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HOW CAN YOU TRANSFORM YOUR CLINIC INTO A MEDICAL SPA?

By **MARA SHORR**, BS, CAC II-VI and **JAY SHORR**, BA, MBM-C, CAC I-VI

With the ever-changing healthcare laws, rules and regulations, we're seeing more physicians than ever before transitioning out of insurance-based medicine and into the aesthetic industry.

With that transition, we're often asked how a traditional healthcare clinic or insurance-based medical practice can go about making the leap to become a medical spa or aesthetic practice.

Following are our top five tips we're offering:

1- RECEIVE PROPER TRAINING, BOTH ON THE BUSINESS AND MEDICAL SIDE.

While you're familiar with how to treat the patients' issues you've been dealing with for years, make sure you take the proper courses when it comes to new-to-you procedures, like injectables and lasers. While a weekend course is great, make sure that when you leave the training session you feel 100% comfortable with each and every item your instructor(s) discussed. Whether you have more questions on how to mix the injectable solutions, how to angle your syringe, who is allowed to perform which services in your particular state, or what strength to fire your new laser, make sure all of your questions are answered by a reputable trainer before you treat a single patient. Complications are more likely to arise when you aren't confident you know what you're doing, and complications lead to unhappy patients, lawsuits and, worst of all, death.

AND MAKING THE LEAP TO BECOME A MEDICAL SPA

Transition Plan

Educate yourself and your staff not only how to perform the treatments, but on how the business of aesthetics is different than that of more traditional medicine. Many organizations now offer excellent courses for just that purpose, including THE Aesthetic Show's Certified Aesthetic Consultant program, Vegas Cosmetic Surgery business sessions, and the American Society of Cosmetic Physicians' Practice Management Track. See which is right for you and your staff, as topics, course length and training locations vary.

2- LET YOUR PREVIOUS PATIENTS KNOW ABOUT YOUR NEW SERVICES.

Whether it's a printed postcard or mailer using the postal service, or an e-newsletter in their e-mail inbox, alert your existing patients of your new services. They've known you only as a general practitioner or gynecologist, for instance, or even as a dermatologist who only helped them with their plantar wart. Inform them of all of the services your office will offer to transform them to a more youthful version of themselves, and make sure that when they enter your office, your showcasing your new services in your physical space as well. Include branded, framed signage and customized brochures on your new procedures in each and every treatment room, as well as your reception area, for instance. Update your on-hold messaging as well. You'll be surprised at how these simple efforts can take your practice to the next level.

3- LOOK, FEEL, AND ACT AESTHETIC.

Gone are the days of frosted glass windows covered in faded insurance-update printouts that you shut in your patients' faces. Gone are the days of worn carpet and sterile exam rooms, mismatched scrubs, and staff that looks unhappy to be at work. Medspa patients are coming to your office because they WANT to, not because they HAVE to. They have a large variety of choices when it comes to which providers they're able to see... not just a list given to them by their insurance company. Make your office a place your new patients will enjoy coming to and spending time in, because if your medical spa isn't a place they enjoy, they'll choose your competitor over you.

4- OFFER YOUR PATIENTS FINANCING FOR THEIR NEW PROCEDURES.

In your previous days, insurance covered the majority of your patients' visits, and they came to you because they had to, not because they chose to. Things are different now, and you'll often be asking patients to open up their wallets and checkbooks for larger amounts than their previous co-pay. Look into patient financing opportunities, allowing them to pay off their procedure on a timeline they're comfortable with. We offer this program to our clients, and they've seen great success with the 0% interest model to their patient. Fees aren't any higher than they would pay to process a standard credit card, and are at 0% to the patient for a 12-18 month period, this allows the patient to spread out payments for their laser treatment package, or more expensive surgical procedures.

5- DELIVER QUALITY MARKETING UPDATES.

Remember, you want your patients to WANT to come back to you. Providing them with ongoing monthly e-newsletter updates about your specials and services will keep you top of mind. In addition, show your patients how much they mean to you with automatic birthday notices. It's the small touches that go a long way! (While there are a variety of options available, we're big fans of Solutionreach, a software which provides all of these options and integrates with most EHR systems to keep things streamlined. As a bonus, it provides your patients with text message, voicemail and email appointment reminders as well, cutting back on your no show rates!)

While this transition is a big step, it's one we've seen with incredible success time and time again over the years. We know it's not something every practice is able to do along.

If you have a question about how to make the transition, always feel free to contact us at info@thebestmbs.com



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