



In

PRACTICE

2010 A YEAR IN REVIEW

By Christine Lapointe, Contributing Editor & Advisor, & Laura Jackson, Aesthetics 360°

THRIVING PRACTICES WITH TOP LEADERS IN THEIR FIELD SHARE THEIR SECRETS FOR SUCCESS

HHeading into Q 1 we thought a summary which recaptured interview highlights from our “In Practice” column in 2010 was in order. We found the process became an excellent exercise in reminding us to never lose focus on core business development foundations. As you read through this edition of “In Practice,” we hope you will use it to help target the processes that may need attention and refinement in order for you to continue to build and sustain a profitable and world class practice.

COMMUNICATION

It is always interesting when we see our experts agreeing on strategies. We found an overwhelming emphasis in the industry for the necessity of defined and streamlined communication systems. The common thread

among our experts was that establishing a relationship with the patient through seamless communications remains the critical component in creating an environment which encourages long-term relationships. The concept sounds simple; but the reality is that the mechanisms and routines

“If you ask the right questions, patients will tell you what they really want.” - Alex Gross, M.D.

needed to create these strategies are often lacking, even in the best of practices. “If you ask the right questions, patients will tell you what they really want,” says Dr. Alex Gross of Georgia.

Quick reviews of suggestions are as follows:

- By asking the “right questions” and employing active listening to the answers, you can leave the guess work out of the equation.
- Listening to what your patients ask for will help you expand services to those areas your patients are looking for.
- Utilizing a team of people, each dedicated to their specific area of expertise, to educate patients leads to a much more productive consultation.
- Establishing a relationship based philosophy with patients will eliminate barriers, allowing clients to open up through their entire patient experience.



“My primary role is guiding prospective patients through the myriad of cosmetic enhancement procedures and interpreting the information in a personal context. Patients cannot successfully be treated without first establishing a high degree of trust and respect.” - Vincent P.

Marin, M.D., F.A.C.S., Marin Aesthetics

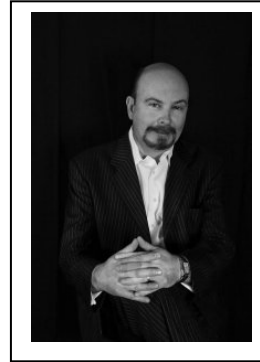
CHOOSING TECHNOLOGY

Throughout 2010, the approach in choosing the appropriate technology for the present yet also allowing for future needs in the practice remained a source of concern for all of our experts. Being able to choose the right equipment or adding to existing platforms at a suitable time was paramount for everyone we interviewed. Adding to the equation was the cost consideration and the ability to generate the revenue necessary to make financial sense. All the experts agreed it can become an overwhelming exercise.

Some highlights to remember:

- Choose technology that can grow with your practice

- With the right technology choices you can get along with minimal space requirements
- Determine the procedure that will offer the desired results weighed with risk, benefits, and down time



“When looking at lasers, for instance, you should ask yourself some key questions. How much space will you have in the beginning? Will you be able to add capability to an existing laser platform to increase your services without buying a whole new laser? Looking forward towards expansion when buying technology in the beginning will save you some headaches later.”
-Tal Raine, M.D.

THE RIGHT PEOPLE

While communication strategies and technology choices are high on the list of criteria for creating a practice poised for success, none of this matters without having the right team. Choosing the right people to represent the practice and deliver services is critical in nurturing the long-term relationships required for return visits and expanded services. Chelsea Eye and Cosmetic Surgery Associates summed it up quite well. “Just as there is a team of physicians who specialize in targeted areas, there is a team of staff members all with their specific areas of training.”

Creating the right team and keeping them committed to enhancing the patient experience is the challenge.

- Target staff education on areas such as phone skills, written follow-up communications, professional presentation, dealing with financial objections, retail sales training, and creating loyal patient ambassadors for life
- Include reviewing performance metrics and working backwards from these numbers on ways to achieve new goals. Use performance metrics to measure failures and successes. They should provide

information that can help to design and implement long-term systematic solutions to problem areas such as capacity and conversion rates.

- Do not limit training to staff only. Having the right people includes having the right physicians. Commit to quarterly strategic meetings with the doctors. Discussions should include volumes, growth, new products, goals, and talking points on services.



“Communication is key. Meetings are how we help the physicians to think about what we need to do from a business standpoint to secure their future.”
- James Dawes, Chief Administrative Officer, Center for Sight



“A significant positive impact to ROI can be expected because all prospects will be communicated to in a proper fashion, and conversion rates will improve. From an administrative point of view, the patient communication process can be managed better and the staff can be given the proper tools to work more efficiently. Changing the processes to increase better lead conversion will be easier, and there will be actual ‘metrics’ to measure success.”
- Onur Birsen, CPA, MBA, Chief Technology Officer of Glacial Multimedia

“Communication is key. Meetings are how we help the physicians to think about what we need to do from a business standpoint to secure their future.”

- James Dawes, Center for Sight

MEASURE SUCCESS

Setting up methods to measure all aspects of the client-to-patient process will assist you in creating long-term relationships. You will be able to better identify trends in both your marketing campaigns and your patients' purchasing patterns. The cost to retain a patient over the years is considerably less than the costs of continually attracting new ones. Cultivation and growth of your existing patient purchases should be one of your key priorities. Start with finding the proper contact management software program.

The program should:

- Solve a problem
- Generate revenue
- Be user friendly for the staff

We often refer to MDprospects' product slogan when discussing the functionality a tracking program you should have. “Capture, Communicate, Convert.”



GET BACK TO BASICS


The best systems are simple, and we often overlook the value of “getting back to the basics.” It is the little things which keep people returning to your practice, and it is easier than you think to find out what your patients want.

- Create a questionnaire along with an “intake” form which asks about areas of interest through a series of questions and list of services. Review the form *before* the interview with the client
- Send surveys - survey monkey is a great service, affordable and easy to use <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>
- Ask for feedback at every visit
- Remember to say “Thank You.” Send hand written thank-you cards
- Create a series of letters for follow up, confirmation of appointment, and financial concerns

- Monitor conversion rates from initial inquiry through consultation and services

CREATE THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE

At the end of the day, you might be the best surgeon with the best technology and the most experienced team; however, if the patients do not feel “good” about their visit, they will ultimately go elsewhere. Creating an environment which not only boasts a “world class” attitude but lives the mission is the key to sustaining any business.

Remember - it's not all about you or what makes things easier for you; it's all about everyone else. You must find the passion to make every patient experience a memorable moment to always make business better. 

References to MDprospects and Glacial multimedia

www.mdprospects.com | www.glacialmultimedia.com

References to Survey Monkey

www.surveymonkey.com

Remember – it's not all about you or what makes things easier for you; it's all about everyone else. You must find the passion to make every patient experience memorable moment to always make business better.



About the Authors

Aesthetics 360° was founded and is owned and operated by **Christine Lapointe** and **Laura Jackson**. Together, they bring their clients over 40 years of Business Development and Sales and Marketing Experience from the elective surgery industry nationally and internationally. Their mission is to provide a comprehensive range of services vital to the support of Technology Leaders and Physician-owned practices on their journey to success. Aesthetics 360° provides the systems and hands-on guidance necessary for practices to effectively measure results and target key areas for revenue growth from initial contact with a potential patient through long-term patient retention. Aesthetics 360° is the solution for technology leaders and practices that are committed to making business better. Contact them at 877.849.8216 or visit their website on the worldwide web: www.aesthetics360.com.