



Featured Physician

Tal Raine, M.D.

UNDERSTANDING THE KEY COMPONENTS TO A THRIVING PRACTICE IS WHAT MAKES THESE TOP LEADERS IN THEIR FIELD GREAT EXAMPLES FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESS

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A Glance into What Makes an Aesthetic Practice Successful

With more and more avenues available for physicians to enter the aesthetic market, it seems an appropriate time to start speaking with veterans in the industry who are willing to share their “best lessons” learned in the life cycle of a practice. This journey begins with Dr. Talmage Raine who is a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon in private practice in the suburbs of Chicago. With over 20 years in practice, he has also made the discovery of how beneficial adding a full service aesthetic side to his plastics practice can be.

As Dr. Raine will attest, the road to achieving his goals has encompassed many life lessons which have not always been easy to learn or openly acknowledge; yet, he believes in sharing these lessons with the industry. The advice offered in this article will benefit anyone thinking of opening an aesthetic center or those already in the

business looking to enhance and improve their practice. We had an opportunity to speak with Dr. Raine about what he sees as the keys to success and, if you’re not careful, where you can get tripped up.

INTEGRATION OF A COMPLETE AESTHETIC PRACTICE

Dr. Raine decided to add a full range of aesthetic services to his already successful plastic surgery practice. When questioned why he decided to expand into the non-surgical arena, his explanation was twofold. The most obvious reason to him was the constant advancements in technology now available, which are dedicated to producing better than previously achievable results through non-invasive avenues and the demand for non-surgical procedures consistently rising.

It was clear to him medical aesthetics was a business to place his focus. It also seemed a logical extension to offer a full gamut of services and not just dabble in aesthetics. The second reason was rooted from his ongoing desire to always develop a long-term relationship with his clients. As a surgeon, he chooses to not simply provide a medical service but rather to offer an expertise that is sustaining to both the practice and to the client.

By listening and engaging in the client's long-term goals, and not simply the present, he was able to create doctor-patient loyalty and long-term relationships. He learned the non-invasive procedures were and still are what his patients have been looking for as a starting point to their aesthetic journey.

Looking forward towards expansion when buying technology in the beginning will save you some headaches later."

STAFF & SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Space and staff requirements are almost always a challenge. Having set up small private ventures as well as large corporate ones, Dr. Raine has some interesting insights to share on this topic. "Something that is always a hurdle is the idea that you, as the physician, want to initially be the one to perform the procedure(s). What you quickly realize is that it is nearly impossible to keep up with the demand if you are also supporting a medical practice." Dr. Raine suggests having a medical aesthetician on staff. In fact, he believes it is a must.

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KEY SERVICES OFFERED

This brings us to some key services which Dr. Raine suggests a "med spa" needs to offer. He says that when you are adding these as a link to your surgical practices, you need enough services to encourage long-term relationships. You do not want to offer only a few services, thus having to refer your clients to others for the services which you do not provide. Skin care lines, hair removal, skin rejuvenation, injectables, and lasers are great basic services. Dr. Raine says it is also important to choose technology that can grow with your practice.

"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? Will you be able to generate the revenue necessary for this addition to make financial sense?

Having this key person on staff reduces the space needed to do procedures. In the beginning, Dr. Raine recommends two treatment rooms and a private area for consultations. One room should be dedicated for pure esthetics such as hair removal and skin rejuvenation treatments, and one room should be dedicated for injectables and laser treatments. With the right technology choices you can get along with minimal space requirements.

In terms of staff, having someone aside from the physician to do the injections is an advantage, not just from the artistic and technical skill set these people bring, but also from the patient bonding aspect. Dr. Raine has learned from past experience that having the right people and delegating some of the non-invasive services to the aesthetician is critical in nurturing the long-term relationship that is required for return visits and expanded services from each client.

How to foster long-term relationships and long-term revenue growth is the one lesson Dr. Raine says everyone working in an aesthetic practice should learn. He says to “Think Big Picture.” “It is much more important to see the larger long-term picture than to count the dollars generated at the end of each individual day. Look at the value of a patient long term.

“Every business venture is motivated by profitability, but the most profitable scenario is a long-term relationship with each and every patient. The cost to retain a patient over the years is considerably less than the costs to keep attracting new ones.”

MEASUREMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY

Dr. Raine recommends, and we could not agree more, putting into place internal processes which will allow a practice to measure long-term relationships and customer loyalty. If you are unable to measure what is going on internally, you will always be challenged when trying to produce positive change. You will be playing a guessing game. And in these challenging economic times, there is no place for guessing game strategy.

Processes which measure internal structure apply to everything from counting incoming calls and initial consultations to measuring the number of consults leading to procedures and purchases. It also applies to patient retention and repeat purchases. An example of conversion rate

Once you are able to measure, the next step is integrating a formal word of mouth program or patient loyalty program and measuring those results. Most of us believe the bulk of our patients come from word of mouth, but we are not formally encouraging or measuring that aspect of the business with a proper program. “More importantly, we are not measuring the number of patients who are doing the actual referring and subsequently losing revenue by not focusing on trying to increase that specific number.”



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measurement at its basic level would be: How many calls do I need to generate to produce “X” number of consultations to produce “X” number of procedures with “X” amount of generated revenue?

While Dr. Raine suggests making these technology, service, and internal system changes to enhance your practice, he also recognizes the great challenges which come hand in hand with these recommendations. He has lived it. “Most organizations and their staff inherently have some inertia where they become comfortable with their current services and systems. I have learned it is important to encourage a culture within your venture which embraces change versus challenging that change. Change gives you and your clients new opportunities for growth and satisfaction. Most importantly, share with your staff ‘Don’t be afraid to fail.’”

CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITMENTS

- Provide an atmosphere that allows for the best client experience possible at every point of contact from the initial phone call, through check in, check out, and long-term communications.
- Encourage staff to bond with clients for long-term commitments.
- Employ trained and knowledgeable staff for all aspects of the client experience from phones to treatments.
- Measure to Manage – measure all aspects of your business from call to consult and from purchasing trends to time between visits.
- Invest in proper technology and tools to give your team the ability to succeed.
- Create an environment which fosters patient loyalty, not transaction buyers looking for the best deal.

LIVING YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

And while there may be others who may be considering making similar changes to their practice, what will differentiate you from those practitioners who are providing similar services and technology is simple. Do not just tout your experience, training, results, and service. Every other competitor in the near vicinity can do the same. Live your mission statement. Show your patients what that training, experience, and service means for them. Guide them in their decision-making process and help them arrive at the determination they have chosen the right place and you can help them achieve their goals.

While technology continues to evolve and you will want to stay on the forefront of those changes, remember to not be tied to one brand of treatments or technology as the means for your success. Your success will rest in the ability to produce results and service beyond the

expectations of your patients. Engage in communications before, during, and, most importantly, after any services. Patients do not always expect it, may not tout it, but surely deserve it and will remember.

With the aesthetic market continuing to grow in both minimally and non-invasive procedures, the surgical market will continue to be increasingly competitive. To remain competitive offering choices and world class service that binds your clients to you, continue to make affordability a priority; but make the perceived value a result of commitment to your clients through relationship building service. **ATI**

About the Authors



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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 them on the worldwide web: www.aesthetics360.com.