

The DOs and DON'Ts of Running Marketing Promotions to Attract New Patients

As a plastic surgeon, you offer a service that nearly everybody wants. More and more people all over the world are having plastic surgery, and even those who don't are often looking for some kind of aesthetic procedure. Still, they can only come to you if they know about you, and that's why it's essential to promote your services. Promotional offers are definitely not as easy as they seem. Should you rent a billboard? Take out ads in newspapers and magazines? What about social media? For a small-to-medium-sized practice with the right strategy, running a promotional campaign doesn't have to be daunting – or expensive.

To tailor just the right promotion for just the right service, follow these best practices:

- DO consider your patient base, and focus on their specific needs. If the majority of your patients come for facelifts, or Botox treatments, or liposuction, offer promotional discounts for those services. One-time coupons are best for surgery, while repeat services can be offered in packages.
- DON'T make promotions complicated, confusing or burdensome. For example, patients will perceive more value in an offer to Buy 4 Botox Treatments and Get the 5th One Free, rather than buying 10 before getting the special offer.
- DON'T base the promotion solely on price – remember, people correlate price with quality. They want to feel like they're getting a good deal for their money, not that they've paid lower rates for lower-quality services. Your promotion should emphasize the *value* of your service, not the price itself.
- DO promote value beyond price. What makes your practice unique? Is it the only one of its kind within a certain geographic area? Do you offer a product or service no one else does? Perhaps you, your staff, or your clinic have won awards, or have the most experience in a specific procedure.
- DON'T just run a promotion because you think you should – have a clear goal. What do you want this promotion to do, change, etc.? Gain new patients? Get more visits from existing patients? Promote a specific procedure? Educate the public about plastic surgery?
- DO time your promotions to coincide with seasons where they are in demand, such as around New Year's Day or Mothers' Day. Not only do people like to look their best for special occasions, but they may also purchase cosmetic procedures as gifts for others. If the procedure you're promoting requires a bit of recovery time, take that into account when timing the promotion.

- DON'T forget to promote your promotion! It's no good if no one knows about it. Announce it on social media, take out advertisements in reputable media, and email your subscriber list to make sure your target audience knows about your offer.

Remember, there's no single "correct" way to run a promotion. Treat your first few promotional campaigns as experiments, and adjust each one based on what you learned from the last one. Track results. Each time you'll be better able to track what is working and what isn't. You can also exchange ideas with your colleagues who have run successful promotions, and even ask your subscriber list what kind of services and offers they would like to see. With time and practice, your efforts will more than pay off.