

HOW TO (SUCCESSFULLY) INCORPORATE HOT NEW TREATMENT TRENDS INTO YOUR PRACTICE

To achieve a healthy return on investment, you need to make smart decisions and take the right actions.

BY DANA FOX



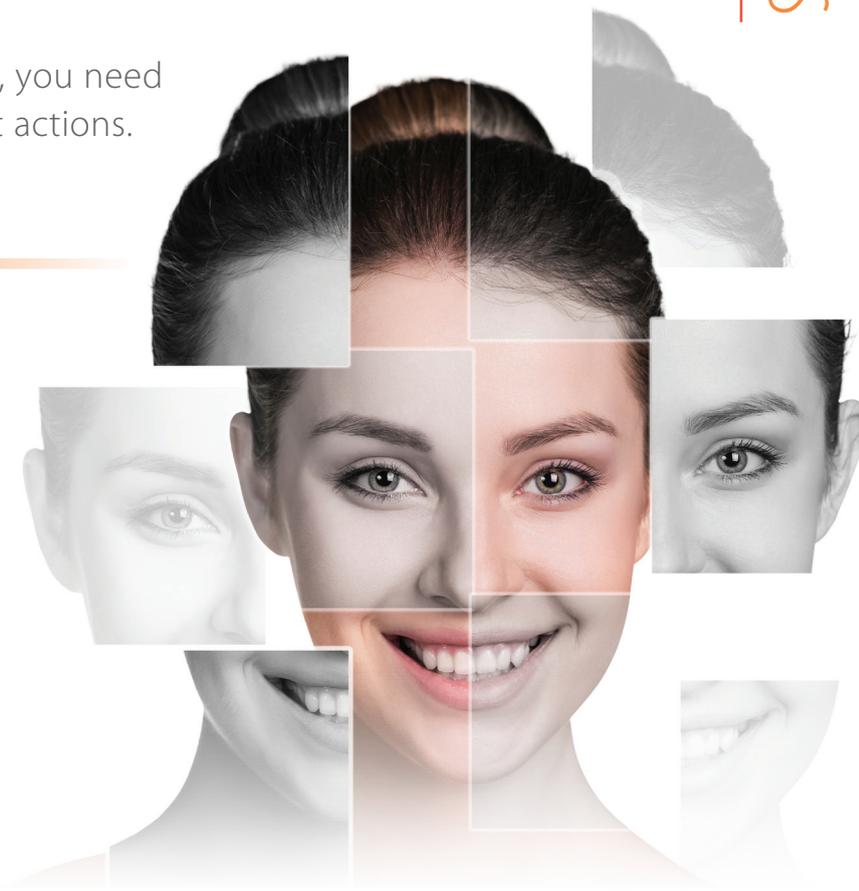
Noninvasive procedures now account for the majority of all aesthetic procedures being done today. Patients want faster results, less discomfort, less risk, less downtime, and lower costs. In fact, only 17% of the market relates to cosmetic *surgery*. That is why plastic surgeons, doctors from every specialty, and nonmedical providers are

jumping on the bandwagon to give patients what they are demanding. But just buying new equipment and setting it up in a treatment room is far from enough. If you are going to achieve a healthy return on investment (ROI), you will need to make smart decisions and take the right actions.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TREATMENTS ARE RIGHT FOR YOUR PRACTICE?

No. 1 **Think about what your particular patient demographic would be most interested in.** If your patients are from a young demographic, they might be interested in microdermabrasion or hair removal. An older patient base is looking for answers to facial discoloration, fat under the chin, noninvasive body sculpture, and much more. Pay careful attention to what patients have already been complaining about so you can be the practice to solve those concerns. The best prospects for a new procedure are your current patients. They value and trust you, and you can easily target them.

No. 2 **Research every option in the marketplace before you make a purchase.** Talk to multiple manufacturers, and invite them to give you a presentation. Check on their science and clinical studies.



How long have they been in business? Who are their luminaries and opinion leaders? What about physician and patient reviews? Talk to colleagues. What about after-purchase service? Check realfself.com for a good overview of that treatment method.

No. 3 **Be skeptical about the newest miracles.** I always advise my clients to be careful about being the first to adopt a particular piece of equipment or treatment method, no matter how exciting it sounds. Rushing into any substantial purchase without doing your due diligence can cause you to take a hit in your pocketbook and in your reputation. Wait and see is a good

approach. When the kinks have been solved and reviews are positive and consistent, that is a good time to take a hard look for yourself.

HOW TO ENSURE A STRONG ROI

No. 1 **Prepare your staff.** Many practices believe the first thing to do is to market the new service. Actually, that is the second thing to do. First, make sure your staff is educated, comfortable, and able to answer patients' questions about that treatment. Staff should be able to bring the new treatment up in conversation. My suggestion is to offer that treatment to any staff member who needs and wants that particular improvement. At the very least, hold a meeting where you tell the staff all about the benefits of the treatment and provide them with frequently asked questions or FAQs so they can gain deeper understanding. The first thing patients often ask staff members is, "Have you had this done?" If the answer can honestly be, "Yes, and I love the results," you will be way ahead of the game. If you expect staff to "sell" a service, you need to let them experience it.

No. 2 **If possible, set up one or more treatment rooms dedicated to aesthetics.** If you are just entering the aesthetics market, as I have mentioned in other articles, you have to "think beauty now." So, make your waiting room more attractive, and be sure your aesthetic treatment rooms look less medical and more welcoming. Remember, these are patients reaching into their own pockets for what many people think are "luxury services."

No. 3 **Let patients know you have added a wonderful service.** To ensure patients' awareness, this is what I recommend: Start with an eblast campaign—perhaps once a month—letting patients know you now provide a new service with an invitation to meet with a provider. You can offer a special "patient-only" incentive, too. Get materials from the manufacturer: a counter card, treatment room posters, and product brochures. If the manufacturer provides a product video and you have a kiosk in your waiting room, make that available to patients. Of course, add a page to your website all about the new service with a quick message that has a link to the product page on your home page.

No. 4 **Let the community know your practice is the place for a particular treatment.** Ask your webmaster to build a plan to expand your search engine optimization activities to attract new patients interested in a particular service. You might think about pay-per-click ads to generate traffic. Think about billboards, too. Yes, this is an expensive way to market your

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services, but in certain communities and if you are one of the few to offer that treatment, it could be money worth spending. A good marketing company can help you decide where to spend your dollars.

No. 5 **Hold events, and offer attendees a special incentive.** Invite patients to regular events in your office for a presentation, Q&A, and, if appropriate, a demonstration. Here are a few things to consider when planning an event:

- Start planning 60 days in advance.
- Send an invitation eblast 30 days before the event with follow-up eblasts 3 weeks prior and 3 days prior. Do not ask for RSVPs, but do suggest they bring friends.
- Include that special incentive on all invitations. Perhaps it is a discount or a gift.
- Invite the manufacturer's sales representative to be there.
- Make sure you have brochures and other materials on hand.
- Do a "benefits presentation" with a PowerPoint that the manufacturer provides, if possible.
- Offer simple refreshments.
- Ensure that the welcome and presentation itself take no more than 45 minutes followed by 15 minutes of a closing and talking with individual attendees. Often, patients will be excited enough to schedule an appointment right on the spot. Be sure to have staff members there to set up those appointments.

A FINAL WORD

To grow a practice in this very competitive, constantly changing environment means making educated changes that can help your practice thrive. Take your time. Consider the patient base you have. Ask your staff for their for opinions, and go for it! ■

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