

THE BUSINESS BREAKDOWN

Looking Good: Collecting Testimonials and Before and Afters

by Louis Silberman

If a potential client sees multiple glowing reviews about the services, it will reassure them that they have come to the right place.

Results are everything. In the aesthetics business, this is especially true. If clients are not seeing smoother, firmer skin as a result of services, they will not keep coming back for more. But, this is just step one.

Seeing great results or simply talking about them is only part of the picture. If a professional want to grow their business, then they also have to share great results. That is why, when it comes to getting the word out to new and existing clients, collecting testimonials and before and after photos and videos is absolutely essential.

1

DEVELOP A HABIT

There is a famous quote that goes something like this: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the next best time is now." Any professional should have been taking before and after pictures for every single treatment performed since they first hung up their open for business sign. But, if not, now is the time to start doing so. Plant that tree today.

There are so many reasons for taking before and after pictures and videos and marketing is just the tip of the iceberg. No matter how skilled or careful an aesthetician is, things happen. Clients are not

always forthcoming about the last time they used retinols or hopped under a tanning bed. Heck, there is even the occasional client who "forgot" to mention that they have just had surgery, who is on blood thinners or antibiotics, or who got Botox two days ago. When it comes to looking good, it seems like people are sometimes willing to take unnecessary risks. While that is a scary fact in this business, it is also a very real reminder that a professional should not be one of them: risk plus risk invariably spells disaster. As a business owner or service provider, professionals have to protect their interests and be able to cover any

potential liability. A simple before picture speaks volumes to the difficult client who insists that she now has a hole in her face because of the chemical peel that was given to her. This is not about he said she said – it is about good business practices in general. Professionals should look out for their clients and themselves.

2

WHICH ONES DO I SHARE?

One might think all of them – because any marketing is better than no marketing, right? Wrong. Professionals should not share any before and after pictures that do not clearly

demonstrate significant improvement. Before and after pictures where potential clients cannot really tell the difference between the two and need a magnifying glass to see whether they are missing something can actually hurt a professional's credibility, rather than help it.

So, whether posting on a website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or other social media or distributing pictures through marketing materials, the rule of thumb is: do not post or publish just for the sake of posting. Make sure it is something that will be viewed as miraculous – so much so that viewers will want to book an appointment right away.

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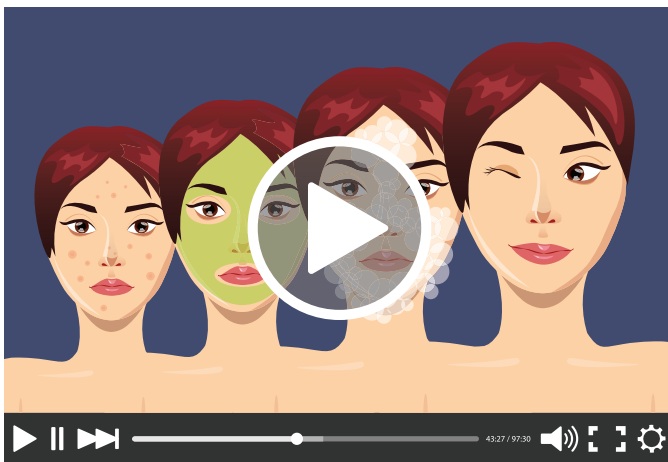
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3

GETTING PERMISSION

When taking before and after pictures or videos for every client, ask everyone to sign off on a form in which they give permission to publish their pictures. Again, only those that show amazing results should be shared, but having those signed forms in the client files will save many headaches, not to mention potential legal concerns.

Many clients are happy to share their images; others will do so only if their identities are withheld; a few will say no, and that is okay, too. Professionals can also offer an incentive as enticement, such as a free product or service.

4

THE POWER OF VIDEO

Videos are quickly becoming even more popular than still images. Videos feel more personal and interactive – the trick

is finding the sweet spot for optimal viewer engagement. In general, they should not be too long, too short, or too technical, though they should be informative and entertaining. Fifteen to 30 seconds is typically plenty of time to demonstrate the product or service being promoted. While one does not need to hire a professional to film the videos, keep in mind that the viewers will see everything and everyone in the treatment room, so it should be pristine.

A good question to ask before posting a video is, “Would I want to watch this?” It sounds simple but think about it. If the clients in the video look like they are bored out of their minds, would you want to watch it? What if, instead, they are having fun and talking about the procedure that is going on and the client is explaining how her skin used to be very sun-damaged and she was self-conscious about it and now she looks and feels so much better about herself? These are the types of videos that typically get more views.

5

OTHER TYPES OF TESTIMONIALS

While images are fast and powerful to the viewer, do not limit marketing efforts to pictures and videos alone. There are many other ways to share great results that will not cost a dime.

Written testimonials are perfect for a website, Facebook, or Yelp page, which many clients will access before making the decision to book an appointment. If a potential client sees multiple glowing reviews about the services, it will reassure them that they have come to the right place.

Interview formats are not only fun to either write or film, but can also be turned into blog posts, YouTube videos, or articles that could even be published in local magazines and newspapers. Come up with a list of five to 10 questions and ask favorite clients to answer them. Focus on the services where he or she got the best results, but also throw in a few personal questions to round it out. If filming the interview, practice a few times with the client before recording.

Speaking of getting published, many local magazines (both digital and print) and newspapers are hungry for personal interest stories with a feel good ending. Google the publications nearby and

check their websites for editors’ contact information. Do not be afraid to reach out and let them know about a unique story in which they might be interested.

Testimonials and before and after pictures are one of the easiest, least expensive ways to market a business. Do not hesitate to ask clients to help in this area. They will probably be happy to do so, and, in the process, they will underscore the professional’s credibility and capability a thousand-fold.



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