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Reasons Why  
You **Do Not**  
**Have** Enough  
Aesthetic  
**Patients**



## **7 Reasons Why You Do Not Have Enough Aesthetic Patients**

*By Dr. Harry Singh*

So, you need more patients... but how do you get them?

In a nutshell... marketing, marketing and - you guessed it - more marketing!

Let's explore the top 7 reasons that may be holding you back from growing your customer base.

### **Reason One - Finding the Ideal Patients**

Firstly let's explore your target market, do you know who they are? Knowing who you want to attract to your practice is one of the most important aspects we need to consider upon opening a new clinic. We may have the perfect array of treatments, offered at a competitive price point and within the best environment; but if no one knows about it then the business will not flourish. In this section we will explore who your market is, by asking:

- **Do you know your target market?**
- **How do you ensure they see you?**

Your target market:

You want to be a big fish in a small pond. There are two parts to a target market – the demographics and psychographics.

1) With **demographics**, you're looking at the following:

Family - are they single or married? Do they have children? What age are they? Try segmenting into decades. What about their location? What's their gender? Answering these questions will help you to create an avatar of your perfect patient. To develop this further, explore the questions below...

- What keeps them up at night?
- What are their fears and concerns?
- What do they value?
- Why should they buy from you?
- What benefit does your service offer?
- Why do your clients buy from you?
- Where are they now and where do they want to be?
- Do they have the money?
- Do they trust you?
- Are they looking to buy right now?

- Why would they go to your competitors instead?

Products and services don't sell themselves. There's no such thing as "If you build it, they will come." That was a smart (but misleading) line from a movie, but in the business world, working out who your market is, how big it is, and how you will talk to them is everything.

My formula for success is in three simple steps:

- Find out what they want
- Go and get it
- Give it to them

No matter what business you're in, if you stick to these three principles you will succeed.

The first step is to figure out what they want. You must know where your patient is in pain and be able to prove to yourself that your service solves their problem. No one will buy anything if it doesn't meet some need.

If the market is too narrow or small, it will limit the potential size of your business. If the market is too broad, it's hard to focus (jack of all trades and master of none). The key is to find a manageable, specific, targeted niche. Without a targeted niche, you'll see that you will be trying to cater for all – a recipe for failure.

Here are some perfect examples of standing out in the crowd and reaching your target market. Nike sells attitude. Asda sells "everyday low prices". They have successfully identified a niche in the market and have a focused marketing strategy. They all have potentially huge markets. They have differentiated themselves from their competitors with their positioning in the marketplace.

Who is your target market and does your brand and marketing material appeal to that target market?

2) With **psychographics**, you're looking at their lifestyle – their social activities.

Find the people who already buy from you and look for proven buyers. Where do they spend money already (theatre, restaurants, gyms, spas). How can you piggyback onto this?

You want to turn suspects (potentially interested in your services) to prospects (definitely interested in your services) to patients (will purchase your services right now and have the capacity to do so).

Joint ventures with people with the right database rather than the biggest database. With your target market, there are two types:

The primary market – as we said, you want to be a big fish in a small pond, so you want to do a laser focus. Have a niche and focus on this. These are the most accessible people to sell to. For example, our primary target market was females between 25 and 35. These are the kind of people who are interested and willing to pay for our facial aesthetics services.

Then you've got a secondary market, which is larger, but more general. What you will need to do is have different marketing strategies for each market. If your primary target is women, you would have a particular ad and copy you would explicitly use for them. If your secondary market was men, you would have different ads for them. Master your primary market initially,

and then you can target your secondary market. If you don't have a target you can't hit it – and you won't know if you hit it.

## **Reason Two - The Message**

**In this segment we explore the message. What should you be saying to reach your audience? Is that message resonating with them? Will they remember you? Generally speaking, the audience, you want to reach have a problem, that you have the power to solve. You want to offer a unique solution so that they choose you over the competition. You address any issues or concerns they may have and resolve them to reassure them and show that you are the best solution. Let's explore.**

### ***1. What is the problem?***

We only seek a solution or buy something if we have a problem that needs solving. If you look back at any purchasing decision, you will find that purchasing that particular item solved a problem you once had.

