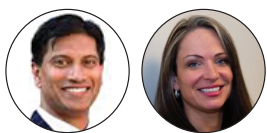


# Strategies to Grow Your Medical Dermatology Practice in 2019



Focus now on options to propel practice growth for years to come.

BY SUNEEL CHILUKURI, MD AND KIMBERLY CAMPBELL

>> The start of a new year is a great time to reflect on what is going well in your practice and to focus on some options to propel that growth further in the years to come. Everyone working at a dermatology practice—from the employees to the physicians and owners—makes choices that can enhance your business, your brand, and your service. In an ever-changing industry, patients want to see that their practitioners can adapt.

Planning for growth does not have to be intimidating, especially when you come at it from a place of positivity. Review the previous year and ask everyone in the practice for their opinion on areas that can be improved. As a successful medical centre, your practice and you are already working diligently for your patients. When you focus on and fine tune certain areas that define your practice, you will really notice that extra boost of growth.

Develop goals for growth and figure out the steps to achieve them. Are there new ways to do what you already excel at?

## CHOOSE NEW TOOLS

Ensuring your patients get the best experience possible requires assessing all aspects of communication and treatment. From booking their dermatology appointment to follow up after the procedure, you want your patients to get what they need throughout the process.

Look into new tools to make each step of the way pleasant, safe, and inviting. See if there is room for improvement in the medical practice's operations, including technology, apps, electronic payment, and other innovations that make it easy for patients to review and share their experiences.

What are your current outstanding payments? More physicians today are requiring a credit card on file. Patients initially

may be resistant to this concept but often find it to be more convenient in the long run. Your check out desk and telephone operators can remind patients that many other industries such as hotels, airlines, and restaurants require a credit card on file. Do you want to require a deposit when booking certain procedures, such as a surgery or laser procedure? You may find that your no-show rate decreases when you require such deposits.

Are you currently tracking and reviewing phone discussions? What is your team saying to new and established patients? If this task seems daunting, consider adding a phone number specifically for new patients. Review phone conversations at least once a week to coach your phone operator(s) on how to improve. You may quickly increase new patient/procedure appointments with a little fine tuning of verbiage.

Update your referral system to encourage patient participation and follow up. Look into recommendations to manage systems more efficiently. Little changes can make a big difference.

## ACCEPT FINANCING

Consider financing your growth plan. Whether it is a new location, a renovation of your current practice, or even just

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equipment for expanding your dermatology services, there are often funding options for your specific needs. As well, many jurisdictions offer tax breaks and other incentives for medical practice growth.

There is a high demand for dermatology services, and accepting financing allows you to provide that service to a growing number of people. With funding often comes connection and direction, so you can work with organizations and professionals who want your business to succeed.

### SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

Growth options for your practice don't have to be monumental, either. Small steps like adding supplemental services can provide increased benefit to your clients and the practice as a whole. Take some time to see how you can help build relationships among patients, partners, and other businesses.

Consider outsourcing recruitment, payment and other services so you can focus on medical care. Or offer a compatible service that is new to your practice to expand how you can help each patient. Also consider specific events to raise awareness about health issues or partner with local charities.

Add in unique benefits and promotions for your patients. Sending or giving gift cards to a referring patient or for a birthday, holiday, or special event (or even on that patient's anniversary of first coming to your practice), will go a long way in patient retention.

Also, review the products you sell, ensuring they are relevant to your patients and your practice. Update your product sales to focus on providing solutions. Begin to think like the patient who will be using them. Supplementing your services with products works best if you use a personalized approach.

Take some time now to devise a strategy for marketing to new and existing patients while managing your online presence. Market the benefits and solutions of your products and services. Patients are looking for results, so provide specific information on the benefits of each of the products available.

In order to grow your practice and increase sales, develop a practice-wide system. Having patients receive the exact same advice from every member of your practice will result in more consistency and efficiency. Also, be innovative in what you offer and be sure your staff is educated to share the benefits of procedures/services with the patients they see.

### ADD A NEW LOCATION

One of the best ways to achieve growth in your medical practice is by opening a new location. This option allows you to do what you do best for more patients. Many larger centers can accommodate more than one location, or a secondary community nearby may be a good fit.

When looking into a new location, focus on what you have

to offer. Then plan out how you see this additional site working:

Will you see patients a few days a week at each location or will you hire an entirely new set of physicians and support staff?

Is your current location at full capacity?

Will you use the new location as a satellite office that refers certain procedures, such as Mohs micrographic surgery and lasers to your main location?

Is the new location going to centralize some current patients? For instance, some patients who are currently traveling a long distance may change to the new location. Evaluate the radius from which patients are traveling to see you. If you do not feel like you are attracting new patients because of your location, consider adding an office at another site.

If you want to see a younger population, research which part of town has the greatest growth of families with younger children. If you want to increase your skin cancer population, see which part of your city has the greatest number of retirees. Hint: to identify growth, determine where new hospitals or banks are being built.

How will you be staffing your new location? Many times, you are your office's brand. Will you be traveling to the new location? Do you have a partner or associate who is willing to work as hard as you are to build that new location? Do you have team members that are already traveling from that area who would be happier with a decreased commute? Many dermatology practices often find it beneficial to outsource some of the administration, especially as they add a new location.

### RENEGOTIATE RATES

Annually make a list of all your rates—from leases to services—so you can consider negotiating something better. Often you can receive discounts for long term commitment. There might also be memberships or organizations that can help you streamline and reduce rates overall.

### THE FOUNDATION

At the heart of your growth plan is the successful medical practice you built. This is the foundation for everything moving forward. By matching your service excellence with your medical skill and intuition to a growth plan that fits your needs, you will be in a position to provide for your patients' changing needs. ■

*Kim Campbell is Founder CEO of Dermatology Authority, which is the leading matchmaking agency for the dermatology market. She can be reached at DermatologyAuthority.com or call 800-577-0125.*

*Suneel Chilukuri, MD, FAAD, FACMS is Director of Cosmetic Surgery and Chief of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery at Refresh Dermatology in Houston. RefreshDermatology.com*