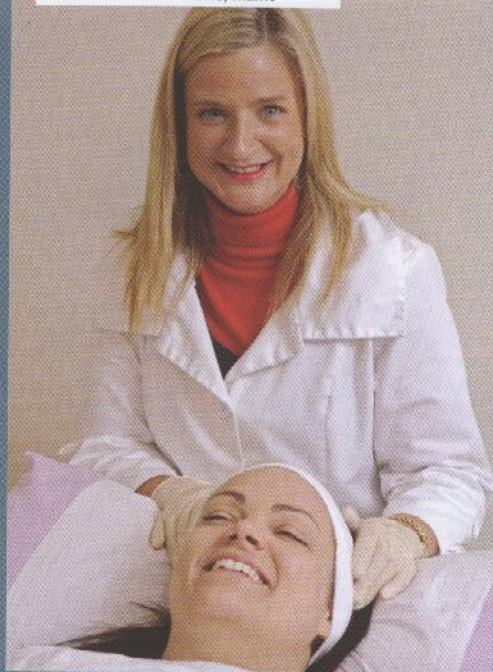


Anne Devenport performs the IS Clinical Fire and Ice facial at MBNS, Thame



BEAUTY BOOSTERS

We look at how introducing beauty treatments, like advanced facials to your menu, can add value to your clinic

A few years ago the gap between beauty salons and medical aesthetics clinics was vast, but now many clinics are realising the added value of offering less invasive, more pampering treatments to their menu. Although statistics have shown that consumers are continuing to spend money on looking and feeling good, despite the current economic climate, many clinics are still feeling the pinch with clients coming back less regularly for botulinum toxin and fillers, or holding off on having more expensive procedures. While the medical aesthetics industry is feeling this less than the cosmetic surgery industry it is still vital. In times like these, to set your clinic apart from the opposition and keep your clients coming back time and again. When times are tough, there is nothing that makes people feel better than a bit of pampering and so it makes sense that to help your clinic stand out from the crowd you need to be offering consumers treatments that fit this mould.

THE SPA FACTOR

One of the most effective ways to do this is to make sure you are offering your clients an 'experience'. Gone are the days where carrying out injectables and laser treatments in a clinical environment was enough. Consumers today want more and with so many clinics popping up in every major city and town they can, and will, shop around. In recent years many aesthetic practices have embraced the medi-spa concept. Visitors to medical and dental practices are no longer being greeted by the sparse interiors and smells that so typify NHS clinics, they are greeted by the aroma of essential oils, soft relaxing music and a waiting room that looks like something out of the pages of an interior design catalogue.

When Dr Bob Khanna built his plush new dental spa in Reading he realised he would be missing a trick if he only offered dentistry and injectables. With three dedicated beauty rooms, the clinic has a specially branded DrBK Beauty treatment menu including waxing, spray tans, massage and advanced facials using SkinCeuticals products. "My concept was to create a really nice tranquil spa-like atmosphere", explains Dr Khanna. "I didn't want patients coming in here feeling intimidated because it looked like a clinic or hospital. Patients are nervous enough when they are coming in for dental or non-surgical treatments so when you walk in here it smells nice and there is a nice ambience with music piping through sound system. It is much more of a relaxing space."

BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES

By creating these spa-like environments clinics are able to blur the boundaries between what are seen in the eyes of consumers as more invasive treatments and holistic therapies.

The success of the medi-spa concept in the US is testament to the fact that this business model works. The Hurlingham Clinic and Spa in London was set up with this philosophy in mind and offers a whole

spectrum of treatments from body wraps to cosmetic surgery. Its signature facial is the SOS Soothing facial which costs £110 and is designed to hydrate and soothe sun damaged skin. The facial includes an assessment of the skin's condition, allowing the therapist to personalise the facial and recommend an individual skincare prescription.

EF MediSpa also follows this mantra and has recently been promoting its Intensive Hydration Facial for pre and post holiday skin. The treatment costs £250 and involves applying vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and hyaluronic acid serums to the skin. It lasts for more than an hour and clients are recommended to take home the Results RX 'Factor Infusion Programme' along with sun protection from the SkinCeuticals range.

One of the reasons this works is the fact that, for many consumers, medical aesthetics is a relatively new concept, whereas regularly attending their local beauty salon or spa to have a facial, massage or get their nails done, is not.

There is a huge percentage of the beauty going public who are interested in, but nervous about, non-surgical treatments and these people are all potential new customers. By offering them treatments, such as a results-driven facial, incorporating medical evidence based cosmeceuticals, you are enabling them to dip their toe into the pool of medical aesthetics and giving them a chance to see what your clinic is about without bringing out any of the treatments that carry the 'ouch' factor. This can be a great way of up-selling clients to other treatments as it takes away some of the fear and anxiety associated with walking into a medical or dental only practice.