Therefore, the first thing we say should relate to a problem that the potential customer may be facing or thinking about. Obviously we don't want to embarrass that potential customer by suggesting that, for example, they don't look good or may need some botulinum toxin. Instead, we should make our first statement very general and not directly personally at them.

My opening line would be something like, "You know how some people are concerned about fine lines and wrinkles..."

Note how I have used 'how some people', thus not necessarily directing the statement towards them. However, it broadens the appeal of my offering, because now they will start thinking about their friends and family, who may be concerned with fine lines and wrinkles, as well as themselves.

### ***2. Why is the problem a problem?***

I often find that many people seem to need a lot of motivation before taking action. Generally speaking, we are either pleasure seekers or pain avoiders. We will have one dominant over the other, and most of us will be a mixture of both.

Pain is almost always a stronger motivator for action; we will take more action to get away from pain than to seek pleasure.

Therefore, we want the person we are talking with to consider the consequences of taking no action. My statement would continue with, "You know how some people are concerned about fine lines and wrinkles, which means that they appear older than they are?" Because people don't necessarily want to look younger; rather, they just want to look good for their age. This statement should resonate with the person I am talking to.

### ***3. Your unique solution***

Now that we have addressed what the problem is and the consequences of taking no action, we should consider the solution. The biggest mistake you can make is to sell too early and in

too much detail. The action we want that potential customer to make is to call us for a consultation. We are not selling the whole treatment plan on the first visit – build trust first, solve a minor problem/concern for them, before jumping into a full-face treatment plan.

We, therefore, want to make our solution very generic to overcome anticipated objections. If we can overcome objections before the person starts thinking about them, there is likely to be a much higher conversion rate.

#### ***What objections could come up concerning, for example, botulinum toxin?***

It could be the fact it's a toxin, which may raise concerns about safety, or seeing unnatural or frozen results. As such, we should address this in our next statement, perhaps by saying, "I offer gentle, natural and safe results."

You can see that the statement is very non-specific, because, as stated before, we are not selling the details, but the opportunity for them to come and see us for a consultation.

#### ***4. Why choose you?***

Next, we want to look at what makes you stand out from the competition. This could be your profession, experience, location, specific qualifications or skills or equipment. "I have been doing this since 2002," would be a good statement to make next. Also, you could reference that you offer a treatment that no one else offers in your local area. You are looking for your USP – unique selling proposition.

#### ***5. A call to action***

Lastly, but most importantly, we want the person to take action easily. We also want to broaden our network and encourage them to pass the message to family and friends. To end, I would say, "If you know anyone who might be interested, here is my card."

This introduction is the **elevator pitch**. This should take no longer than 30 seconds. Here it is in full:

"You know how some people are concerned about fine lines and wrinkles, which means that they appear older than they are? Well, I offer gentle, natural and safe results and I have been doing this since 2002. If you know anyone who might be interested, here is my card."

Doesn't this sound much better than saying "I do botulinum toxin?"

#### ***How to write compelling copy in your marketing literature***

The old and tested acronym of AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) still holds true today. By creating curiosity, you will get opportunities which will lead to marketing success.

Also, make good use of hidden bullet points. Look at the two sentences below; one will have a much higher conversion rate than the other.

- 'How to reduce patient complaints'
- 'The 4 Ps that will significantly reduce patient complaints'

It goes back to curiosity. Arouse their curiosity, and you will gain their attention.

## Reason Three - Patient Needs

**In this section we will look closer at what needs you are filling with your marketing, as well as developing marketing plans to attract the right prospects to your business.**

### **Are you meeting the patients and prospects needs?**

Marketing is about the patient's needs, not yours. It's not about how fancy your logo, brochure, or the website is; it's about the patient, their problems and how you can solve them.

Marketing is communicating with the public in an attempt to influence them towards buying your products and services. It's about effective communication in who you are and what you do. Marketing is a process, not an event. It has a beginning and a middle, but not an end.

