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SUMMING AND CELLULITE

USE ESTABLISHED EVENTS TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS. GO TO SLIMMING CLUBS, POST-NATAL MEETINGS AND BRIDAL FAIRS*

Slim chance

You may have your January detox promotions sorted but if you analyse your market and learn from client feedback your reservations book could be packed all year, writes **Rachael Glazier**

January is the natural time of year for clients to turn their thoughts to losing weight and slimming – and it is also exactly the right time to start thinking about how to promote slimming and cellulite treatments later in the year, when customers will once again be fighting to shed pounds in preparation for shedding clothes on the beach in summer. Talk to clients now to see what would motivate them to kick start their slimming or cellulite-treating regime with you next time.

A targeted approach to these types of treatments over a few months can be very effective. If you introduce them to the idea of slimming therapies now they may look and feel like they are looking to shed weight, says Angela Barbagliata-Fabes, chairman of The Carlson Group, which manufactures tanning machines.

"In the New Year many will be looking for these treatments anyway so it is a great time to bring their attention to existing or new treatments, couple with taster sessions," she adds. Promotional evenings are also a good way to boost interest.

Stay focused
Promotional activity should always have a clear focus if you want it to be successful, and the way to do this is to research. January is the perfect time for

this, so get cracking. Gill Morris of QMT Business Training suggests: "Analyse why people want to lose weight – when you are doing your consultations ask them what has triggered their interest. The main reasons will be a wedding, to look good in a bikini on holiday, a new lover or a special event. This should be mirrored in any advert or advertorial because that is what your clients will pick up on." An additional advantage of doing this research is that you can establish whether the treatments you offer reflect what clients actually want.

As well as talking to them, analyse the data you hold on clients. "What age are they?", says Barbagliata-Fabes. "How affluent are they?" These parameters help to define what offers and marketing mechanisms will work for your salon or spa in your locality. What language or visuals you use for your marketing and offers should depend on your client base – their age and interests. By talking to clients and asking your clients how they will measure with them and be more likely to take them on board."

Supplier support
Check you've identified what demographic of client will potentially be interested in looking slimming treatments with you, you need to create your marketing materials. Never feel that

you are alone in producing these. Your suppliers will want to help you, as Dean Subramaniam, managing director of CNCI, explains: "We have a team of regional business development managers to give business advice and assist salons with promotional events. Our in-house graphic designer will help salons design bespoke advertising and marketing campaigns."

Don't forget to ask suppliers for any case studies they may have, especially if they include before and after pictures, as well as any relevant statistics, because as Renata Indacochea, export area manager UK for LPG Systems, points out, "The beauty market is incredibly crowded, with some treatments promising miracles, so it's important to distinguish yourself by providing scientifically proven and effective results."

You may also want to consider what effort the companies willing the machines or products put into marketing them on a national level. Trish Tsai, owner of Hidden Secrets in Clapham, says, "I have noticed a reduction in wax bookings and facials are even more hot. Internal Customer Wrap slimming treatments are consistently booked up because the PR coverage it gets gives a real boost and creates new clients."

Be sociable
Social media is a growing area, and one that can be particularly helpful in promoting treatments such as slimming and cellulite therapies that require a course. Zoe Parnham, director of social media and PR specialist Boutique Communications, says: "Tools like Facebook and particularly Twitter are essential for a business looking to build a relationship with customers beyond the salon. By investing time in interacting online you can run promotions quickly and cheaply and ongoing conversations encourage loyalty and attract new

customers. On the flip side another salon in Newcastle did a Groupo offer with a 60% discount on the first three Celli sessions and they booked the uptake to 200 clients, 20% of whom went on to book additional treatment sessions."

Converting clients
To convert the people who take up an offer into regular clients, Barbagliata-Fabes advises that clients must go away feeling that they have had an effective treatment that is good value for money, as well as good customer service. "Consider CARE: Customer service; Affordability; Results; Expertise," she adds.

Marketing slimming and cellulite packages involves more than offering to the salon, creating word-perfect brochures, signing up to daily deal sites and tweeting special offers. It may sound old-fashioned but you need to get out of the salon and meet people. Morris recommends using established events to promote your business. Go to slimming clubs, post-natal meetings and bridal fairs – anyone who shares your target audience. "You've got to think about who will benefit from your service – where do they go, where do they congregate – and take a touch broader look. Think about the audience. For example, is there a particular clothing shop such as Evans nearby that you can team up with? Or a friend about having a charity event you can team up with?"

Trade fairs fit, new product development manager for Salon Systems, agrees there is a need to get out and meet potential clients, adding: "Chairs such as Slimmers World usually have a 'Slimmer of the Week' or rewards for reaching goals. Salons could give a reward voucher for a discounted treatment or free product with every course of treatments booked. Try to find out who the area managers are and ask to present your treatments and products at one of their team meetings."

You've invested in slimming and cellulite products, equipment and training, so take the time to research your clients and plan an effective, multi-channel marketing strategy if you want to ensure the best return on your investment. **PH**

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THE INSIDE TRACK
Lorena Perrella, manager of the Advanced Nutrition Programme, believes that a holistic approach is imperative for salons wishing to promote slimming and cellulite treatments, pointing out the good skin comes from the inside so offering a nutritional supplement along with beauty treatments is logical. "I think salons are missing a trick and almost doing a slight disservice by not including nutrition. Clients come to beauty salons because therapists are experts," Perrella has a similar viewpoint and offers salons and spas its 302° beauty approach, where it links its treatments and nutrition products together for improved efficacy, as well as creating an extra revenue stream for the salon.

Abuse
Carlton
Professional
Before
Cell
International

A good book that explains how businesses can best use social media to build loyalty, sales and brand awareness is *This is Social Media* by Guy Chapperton.

Another recent development is the use of daily deal websites. Carl Carlton, manager of The Beauty and Laser Clinic in Ringwood, Hampshire, sees Groupo, Mahanda and Lastminute.com every month to offer discounts or free products to business customers, but while such sites can generate a fantastic response, salons must recognise that this type of promotion is normally a loss leader, in that it is not designed to make money but rather to attract new clients to the business.

"It's crucial to set realistic limits on the number of clients that you are able to cope with taking up promotional offers," he says. "An owner of one salon that did not set a limit on a Groupo offer and had over 2,000 clients take it up. They simply couldn't cope with the



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