

Marketing Guidelines for Successful Spas

Positioning and Planning

You have a beautiful spa facility, but your customer base doesn't seem to be growing and some of your customers visit once and don't return. What can you do to turn things around and not only increase the number of your customers but also keep both new and existing customers coming back to your spa?

Laura Walker of Spa-Solutions.net has some suggestions for you. With over 20 years of experience as a spa consultant working with a significant number of clients including major hotel chains, wellness centers, medspas, salons, and destination and day spas she can design a marketing plan specifically tailored for your business with the fundamental objective of increasing your profits by applying a number of proven strategies.

Walker says the first thing any spa owner, regardless of the size of their facility, must review - and hopefully confirm - is what she calls the, "Unique Selling Point (USP)" of the business. She says, "If an owner doesn't know where they're positioned in this spa-saturated marketplace, they're in trouble. It's essential that the USP - or we could say the DNA - of the spa permeates every aspect of the business from the design of the entry foyer down to the look and feel of the of the linens."

Assuming the image being conveyed aligns with the services being delivered, the next step, according to Walker, is a determination of precisely who represents the facility's ideal clients. If you know who you're targeting with your marketing, Walker argues, it makes the process more effective and efficient and, in turn, less expensive.

Once you know your clients in terms of their geography, spending patterns, income, and spa usage habits, a review of the existing marketing plan should follow or, if necessary, the actual design of a new plan.

The majority of businesses - in fact, it is estimated the number is as high as 97% - do not have a business plan. Stressing, "A plan is the cornerstone of any business," Walker adds, "Without one, a business flounders." She emphasizes a plan is essential in order to control costs and evaluate whether any particular marketing initiative is valid, explaining, "If you spend x dollars on a marketing campaign and receive y responses, but fail to record how many of those responses turn into sales, then you don't know your ROI (return on investment.)" Walker states firmly, "If you don't know your ROI, you aren't in a position to know what is and what is not working financially from a marketing point of view."

Once a marketing plan has been created, it is not something to be filed away in a bottom drawer, says Walker. She encourages not only its frequent review - daily in some cases - but also its regular revision to meet changing needs and circumstances.

Analysis of the return on various marketing initiatives allows the owner to determine which should be continued and those that should be dropped. The ability to determine what brings clients through the door and what brings them back is critical to spa business success. Also critical is the "open-eye

approach” to new marketing ideas. A business that is holding only to its tried and tested marketing methods may maintain its market position short-term, but is unlikely to grow, and long-term is likely to find its market share decreasing.

Having determined the optimum initiatives, the next task is to work them into a Marketing Calendar says Walker. This serves many purposes, from keeping all employees on track with which promotion is current to ensuring no special occasion, such as Mother’s or Valentine’s Day, passes without being exploited from a marketing perspective. The calendar can also be published on the spa’s website and communicated to clients through e-blasts.

Walker’s message is straightforward – know your business, position it correctly, make a business plan, change it when required and, most importantly of all, follow it. This approach allows spa owners to focus on what brings their customers through the door and how to encourage their – and their friends’ – return, while also increasing both the frequency of re-visits and the level of expenditure at the spa.

If a spa owner is uncertain about his or her market brand or considering changing it, a consultation with Walker would be immediately beneficial. Spa –Solutions.net can assist with any or all of these phases of branding the business, determining the client base, or preparing the business plan.