Marketing is everything you do and how you do it. From the way you answer the phone, greet the patient, decor, team, your image – everything. Marketing is everything you do to communicate who you are and what you do

The greatest marketing challenge is the clutter factor. The costs of marketing have tripled, but effectiveness has halved. There are two parts to this activity.

The first is the initial contact – this is critical to the success of any marketing activity. Patients will make a snap decision of your promotion, branding, offer within seconds, and if it not remarkable or fails to stand out, you will be lost within the dire clutter they are bombarded with on a daily basis.

The second part is ongoing and can be summed up as TOMA, which is Top Of Mind Awareness. A lot of your patients will need timely, regular reminders of your facial aesthetic services.

Here's an exercise for you. Name a soft drink, a fast-food chain, a luxury car manufacturer. Most of you would've said, "Coca-Cola" or "Pepsi", "McDonald's" or "Burger King", and "Mercedes" or "BMW". The reasoning for their continuous spend is that when you are ready to make that purchase, you will call them first.

Without the initial and ongoing marketing, you will not attract patients to your services. You may be the best clinician, have outstanding customer care, have the patient's best interests at heart, but without them knowing about it you won't have any patients. However, the opposite is also true. If what you are offering is substandard, then all your marketing efforts will go to waste.

“Don’t expect customers to flock to you. Success is not an entitlement. They, like the rest of the world, don’t appreciate new ideas easily. Good things take time to come. You have to see that customers, like every other hurdle you pass, i.e. bankers, suppliers, will not buy into your vision initially. It won’t be easy at the beginning. You’ll need stick-ability. Keep focused, and you will succeed.”

~ Bobby Hashemi and Sahar Hashemi, *Anyone Can Do It: Building Coffee Republic from Our Kitchen Table*

**Marketing and advertising can be considered conservative investments.** They are not miracle workers. They are not magic formulas. They are not instant gratifiers. If you don’t recognise that marketing is a conservative investment, you’ll have difficulty committing yourself to a marketing programme.

For example, let’s say you buy a share in a company. After a few weeks, it decreases in value, but you don’t sell it. You hold onto it and hope that its value will increase, and in all likelihood, over the long-term, it will. Such is the nature of any conservative investment.

Look at marketing in the same way. If it doesn’t produce instant results, it’s because most marketing doesn’t. If it does produce instant results, excellent, but don’t expect it to.

You need to have a yearly marketing plan. Planning your marketing month by month means it can tie in with special events such as Valentine’s Day or Mother’s Day, so you have a systematic approach to what you’re going to market, when you’re going to market, and who you’re going to market to. You need to have a structure to it. Stick with a plan and commit to that plan.

Then you need to look at your budget; it is essential that a marketing budget is established. It’s normal for a new business enterprise in the first year to set the marketing budget as a percentage of gross turnover that you expect to generate during this period. This will come from the detailed financials in your business plan.

The budget for the following year could be a percentage of the forecast net profit, the thinking being that in year one, you have to invest in creating patient awareness of the new venture. The marketing budget has to cover all of the expenditure that goes into launching the business and the ongoing requirements to create and maintain local patient awareness of the treatments available.

Once there is an opportunity to obtain financial support from some activity from the manufacturers, you must expect to invest the practice’s funds into the marketing budget. Once established, you must reread the budget on a monthly basis and justify any piece of expenditure as there will be several different media to use. **It’s very important that every patient is asked where they heard or found out about the practice** or your facial aesthetics treatments. This will make media selection and planning for the second year much more cost-effective. Again, the team must be responsible for keeping a database of the responses to this key question.

Test everything. Split test different ads: change the headline, colour, text, photo, copy and see which one performs better. Then disregard the worse performing marketing tool and split test again the winning one.

I am always looking outside my industry to see what has grabbed my attention, what has stopped me in my tracks. I keep a scrapbook of adverts that have caught my eye. If it can work in one industry, then it can work in mine too.

Marketing is critical to your success. Right now, your competitors are currently trying to come up with new ways to take your patients!

## **Reason Four - Medium**

**Medium refers to what message delivery system you will use to reach your market with the correct message. These can be both internal and external marketing, meaning you don't neglect a patient or customer group. Let's look at this in more detail.**

### **Are you using the right medium to reach your target market?**

Medium types can be divided into internal marketing, external marketing, internet marketing and social media.

