being influential means gaining credibility amongst your patients and the industry. Excellent ways to do this is to be seen as experts in the field. One way to be seen as an expert is to be a published author. As Chapter Four of my book, *Beautifully Profitable, Forever Profitable* states, "No doctor should be without a book that he or she has "written" (or had ghost written for them); one that positions the Medical Practice or spa to potential clients in a positive and impressive fashion."

Other means of building influence and being seen as an expert in the field include guest speaking engagements at industry conferences, local events, etc. It's about getting your name out there in a positive way. To build influence, you must build trust.

Trust is essential. If your patients/audience don't trust you, you won't have any influence. To gain trust, you must provide educational content, be entertaining,



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be positive and stand out from the crowd. Your message must be authentic and real. Trust building is long and hard work, and it can be lost in an instant.

Relevance means staying top of mind, releasing new content on your social media on a regular basis, being in the news, etc. You must stay abreast of the newest breakthroughs, breaking information, latest trends and new technology in your industry. You need to be viewed as “in the know”, a leader, etc.

Brand Management – Keeping Your Brand Fresh

To remain relevant, you need to keep your brand fresh. Here’s a solid approach to doing so in four easy steps.

First, review your key target audience and thoroughly understand their wants and needs. These change over time. Does your branding approach still resonate with your target audience today?

Second, review your positioning. Is your practice/product/service still a compelling alternative to your competitors? Have you stayed abreast of the latest information and trends and communicated this to your target market?

Third, take a look at your visual brand identity. Consider updating the colors, photos and images. A slight change of hue can make a world of difference. Are you presenting an inclusive image?

Finally, review the tone of your content – all of it. Your messages must be consistent across all media... Is there a common voice or tone? Is it current with today’s marketplace?

Some Additional Options for Refreshing Your Brand:

Consider adding new distribution channels or methods to reach a broader audience. Add an online store if you don’t already have one. Innovate! Add new products and services and be sure to make your target audience aware of them. Add a private branded label skin care line. Expand your treatment offerings or bundle them to

appeal to a new market segment – think men/teen acne skin care programs / be inclusive and welcoming to the LGBTQ community. Be willing to change. Consumer habits, likes and dislikes change. Your brand has to change with them if your practice is going to remain profitable.

In Summary

Section 1 of Beautifully Profitable, Forever Profitable says, “To market and promote effectively, you need a clear vision of what you want your business to become – as well as a recognition it’s now more than a Medical Practice...it is now also a retail business.” Brand development and management can be overwhelming, but it must be done if your practice is to be viable. **ME**



Cheryl Whitman is a celebrated author, speaker, and highly regarded national cosmetic marketing professional with more than 35 years in the Aesthetic Medical Spa Industry. A cosmetic anti-aging wellness “Influencer” she is one of the most sought after speakers in the industry. Mentoring all size practices and laser centers.

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Cheryl is the author of the “Aesthetic Medical Success System,” a revolutionary program providing a turnkey educational success system that assists clients in brilliantly jumpstarting successful aesthetic and medical spa businesses.

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