

Retention Marketing — How to Keep Your Patients Coming Back and Referring Others

How do you keep attracting new patients to your practice? How do you maintain connections with previous patients and keep their interest engaged? The answer is the same for both: by offering them something of value. But what, exactly? These two groups often have very different desires and reasons for wanting plastic surgery, so your marketing strategy has to be customized to each.

Keeping in contact with previous patients and drawing them back for additional procedures and services is a simple matter of offering value. The more they feel they are getting something useful, the greater the chance of retaining them in your marketing funnel.

Retention incentives can include:

- Discount coupons and promotional offers.
- Relevant and engaging content. “Value” doesn’t have to mean money; you’re offering something of benefit in exchange for their time and attention. Maybe it’s useful information, a humorous cartoon, a game or contest.
- A sense of participation in a collective community, whether it’s a social media challenge or an online discussion board.

Much of the retention marketing resources you’ll find online will talk about price incentives, which are not always appropriate for plastic surgery. Getting the lowest price and getting value are two different things; plastic surgery offered at costs substantially lower than the common price point carries no reasonable guarantee of safety or quality. However, a discount coupon of 10% off abdominoplasty may just be the “push” your next patient needs in order to finally take a step toward getting the [tummy tuck](#) she’s always wanted.

Obviously, plastic surgery is not a product to be urged on a skeptical buyer. But a patient satisfied with her [breast lift](#) may return to you later for [implants](#) or [liposuction](#). Another may be so pleased with the results of his mini-face lift that he follows it with [blepharoplasty](#) and a [forehead lift](#) to maximize the effect. The patient should always initiate the decision-making process; the more effort you’ve put into maintaining their attention, the more likely they will be to think of you once they’ve settled on looking into surgery.

Minimally invasive treatments, on the other hand, need to be performed on a regular schedule. Patients seeking [Botox](#) treatments, [dermal fillers](#), [laser skin rejuvenation](#) and [vein treatments](#) are ideal candidates for retention marketing. If your practice offers these, or medical spa services such as facials and [chemical peels](#), you can run occasional promotional discounts or packages.

And, of course, countless practices are built on a strong network of patient recommendations. In countries that permit plastic surgeons to use patient testimonials in marketing material, you can

publish feedback on your website (anonymously, if they wish). But people are busy, and they're not likely to remember to fill out a feedback form unless you remind them. Be sure to send out periodic encouragement to your email list, and include calls to action in every blog post and newsletter. Again, if your country permits reviews on public third-party websites, these are valuable for spreading the word about your practice. Invite patients to leave comments on your professional blog posts and social media sites. Remember, too, that in addition to the high-tech wonders available at our fingertips, there's still no substitute for word-of-mouth.