Internal marketing is great to get your patients back in for further treatments. It will be your preferred methodology to attract patients. It will be the lowest cost and provide the best return on investment.

Let's take a look at the numerous internal marketing strategies we can use.

- Medical skin questionnaire - a great way to see what other treatments patients could also be interested in.
- Treatment menu - design a grid. On the left put common skin concerns a patient may ask about, and on the right, put the possible solutions. During the consultation show the patient and engage with them about the 'troublesome' areas. Having it as a physical document helps to reinforce.
- Before and after pictures - both physical and digital.
- In-house promotional material: branded posters, patient information packs, separate price list flyer.
- Free report - an educational document that is given to all new patients about how to avoid premature aging (for example). Shows you as an expert.
- Pamper evenings.
- Facial Fridays/feel-good Fridays. Every Friday run the facial aesthetics practice as a beauty spa. Offer discounts on the day, and all treatments have to be pre-booked and pre-paid-for.
- Birthday vouchers - to be used on their next treatment, for a limited time.

- Feedback forms - ensure you are on top of everything, counteract any possible complaints before they occur!
- Treat your team for free - they're ambassadors for your practice. Many patients will ask them about treatments.
- Awards - why not host an annual black-tie event to celebrate your patients and your team members. Judges are local contacts you would like to do business with.
- Email newsletters - educational and promotional. Don't just do promotional, recipients are more likely to unsubscribe if they constantly face offers. Constant offers also can serve to devalue your brand in the eyes of your audience.

Lastly, make sure you measure the results! There is no point in doing any of the above if you ignore the results you get. To ensure we all build successful practices and create patient brand ambassadors, we need to know what is working and what is not. This will inform our future marketing.

## **Reason Five - New Patients**

**Getting new patients into your practice on a regular basis is no easy feat. It will also cost you more time, energy and money to achieve. Here are some top tips to reach out to potential new patients.**

### ***Consider joint ventures***

Joint ventures can result in the greatest number of new patients and, as a bonus, it is the least expensive 'external marketing' way of attracting new patients. Try working with local hair and beauty salons and of course dentists (that do not offer facial aesthetics).

### ***Wedding Fairs and tradeshow***

You could either have a stand at a wedding fair or local trade show, or do a bag drop with flyers about your services. Don't forget to capture data!

### ***Interviews***

Give opinions or interviews about aesthetics on local radio, published articles, blogs, or even TV! Some research is needed to find the best places, but this is a great way to raise awareness of your business. You could also look into using adverts, try to couple them with editorial pieces for example.

### ***Pamper evenings***

Invite patients and prospects. Hold talks about different treatments, invite questions, ensure people feel at ease. This is a great way to get people into the clinic and take away any unease they may have about the treatments they are considering. You could also raise funds for a charity, a great way to increase support for them and to get some local PR out of

the event.

### ***Networking***

As well attending formal networking events, consider creating your own networking or 'mastermind' group. I invited potential partners I wanted to work with in my local area to meet once a month to discuss how we could promote each other, any new services we were offering and what specifically we were looking for - whether this was a particular group of patients or a contact we wanted to speak to.

### ***Webinars and podcasts***

There are many myths and misconceptions that the general public may have about facial aesthetics. Undertake a live webinar where people sign up, listen to you and have the opportunity to ask questions. A great data capture tool!

### ***Public speaking***

Local business groups such as Rotary and Chambers of Commerce are always looking for speakers. If you volunteer yourself, it will add enormous exposure to your business.

### ***Direct mail***

I don't recommend a scattergun approach unless you are starting out and have no patients. If you do have a patient list, look for clusters in the same location and provide targeted drops of direct mail. When designing your material, have a strong headline that captures their attention. Go through the elevator speech discussed earlier. Have a call to action and a reason to respond right now.

Combining several of these together can be a great way to create awareness of your practice, elevating you as a local expert in the facial aesthetics field.

