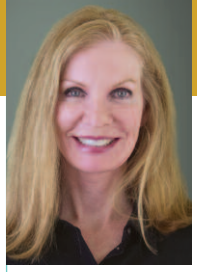

# Who Do You Think You Are?

By Catherine Maley, MBA

Who you think you are can be quite different than how you are perceived by cosmetic patients so bringing the two together to become congruent will get you better results.

Now most surgeons don't want to hear the negativity because they are already drowning in everyday problems as it is. While that is total understandable, there is a cost to not knowing.

We all know unhappy patients are all too excited to "share" their unhappiness with you via bad reviews. One of the reasons this happens is because they didn't feel heard and understood so a patient survey can help.

And, for the one who complained, there are many more who did not. They just went away never to be seen or heard from again. But they are still bad-mouthing you and telling their story everytime the topic comes up with their friends and family.

That very information can be what is stopping your growth. You don't know what you don't know so a patient survey will enlighten you.

And while you may think you already know the pitfalls of your practice, there are always a few things you were not aware of that are costing you patients. For example, a patient survey offers a quick path to discovering hidden issues such as:

- A rogue aesthetician is hurting your patient retention.
- Your office is in need of a cleanup and facelift.
- The consultation process is turning patients off.

Patient satisfaction surveys in your practice can give you exceptional insight into how to improve the patient experience and referral rates.

It's easier than ever to conduct a survey and it can be an eye-opening practice builder that becomes a cash surge to boot.

What you learn from the survey will be invaluable to you since whatever it is that needs improving is a lot cheaper to fix than losing revenues from patients and their referrals.

## *Who to Ask*

You are looking for candor not just from your fans who love you and forgive you for your missteps, but from everyone who has come in contact with your practice… good or bad. For example:

- Those who came in for a consult and were never heard from again.
- Those who came in once for a small procedure and then never returned.
- Those who had a procedure but never came back for their follow up.

## *How to Ask*

Once again, technology has made it easier than ever to conduct a patient survey and get responses fast.

There are many platforms available today with Survey Monkey being one of the most popular because they are so easy to use.

You simply decide what questions to ask and send it to your email list and the platform compiles the responses and feedback.

## *What to Ask*

Before you jump right in, you need to ensure your survey is equipped to provide helpful feedback in as few questions as possible. Above all, this means writing good questions that are focused and easy to understand.

Here are a few sample survey questions that give you great feedback:

**Were the telephones answered professionally and was it easy to make an appointment?**

This is important to know because if the caller doesn't have a good experience on the intital phone call, they are never going to meet you and your staff so you want to be sure this first step is handled.

**Were you treated courteously by my staff?**

Patients might be satisfied with the appearance of your cosmetic practice, but if they don't have a good experience with your staff, they won't be back. Aesthetics is personal. Nobody NEEDS cosmetic rejuvenation so this is "feel good" health care.

The cosmetic patient with a credit card is looking for a connection with a practice that makes them feel special and cared about.

By the way, if the same staff person's name comes up more than 3x in a negative way, it's time to either retrain that person in customer service or free them to work elsewhere where they are not hurting your practice.

It's too competitive to have to deal with staff that is not anything but professional, engaged and eager to help you succeed because the alternative is costing you a fortune in bad will and lost revenues.

**Would you refer your friends and family?**

Word of mouth referrals are the lifeblood of a cosmetic practice. But you won't get many if patients aren't happy with their overall experience.

Every touch point in your processes can leave a lasting impression.

## *Conclusion*

Patient surveys can be initiated as the patient is leaving your office or emailed to them later or you can survey your entire email list once a year.

The point is to find out how patients feel before it's too late and the damage is done.

## *Want a Free Cosmetic Patient Survey?*

I am happy to conduct a cosmetic patient survey for you to help you identify the practice gaps most affecting your bottom line. To get started, simply email me at Catherine@CatherineMaley.com or visit www.CatherineMaley.com.

*Catherine Maley, MBA is author of "Your Aesthetic Practice/What Your Patients Are Saying" and President of Cosmetic Image Marketing. She uses creative patient-attraction and staff-training strategies to get you more patients and more profits. Catherine can be reached at (877) 339-8833 or visit her website at www.CosmeticImageMarketing.com.*