Aesthetic Sales 101: How Your Staff Can Close More Procedures
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The aesthetic industry is buzzing with new and current procedures that are affordable, safe and quick. Just what the aesthetic patient is looking for. These procedures lead to new consumer target markets so looking good is no longer for just the elite. There’s something for everyone at every socioeconomic level. This increased demand for enhancement from the consumer ignites the supply side. That means more practitioners than ever are now offering cosmetic enhancement.

The aesthetic consumer today has many options. They know they have several choices on where to turn to for a great result. Your marketing efforts have a lot to do with who they choose. However, marketing efforts only get your telephone to ring and get the prospective patients through your door. Once you have the patient’s attention, it is your sales savvy that keeps them in your practice.

It is imperative you and your staff have the sales skills to close appointments, close procedures and ask for referrals. You start with a certain mind set. You have to be comfortable with the word “sales” or at least “promotion”. While you are practicing medicine, in reality, you are very much in sales in this industry so you need to be comfortable with that. Your staff needs to be comfortable with that. Selling or promoting is simply setting the tone and using well thought out strategies that help the patient decide to choose you.

What Does the Cosmetic Patient Want?

Nothing is more important in aesthetic medicine than patient relations. When patients are spending their own money on elective procedures, the experience needs to be a good one every single time or they will go elsewhere where they are treated special and they’ll bring their friends with them. The aesthetic patient wants:

- to feel special
- to be heard
- to be understood
- to be treated nicely and respectfully
- to feel important
- to feel comfortable
- to feel significant
If your staff would simply treat the visiting patient as they would a good friend visiting their home that would go a long way in patient relations. The patient would look forward to visiting and calling your office since they feel a connection with your staff, and hopefully you. Be sure your patients are feeling these positive emotions while in contact with you.

**Image is Important**

Your patients will look to your staff for guidance, reassurance and answers. You want your staff to look professional and presentable. Too much or too little makeup, hair, nails, revealing clothing does not open up communications among women so be careful what image your staff is portraying.

Also be sure your staff looks the part. Staff members should experience your services so they can not only look their best; they can relay their first hand experience to your patients. There is no better testimonial than your walking/talking staff members standing right in front of a potential patient who is interested in the same procedure. Sharing anecdotal information with patients, again, helps with the bonding experience and gives your staff confidence to promote you and your services to your patients without pushing. They are simply relaying their own experience and that is what sells.

**Bond with the Patient**

The first step in sales is to have the patient comfortable enough with you to open up and talk with you about their personal concerns. They need to be open to you so they will hear you and respond to what you’re saying. Develop a bond with your patient by greeting them with a smile and using their name throughout the conversation. Be happy to see them and use eye contact. Ask questions and show interest in them as a person as well as a patient. You are looking for commonalities with that patient so they can relate to you. Perhaps you live in the same area or go to the same health club. People like people that are like them so look for those similarities.

Learn the art of listening. The more you listen to the patient, the more they will tell you and feel bonded to you since they are sharing with you. And, the patient is more likely to hear what you have to say if they have been heard first. Listening is harder said than done but well worth the effort. The patient who is given the opportunity to talk will most likely tell you exactly what her concerns are as well as her objections. You don’t have to pull it out of them. Simply listen.

**Closing Techniques**

Your patients may also need some nudging from you and your staff. Some of them may feel selfish spending their (family’s) money on such vanity issues or they may not feel worthy of such indulgence. Let them know it’s OK for them to invest in
themselves. That the better they feel about themselves, the better life will be for them and everyone around them. Addressing their emotional needs is often the difference between a “let me think about it” to “let’s do it”. Here are some subtle closing techniques that help the patient move forward:

**Assumptive Close**

If you have bonded with the patient and listened to them, the close should be a natural next step. Make it even smoother by using the “Assumptive Close”. The question is not WILL they book, but WHEN?

Assume she will book so move forward with filling out the quote or scheduling the appointment. Some key phrases include:

“So, let’s check the schedule to see when we can get you back in here”

As you begin filling out the paperwork ask, “Karen, may I get your daytime telephone number please?”

When the patient answers your questions or doesn’t object to you checking the schedule for an appointment, she is moving forward.

**Choice Close**

Another natural way to complete a consultation is to ask a question that gives a choice rather than yes or no. With this approach, they are not asking them IF they should do it. They are actually moving beyond that and asking themselves a different question. Examples include:

“Karen, I have an opening this Thursday at 10:00 am or would you prefer Friday at 3:00 pm?”