## **Reason Six - Everyone is Online**

**Ensure you have multiple online platforms, each interlinked with one another. This can be a great way to maximise your reach in the digital space. What's next? How do you locate your audience?**

Firstly, let's understand why our patients and prospects go online? There are three primary reasons people go online: (1) to read something, (2) to get information for free – to look for instruction or to buy a hard commodity or (3) to find out how to do something. You must understand the context and the state of mind in which people use the internet.

So, you've decided to do some online marketing. You can divide this into three sections:

- Website
- Traffic

- Conversions

## **1) The website**

First and foremost you need a well designed, SEO optimised and image led website. This will be the main place you will want to send traffic to. Ensure there are plenty of CTAs (Calls to Action) such as an email address, phone number and perhaps a contact form. You want people to contact you after all.

### ***List building strategies***

Offer a free report to the visitor in exchange for giving up their contact details, so that they are signed up to your sales funnel. Be aware of GDPR compliance regarding opt-ins.

### ***The sales letter/copy***

You need to have a clear message which is above the fold. 'Above the fold' means everything they can see on the screen without having to scroll down. You want that tagline or whatever message you want above the scroll, in the top half of your website.

### ***Video marketing***

You can optimise videos, upload them on YouTube, embed them in your website and enhance your visibility on the internet

### ***Landing pages/microsites***

A microsite is a landing page with only one call to action, normally for a visitor to leave their details to receive a free report. Do make it more than one page as Google rewards content rich websites.

### ***Website optimisation***

Certain keywords and links can be used in the text to enhance your rankings on search engines.

### ***Opt-ins***

Use some opt-in which captures data. This could be, for example, filling in their name and email address in order to receive your e-newsletter.

### ***Website analytics***

Your website provider will set you up with a Google Analytics account to see how well your website is converting.

Use the following checklist to see how well your website is performing:

- What is your call to action and is it strong enough?
- How quickly does the website load on desktop and mobile?
- Do you have social proof?

- Do you have white space?
- Is your privacy policy shown and do you comply with regulations?
- Do you have links to social media?
- Are you showcasing your awards?
- Is it about the patient rather than about you?
- Do you have a lead capture?
- Is the contact information easily accessible?

## 2) Traffic

92% of the search traffic is through Google; 80% click-on organic and 20% click-on pay-per-click.

Paid services are referred to as pay-per-click (PPC). With paid search, an advertiser pays the search engine to display its ad on a particular search results page. Each time a searcher clicks on the ad, the search engine charges the advertiser's account a certain amount per click.

Bear in mind that, currently, you cannot use the word Botox® in your pay per click campaign, so think of alternatives such as: muscle relaxant, anti-wrinkle, or line softening.

### **PPC**

There are rules to **PPC** to get maximum return for the least amount of investment:

- Always set a budget.
- Set match types, such as a word, phrase or exact match.
- Negative or excluded keywords - make sure you don't end up paying a lot for wasted clicks.
- Keyword research to find out what people are searching for.
- Create 'ad groups' by grouping your keywords. An ideal situation is to create a group of keywords and set up one ad per group.
- Write your ads, using the keywords in the ads. Get bold with words. Always split test several ads to see which gets the best response, and then you pay less for higher CTR.
- Create your landing pages. Send all pay-per-click ads to individual landing pages, not to Facebook, blogs, etc.

### **SEO**

Ensure you have optimised your written content on your website with the key phrases that have high search returns. Less is more. Don't dilute your website with too many, it will make your SEO less effective.

Claim your Google Business Listing. Then encourage Google reviews.

### 3) Conversion

The third part of online marketing is conversion. When we're talking about conversion, we're talking about: building relationships, developing your sales funnel, one time offers, up-sells and down-sells, cross-sells, testing and clicking, sales process optimisation, webinars, creating your products, continuing team membership products, affiliates, teams, autoresponders, mobile marketing, and joint venturing.

Webinars are an excellent way to educate your patients and build up your list.

### Reason Seven - Social Networking

**Online social networks are where a large proportion of your patient base will 'hang out.'** If you are not on social media then you are missing them. Now that you are on these platforms, how is it best to attract and speak to your prospects or patients online?

