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I Spa: Spa Branding for Beginners

By David Evans, PhD, MBA



Medspas experienced a boom between 2007 and 2009. That quickly turned to bust for many when the recession hit, but today they're back. Medspas offer Botox injections, fillers, laser hair removal, and even tooth-whitening in a luxurious and soothing environment.

As ever, the decision to open a med or medspa is a big one—one that requires significant investment—and the branding and marketing of your spa can make or break it.

Both branding and marketing depend on how the spa is set up. Some medspas are adjuncts to established aesthetic surgical practices and are marketed as such, while others have completely different names, logos, color schemes, and websites from the main practice.

Here are some pointers on how to market your spa online:

Google+ Local: Keep It Simple

Google+ Local listings are the five to seven listings at the top of the Google search results page. These have become very important for generating traffic. Google+ Local's algorithm works by identifying the physical address of a local business and ensuring that this location is unique for an individual business.

If your spa is located at the same address as the main practice, don't create a separate Google+ Local page for the spa. Google can become confused when it detects two different businesses at the same address. When this happens, the search giant will likely not rank either the practice or the spa. Another potential snag: Local pages are tied to a practice's websites, which means that a duplicate address could affect the rankings of your practice websites as well.

Don't Cross-link – Cross-promote Instead

It is tempting to cross-link the spa and practice websites through the navigation. For example, Botox may appear in the navigation of the main practice's website, but when a consumer clicks on the link, he or she ends up on the spa site—one that has a different look, feel, and color scheme. This is confusing for patients and Google alike.

Cross promotion is a better bet. Create a page about your spa brand on your practice website, and link to the spa site from that page. Another option is to create buttons promoting your brand, and link to the spa site with those buttons. Any linking strategy must be transparent. Patients and Google must realize that they are leaving one site for another.

Split Up Your Social Media

Your Facebook strategy should reflect your dual branding. Two different brands need two different Facebook accounts and strategies. Using one Facebook page for both brands is confusing, particularly when the colors, logos, and branding for the practice and spa differ.

If you or your staff don't have the bandwidth to manage two Facebook accounts, think about co-branding. Add

the name and logo of your practice on the Facebook header to eliminate any potential confusion if your Facebook strategy predominantly focuses on your spa brand.

Invest in the Spa Site, Too

Optimizing a separate spa site is a task in itself. A spa site has to have its own online identity, including unique content and a separate strategy for building citations and links. In many markets, spa search terms such as "Botox + market" are more competitive than surgical procedure terms like "breast augmentation + market." Don't expect the cost for search engine optimization or the resources required to be reduced because you have two sites.

Your main practice site should rank for your name, particularly when the spa branding does not include your name. For example, if the practice name is "John Smith MD Plastic Surgery," but the spa brand name is "Your New Beauty Today," the main practice website should be top-ranked for your name. Here's why: Prospective patients are more likely to click on a Google listing that is immediately identified with their search term. If the top-ranked site does not connect with your name, they may become confused and move on.

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