“Sue, would you like to see Deborah our nurse today or wait for the doctor to see you on Wednesday?”

In the patient’s mind, they have skipped over the first question of whether they should even proceed and have gone on to figure out HOW to proceed.

**Address Emotions**

Emotions play a huge part in aesthetic medicine. The aesthetic patient is coming to you because there is something about their looks they are dissatisfied with. They believe improving it will also improve their feelings about themselves and their lives. They believe your services will bring them happiness.
If you attach emotions to their decision, it becomes easier for the patient to make the decision to move forward. If you address and reiterate the “discomfort” they are in now and how much better they will feel when they take care of it, that will bring them even closer to moving forward. Ask the patient how this “issue” has affected their life. Ask them how they think “fixing” it will help them. The more the patient can feel the problem and see the solution’s benefits, the more booked procedures you will experience.

Handling Objections

Objections are a good thing. It means the patient is actually considering buying your services so relish them. Objections are also a clue to you the patient has not yet been given enough information or they are teetering. Be prepared. Follow planned-out steps that address their objections. When they ask you questions about procedures:

- Listen to the entire question or comment first so you thoroughly understand what they are saying. Let them talk.
- Acknowledge them by saying, “Sara, I understand what you’re saying”
- Have answers prepared ahead of time
- Relay anecdotal information about your own experiences as well as other patients (without naming names); i.e., “well Sara, I can tell you that I’ve had it done and love my result” and “it’s one of our most popular procedures”
- Answer their concerns with proof such as before/after photos or have them speak to other patients who have had the same procedures performed. Have them read testimonials from other happy patients. If the objection is about money, offer them easy financing. Find out what their concerns are and what they would need to do or know to get them answered.

They are often just looking for reassurance and a little push from you to say it’s ok – you can do it.

Sell the Difference

Your staff needs to be able to answer the question, “Why you and your office over all the others?” Due to the competitive nature of aesthetic medicine, aesthetic consumers have many choices. You want to reiterate to them why you are a good choice. You and your staff should come up with a list of what makes you different than the others in your area. Examples include:

- Stanford-trained
- You offer evening and weekend appointments
- Unique practice offering comprehensive services – both skin care, makeup, surgical and non-surgical
- Doctor has performed more than 2,000 injectable procedures
- Doctor has been in practice for 15 years
- Certified as the Botox training to other practitioners
Be creative. List any unusual training or areas of interest that may be unique and of interest to the patient who is trying to decide on a practitioner.

**Add-On Sale for Increased Average Order Size**

The perfect time to add on to a sale is when your patient is standing in front of you with her credit card in her hand. She is already in the buying mode. Offer her gift certificates via a pretty display at your check-out counter. Tell her about a special you have running this month. Especially if it’s a package of multiple treatments she can buy for a discount rather than buy just one. Introduce her to your new skin care line or tell her about a new product you now offer.

**Keep Them Coming Back**

Never let the patient leave your office without the next step firmly planned. Ideally, you want them to schedule their next appointment now. You even want them to schedule all of their remaining appointments now so they feel a commitment to you. They may be hesitant to schedule so far in advance; however, assure them you will call to remind them about their appointments – just like the dentist does.

**Ask for Referrals**

We all know the best aesthetic patient is the referred patient. They are not as price conscious and are much more likely to stay loyal to you. You want to nurture those referrals and know who your advocates are in your practice. Every practice has a group of cheerleaders that sing your praises to everyone they know so wouldn’t you want to know who they are?

When the patient is satisfied with their result, tell them you want other patients just like them. Inform them of your referral program and give them referral cards to give to their friends, family and colleagues. Give them their before/after photos so they show them to others and talk about you. Now track these referrals and then thank them. Show them you appreciate their support. Send them a thank you note, call them personally to thank them and invite them in periodically for a complimentary treatment. They will keep the referrals coming when you acknowledge their support and show appreciation.

**Follow Up**

Always follow up after a consultation with a thank you note and then a telephone call.

If the prospective patient does not schedule, ask her when you should follow up and then do it. Send a thank you letter that day so she receives it the following day and
then call her. Also call her to invite her to your upcoming event or seminar. Put her on your practice newsletter list. Keep in touch so when she is finally ready, she calls you versus the others.

Conclusion

Your practice should act as a well-oiled machine. Once you have spent the time, money and effort marketing your practice and attracting new patients to you, it’s imperative you and your staff see it through with solid skills in selling techniques and patient relations.

Happy Selling!

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