I have a 'rule of three' for all my posts, irrelevant of which media channel I am using.

**A third of my posts are educational**, something along the lines of 'how to reduce premature ageing' or 'how to look after your skin in the summer.'

**A third of my posts are personal.** If someone has got married, engaged, pregnant, gained a qualification. That's why we are on social media: we want to know what's happening in other people's lives.

**A third of my posts are promotional**, introducing a new service, or a special promotion we may be doing.

Ensure it is not all promotional. Viewers will feel it's spam and either turn off or not bother reading.

***The main channels are:***

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Blogging
- YouTube

***Regulators have produced guidance regarding professionals and the use of social media:***

- Be professional at all times.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Take care not to breach patient confidentiality.
- Respect patients and colleagues in your comments.

Let's explore those main social media platforms:

### ***Facebook***

The important thing about sites like Facebook is that you have to be committed to updating your page regularly so that you keep people interested. From the personal touch, to promoting a free event hosted online, it all makes a difference. And I've done both in the last few days.

Regarding choosing your content, select an engaging picture and get the most critical information into that first sentence.

Also think about creating communities - Facebook Groups allow people to join together around a common cause, issue or activity to organise, communicate objectives, discuss issues, post photos and share related content.

You could set up different groups for patients, suppliers, local business networkers and strategic alliance partners, for example.

### ***Twitter***

Twitter is an excellent place to pick up the latest trends, celebrity gossip and find out what's trending in the world of facial aesthetics. Twitter works well to provide the 'grapevine' effect.

### ***LinkedIn***

LinkedIn is a great way to educate and connect with local and national businesses and individuals. Grow your business by becoming a thought leader.

### ***Instagram***

Images create powerful stories and calls to action. Showcase your work and use hashtags for your business. I get many referrals through Instagram.

### ***Blogging***

This is primarily used for SEO purposes because Google likes content. However, as mentioned at the top of this section, we want a third of our posts to be educational. You can repurpose the content and use it in your social media posts and newsletters.

### ***YouTube***

Another excellent way of increasing conversion is by creating videos. Keep it simple and use minimal editing. Keep them short; attention spans are very limited these days. I suggest no more than a couple of minutes. Don't forget to check your lighting and sound.

Choose topics that work for your target market, your message, what your customers are searching for and what questions they might have.

Videos help your SEO rankings because Google owns YouTube. You want to insert the video directly into your website and blogs, but also have it uploaded to YouTube and have the relevant keywords embedded so Google can discover it quickly and easily.

## Social media tips

My tips on social media are as follows:

- Find out what people are talking about.
- Join groups that your ideal patients belong to. What are their concerns and fears?
- What problems do they want solved?
- Look at what's being said about your business, you, and your team.
- Respond to likes and comments, engage, be social.
- Promote other people and give value

Don't think social media will be your end-all. Social media is global. It builds relationships, and it's free. The bad news is that it's free, so everyone is online, and there's a lot of noise. You have to be strategic to break through and reach your target audience. This can be done but works best hand-in-hand with other marketing methods, to create an omnichannel experience.

## The summary

In summary, map out your marketing using the 3 M's: market, message and medium. Don't neglect online or off. Find out where your patients and prospects 'hangout' and hangout there too! Ensure your messaging and tone of voice is appropriate to attract and keep the attention of your target audience. Then once they are engaged through your marketing activity, make sure that you keep them interested through your phone calls, emails, consultation, treatment, environment and follow up activity. Engaged patients are brand ambassadors and can create a buzz for your clinic through word of mouth and referrals.

## About the Author



Dr. Harry Singh has honed his aesthetic practice since 2002. Harry has a wealth of understanding on what works, and what doesn't in a cosmetic business. He shares that journey and aims to help you on your journey. Learning to 'let go of the handbrake', take risks, and drive yourself forward can be the hardest decision when running a business. We are all naturally risk-averse, yet Harry teaches you how to grab that steering wheel, put your foot on the accelerator, take off the brake and drive your business where you want it to go – into the fast lane. It's scary yes, but with the tips and tools that he provides it means that you have the best co-driver you could wish for.