



HOW CAN I BEAT THE SUMMER SLUMP?

Expert advice on how to use downtime to your advantage.

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Summer is notoriously slow for many aesthetic practices. Here, our practice management pros provide tips on how to use this downtime more productively.



GET COMPLIANT

This year, make a change and do something that will help your practice be more

efficient and compliant by following these simple steps.

First, go through your website. Check to see if it needs to be spruced up by adding new information related to the procedures you offer and uploading fresh images. When you upload new photos, make sure that the proper disclaimers and before and after information is listed. Also, make sure you have the proper terms of use and privacy policies.

What content are you posting? Are you making promises or claims of superiority over your competitors? All such content should be removed, as it violates Federal Trade Commission regulations. Also, is your website

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant? If not, now is a good time to make sure that it is. Some estimates have noted that there were at least 11,452 federal filings on ADA claims last year alone.

Second, do you have the most up-to-date employment posters that are easily accessible to your employees? It does not matter what size your office is. Every employer is mandated to post the current year's state and federal employment-related posters. All notices must be posted in a conspicuous place so that they can be seen and read by employees. Failure to post notices can result in stiff penalties and possible fines.

Third, have you sat down with staff and conducted employee reviews? Many employees state during exit interviews that they wished they had more communication with their employer. You may be unhappy with an employee's work ethic or productivity but haven't taken the time to address these issues because you were too busy to write down your grievances and discuss them with your employ-

ee. Make sure that you document your complaints so that you can defend yourself against any employment discrimination claims should it be necessary to terminate the employee at a future time.

Fourth, go through your insurance policy. Do you have adequate coverage? Are there any exclusions of coverage that you overlooked? Oftentimes, people do not have time to go through their policies and assume that they are covered. Now is a good time to check, because not doing so can be very costly should you have an uncovered claim.

Just because summer is upon us does not mean that the number of lawsuits decreases or that the regulatory boards are not active. Protect yourself and your practice by using this time to organize and correct any potential areas of non-compliance.

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SUMMER SPEAKEASY EVENTS AND MORE

The summer season is all about sun, sand, surf, and vacays, which can translate to a summer slump. Take advantage of seasonal festivities to ramp up your marketing tactics. Whether you run summer-themed events, introduce a new treatment, or have an annual summer gala for your best clients, you can keep your practice top of mind.

Get started by identifying special days that may stimulate clever variations on special offers, virtual or live events, or bundling treatments and products. For example, pre-Labor Day is a good time to run with a “reverse summer sun damage” theme.

Check out some of the trending special days, too. Choose the ones that may resonate with your target audience. Find such holidays at holidayscalendar.com.

On a positive note, many people have more downtime during summer, which may make them more inclined to have a little work done. Both outdoor and indoor events, as well as virtual events, work well for summer. Look into local events to sponsor or participate in, including festivals, street fairs, panels, and other community activities where you can showcase who you are and what you do. If you have access to outdoor space like a rooftop or garden, light up some lanterns and try a barbecue or picnic to show your most loyal patients some love. Choose a timely theme, get your vendors involved, and encourage patients to invite a partner or friend. Bringing your loyal clients together for a social evening can foster a sense of community around your business.

Consider a “Summer Speakeasy” event to promote skincare and nutritional products. Hire some pros dressed in 1920s garb to serve themed summer cocktails to make it unique. Try

partnering with a popular yogi, nutritionist, or fitness pro to offer a special class for patients who have had or are considering body sculpting treatments. Do a brief presentation about fitness and nutrition, add some slides of your results, and offer guests special pricing if they sign up at the event.

Even your patients who are summering away from home will be glued to their phones, so don’t let your social media activity slip. If you haven’t tried Instagram Reels or TikTok yet, dip a toe in those waters to captivate new attention. Try a series of Instagram Lives on hot topics to stay engaged with your fans and followers. Increase your ad budget for mobile marketing to stay visible, as most people tend to browse when they are relaxed and not under stress.

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RENEGOTIATE CONTRACTS

If your practice sees a decline in patient flow and procedures and lower revenues during summer, it might be time to encourage employees to take some of their accrued paid time off (PTO). This will prevent an excessive accrual of PTO when it starts getting busy again.

Training should always be top of mind. This includes procedural, operational, and safety training. This is the time to ensure that your newer staff

is brought up to speed since you may not have had that opportunity to conduct formal training sessions when you were busy.

Evaluate your need for any capital equipment that has not been properly utilized. If you can add additional marketing to increase utilization of your lesser-used equipment, now is the time to do it, or else consider disposing of the equipment so it does not become a dust collector.

Look at when all of your licenses and contracts are up for renewal, so you don’t forget to renew them or get caught up in the automatic renewal cycle when you want to cancel.

Contact all of your vendors and try to renegotiate your expenses. Inflation has been driving costs through the roof, so renegotiating anything can help minimize all of the other price increases. ■

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