

Marketing Guidelines for Successful Spas

Identifying Initiatives That Work

Non Web-Based Initiatives

Are you overwhelmed by the choices available for marketing your spa? Laura Walker of Spa-Solutions has some suggestions for you. With over 20 years of experience as a spa consultant working with a significant number of clients including major hotel chains, medspas, salons, destination and day spas, she can help you sift through all the options available and choose those that will work effectively for your facility.

Walker notes that marketing initiatives tend currently to divide into two broad generic groups – non-web-based and web-based. Looking first at the former, she highlights a host of opportunities often neglected by spas of all sizes. “Invertizing” is the process of exploiting the myriad of opportunities available once a client has already walked in the door of the spa or made contact with the facility.

Ensuring all your services are advertised clearly in your waiting areas through a combination of posters, press releases, brochures, displays and looping videos is a low-cost, effective method of reaching your clients. This is an ideal time to introduce existing clients to services other than the one/s for which they came to the spa. Other types of “invertizing” include using a professional On Hold service to keep clients or potential clients engaged while on waiting on the phone for personal service. Statistics suggest 90% of callers hang up after 55 seconds if they have not connected with someone by that time.

Another important form of “invertizing” relates to the quality, friendliness, and comprehensive nature of the front desk service, says Walker. It is essential that each member of the front-desk staff be aware of all specials and marketing initiatives currently available or upcoming. Staff should not only be able to speak knowledgeably about any service offered by the spa but also always offer to book new appointments for clients.

Paperwork in all its forms - prescription pads, appointment cards, menus, consent forms, and referral cards to name but a few – should always promote an aspect of the spa services or environment.

Turning to ways to support your existing client base, Walker says practices such as sending birthday cards, thank you notes and holiday cards can all reap results. Similarly, referral and rewards programs, unadvertised specials, Friends & Family and corporate discounts can all stimulate sales. The purpose of these kinds of incentives is primarily to promote customer loyalty, meaning the client is less likely to go elsewhere at any point and more likely to provide excellent “word of mouth” advantages for the spa..

What should you do if you need to expand your client base? Walker is a great believer in the power of an Open House. She suggests you encourage all your invitees to bring a friend, family member, colleague, client, employee or even the whole department. Joint initiatives with a second enterprise, for example, a flower shop, gym, restaurant, boutique, or simply a business that’s nearby, not only save

money but also enlarge the size of the audience. This strategy also promotes good will in the immediate locale of the spa.

Another key segment of the market that spas frequently miss in their advertising campaigns is men. Men have become a significant and growing factor in spa statistics. They require special attention in the sense of generally being short of time and having a preference for a technological approach to their services rather than a “romantic” one.

The bridal market is also ever-increasing and spa treatments have now become integrated in to the gift aspect of many events along with pre-event preparations, day-of-wedding beauty services, and even as part of the honeymoon.

Yet another growth area in spa marketing is the merging of spa therapies with wellness themes such as health, nutrition, stress reduction and emotional health. There has been significant growth in the expenditure of disposable income on ways to enrich, enhance and improve one’s quality of life. Spa owners need to respond to this, notes Walker, offering desirable ways to meet these combined needs.

Regarding med-spas, Walker submits that the most important factor to clients is the relationship between length of down-time from a procedure compared to visibility of its results. The top three procedures identified through analysis related to this equation are laser-liposuction, fractional skin re-surfacing and liquid face - the use of multiple injectables to promote a youthful appearance. Walker suggests these procedures should therefore be at the top of a med-spa’s marketing efforts.

Finally, there is a plethora of marketing initiatives that can be applied in a hotel environment, for example, leaving a voice-mail welcome message to the spa for new arrivals, using chocolates bearing the spa logo for the evening turn-down and promoting the spa through the menu including an option for women business travelers to dine in the spa.

The list of marketing initiatives for spas is almost endless, but the vivacious and knowledgeable Walker offers consultations to help analyze your spa business and then assist in determining the optimum initiatives to maximize returns.