

# MARKETING TACTICS YOU NEED TO CLOSE OUT THE YEAR IN THE BLACK



You can end the year strong with a little creativity.

BY WENDY LEWIS

**W**e can all agree that 2020 has been a year like no other.

The global pandemic has changed every kind of business from tourism, retail, and food service to medical aesthetics and elective procedures. A lot of industries have been forced to cut back on their marketing spend, or at least, have pivoted to exploring new channels and tactics based on consumer behavior. Some of these behaviors may have changed for the foreseeable future, such as shopping, scheduling, consumption, and tolerance for costs, downtime, and discomfort.

It's not just business as usual. Every type of practice is faced with revisiting their former marketing strategies to determine what patients may respond to now. So, on the eve of what has historically been the most lucrative period of the annual marketing cycle, it's important to consider new ways to plan for the upcoming holiday season with a fresh pair of eyes.

## REACH YOUR PATIENTS WHERE THEY ARE NOW

One of the most notable advancements over the past six months has been the escalation of digital communications and streamlined systems. According to McKinsey Digital, "The COVID-19 pandemic is a full-stop on business as usual and a launching pad for organizations to become virtual, digital-centric, and agile—and to do it all at lightning-fast speed."<sup>1</sup>

We must constantly adapt to new technology and changing consumer needs. Everyone has had to rely more on technology now, especially those who are working from home. From Zoom meetings to virtual consults and curbside delivery, aesthetic practices have had to pivot to keep their patients happy and their business thriving. We have come to rely more on technology to schedule, shop, pay, ask questions, and more.

Many practices have discovered new ways to generate sales through online product sales, packages, memberships, and loyalty programs that will continue to grow in 2021.

best options, and evaluate before making a purchasing decision. There will also be patients who want to splurge on themselves after going through this challenging year.

Use special days as potential profit-builders, such as creating holiday-specific promotional content for e-blasts and Instagram campaigns. Black Friday and Cyber Monday are good opportunities to feature limited-time product and service bundles, especially when combining bread and butter services or mini-treatments with more high-end treatments.

Take this opportunity to reassure your patients that you appreciate their loyalty and wish them a healthy 2021 in a humble tone of gratitude. This is also a good year to support a local charity to give back to your community. Send out an end-of-year eblast that concludes with, "A donation has been made to (fill in charity here) in your name" to help patients feel connected to your practice in a personal way.

## DETERMINE HOW YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FIT INTO THEIR WORLD

As the holiday season is fast approaching, it's crunch-time to make this the busiest and most profitable time of the year for aesthetic practices. Think like retailers do, and start early executing your plan and preparations.

Focus on realistic goals and create a detailed timeline to keep you on track. Review previous holiday promotions you may have implemented and tweak them to work post-COVID. If you offered a special package that brought in new patients, try it again or trade up to appeal to a fresh set of eyes. Digital gift certificates are always a good option, especially for someone who knows that their partner or friend has been dying to try an injectable or non-invasive body shaping treatment.

The holiday season is prime time for targeting your most loyal patients in an appreciative rather than hard-sell way. Consider adding subtle no-touch holiday decor to patient areas, use branded shopping bags, pretty ribbons, or glittery tissue paper for product purchases. Give your retail space a refresh and display popular skincare gifts already wrapped to stimulate gift purchases and make it easier for staff.

Virtual events can be very effective to boost your business. Organize or participate in cross-promotional events solo or with upscale salons, shops, or other professionals like cosmetic dentists. Any opportunity that gives you a chance to educate an audience on the hot trends in aesthetics (and weave in the treatments/procedures you offer) can be a win for your practice. The goals for a successful virtual event are to promote a particular product or treatment and drive new patients to sign on for virtual consultations and finally into your practice. This can be an effective way to effectively communicate—and resonate—with current and prospective patients. For example, try a "Party Prep" event and use #PartyPrep2020.

Rather than impulse sales, this year patients may be more likely to do some research and gift more carefully. They may identify who to put on their list, search online for the

## STAY NIMBLE

The world will always keep changing and marketing trends come and go all the time. Stay flexible and pay attention to these ebbs and flows to stay nimble so that you can handle any unexpected changes that you run into. ■

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1. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/how-six-companies-are-using-technology-and-data-to-transform-themselves>

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