Dr Khanna has made this one of the philosophies at his new practice, getting his therapists to do the initial consultation with new clients and educating them about all the other procedures offered at his clinic.

"For me adding the beauty side was purely a business decision", he explains. "It is not what I make my money from but I believe if you provide a good service then that is your USP. You have to appreciate that medical treatments are not for everyone so you need to broaden the scope of what you offer. The girls meet with the patients and talk to them about what they concerned about and what they want to achieve. This works well as they can talk openly in a relaxed environment to the therapist before they see me and it gives me a clearer picture of what their concerns are. There are things that a patient will tell the therapists that they wouldn't necessarily feel comfortable talking to a clinician about. It's a great synergy and doesn't compete with what I am doing - its added value for clients."

RESULTS ORIENTATED PAMPERING

The key to making beauty treatments work in a medical setting is by offering results driven treatments that are not purely pampering. Always ahead of the game when it comes to being business savvy, the team at nurse-led clinic MBNS in Thame have long realised the benefits of combining these two philosophies. They were the first clinic in the country to introduce the IS Clinical Fire and Ice Facial, known in LA as 'The Red Carpet Treatment' because of its instant brightening, lightening and smoothing effects.

"We started doing the facials about 18 months ago", explains clinic manager and trained beauty therapist Anne Devenport. "It is a little niche thing we offer clients in addition to the other treatments we do and it has been incredibly successful. It is not just a pampering facial as the products really do have an effect however it is a nice relaxing treatment. It is about giving people an experience, which is what makes them loyal to you."

In fact, the team has embraced this concept so much that the nurses also incorporate some of the facial protocols into their medical treatments, using the cleansing treatment beforehand and applying the IS Clinical ProHeal serum afterwards.

SkinBrands has also realised the potential in targeted results-driven facials and earlier this year introduced the HydraFacial to the UK. Popular in the US in glamorous locations like the Bellagio Resort and Spa and Caesars Palace Hotel, Casino and Resort in Las Vegas, the treatment integrates cleansing, exfoliation, extraction and hydration and is backed up with scientific studies which show how it effectively and safely improves skin quality by increasing thickness, repairing the dermal matrix and delivering beneficial antioxidants.

"HydraFacial is the closest thing to a spa treatment that gives results than I have seen", says Martyn Roe of Aesthetic Business services, who worked closely with SkinBrands in launching the product. "It has a very high patient satisfaction, is very non-invasive, has no downtime and is popular with men, mainly because of the extraction."

HydraFacial can be used as a stand-alone treatment but is also an effective tool to use pre and post more aggressive or abrasive procedures. It also enables you to carry out the SkinMedica Growth Factor facial treatments, which involve a proprietary mixture of human growth factors, cytokines, soluble collagen, antioxidants and matrix proteins.

Pampering is the name of the game when it comes to advanced facials



HydraFacial simultaneously cleanses, exfoliates, extracts and hydrates the skin at the same time as delivering potent anti-oxidants into the skin

PROFIT POWER

By adding treatments like advanced facials to your clinic offering there is not only a huge potential for cross referral and up-selling but also for increasing your retail sales of cosmeceuticals and mineral make-up. Beauty therapists are not afraid to talk about and sell products, something which many physicians struggle with when making the leap from the NHS into private, profit driven practice.

"Doing the facials gives me a chance to talk to the clients about the IS skincare regime", adds Anne. "I use the products during the treatment and talk to them about the products. It works really well." Dr Khanna agrees. "We never do pressure selling," he says. "But there is definite a benefit in offering beauty treatments in terms of up-selling and retailing."

Another big advantage of these value-added beauty treatments is that they do not cost you a lot of money and do not conflict with the more medical treatments on your menu. "HydraFacial is very cost effective for the clinic as it only costs £8 per treatment", says Martyn. "It also increases take home sales of skincare." They also enable you to run promotions and offers that may not be suitable or ethical to do with more medical treatments. "I don't discount on botox and filler treatments because they are medical however you can give away a treatment like this to your clients as a complimentary gift", explains Marea Brennan Thorns, one of the founders of MBNS. "We give a complimentary facial to everyone who comes in for Sculptra® treatment. Treatments like that can be quite uncomfortable for the patient so you want to make the experience as pleasant as possible. Often after they have had their complimentary treatment they enjoy it so much that Anne sells them a course of treatments."

Dr Khanna also uses his treatments to encourage customer loyalty. The clinic has a star patient every month who receives a complimentary treatment. "It is about building loyalty and saying we are thankful for your business", he explains. "If you provide a good service and give people that little bit extra, they will tell friends and there is no better way of getting new business than word of mouth."



The HydraFacial system (SkinBrands) can be used as a stand-alone treatment or as a pre or post treatment enhancer