



# The Power of Profiling

Julia Kendrick outlines how database mining and a tailored marketing approach can yield valuable results for your business growth

**With limited time and resources, many clinics are unable to launch a big marketing campaign to boost business.** This easy step-by-step guide will help you to grow your business by using tools already at your disposal. By mining your patient database you can identify key patient 'profiles' and group these according to certain criteria. These will allow you to maximise your existing marketing approaches, significantly growing your business and optimising patient retention – without a big marketing campaign.

We know there's a significant thought process and consideration period behind every patient's decision for treatment. Sometimes, just getting through the door has taken months, if not years, and this is only half of the challenge. Once the first treatment is

complete, a key issue facing practitioners is patient retention – how to keep these patients coming back. Whilst securing new patients is always a plus, the smartest strategy may be to channel resources into reconnecting with existing patients – maximising this base of patients who have already made that 'big step' into the clinic. First, however, you must establish exactly which groups these patients belong to create an organised and clear system.

## Maximising the database goldmine

**Patient profiling:** This is where your existing patient database comes in: a potential goldmine of information. If maximised correctly, your database will allow you to reconnect with patients in a targeted way to

grow your business. Patient profiling involves reviewing your database and categorising patients based on key criteria. Clinic marketing is then tailored appropriately for each of these groups, maximising the chances for hitting the right 'consideration spot' for each patient. Firstly, ensure your database is fully updated with patients' details. This should include a visit log, treatments conducted, whether further treatments were booked and when they were last contacted by clinic marketing. The more detailed the records, the better you'll be able to appropriately tailor communications that meet patients' needs. An easy way to categorise the groups is to identify what proportion of your database are 'first timers' (i.e. one visit to date), 'loyal customers', or 'lapsed patients' (not visited clinic for a year or more).

## Categorising your database

**1. FIRST TIMERS:** This is where you need to build loyalty to help your business grow. This group has visited once, but are at the highest risk of 'drop off' – i.e. not making another appointment. This could be due to a range of factors such as cost, convenience, and satisfaction with treatment results. Ensure you consider what each individual patient's first type of treatment was when attempting to reconnect with him or her. Those who came in for their first advanced facial or a wrinkle-relaxing treatment may not be ready for some of the more advanced and complex facial or body therapies on offer. Help them along that consideration pathway slowly and steadily.

### Some ways to reconnect:

- **Touch-up reminder** – timed to encourage patients to maintain the best effects from their initial treatment type.
- **Seasonal theme** – discounts on their first treatment type or closely related clinic offers tied in to relevant milestones such as Valentine's Day, Summer Skin, Bridal, Back to School, etc.
- **If you liked X, you'll love Y** – Suggest a linked treatment which they might consider for next time. You could potentially incentivise this treatment with a discount offer.
- **Invitation to a clinic 'behind the scenes'** – an open evening

to showcase some of the other services on offer and answer potential patients' questions. You could also encourage guests to bring a plus one.

- **Loyalty programme** – maintain their interest with offers, exclusive discounts and priority bookings.

**NOTE:** Ensure all offers comply with industry guidelines to ensure they are responsible, do not trivialise aesthetic procedures and do not put patients under pressure to buy treatment bundles or act within a limited timeframe to secure a discount.<sup>1</sup>

**2. LOYAL:** When assessing this patient group, you need to explore how you can increase value per patient. These patients are your highly valuable repeat clientele, who require consistent great service to ensure their return. They are generally more comfortable with aesthetic treatments and are likely to be more receptive to new therapies on offer. They want the 'VIP' approach – to be the first to hear about the latest innovative treatments on the market. By acting as a trusted source, you will increase their engagement with your clinic. Consider offering exclusive sneak previews of forthcoming treatments, priority booking and bundle offers on the latest treatments alongside their 'usual'.

### Some ways to connect:

- **VIP birthday gifts for your top 20 clients** – let them try another



treatment that gives a great one-off result, but works even better when they undergo a course of treatments.

- **Newsflash** – exclusive sneak preview of a new therapy on offer at the clinic. Give priority booking or discounts to loyal patients.
- **Hot off the press** – share snapshot of the beauty trends / latest treatments unveiled at key congresses that are coming soon to your clinic. Perhaps send email newsletters offering advanced bookings, discounts or bundle offer with their usual treatment.
- **Invitation to an exclusive taster event** – for a new treatment or technique, encourage them to bring a friend.
- **Refer a friend scheme** – provide an incentive for loyal customers who refer a friend.

**3. LAPSED** – This group represent a huge untapped opportunity to grow your business. You don't know why they have disconnected – it could be due to cost, fear of side-effects or social pressures – but it's your job to bring them back with effective marketing messages. Use your clinic team to reconnect with them to find out whether they are likely to come again. Phone calls are preferable to emails as they offer a more personal approach, and I would always recommend developing a Q&A for your staff to use should any negative feedback arise. It could comprise details

regarding cost, convenience of service or treatment satisfaction, including adverse event reporting, which would entail informing the manufacturer and the MHRA Yellow Card Scheme of any unexpected or negative side effects described in relation to a product or procedure.<sup>2</sup> Once you have established which patients are still keen to return, you can remove patients from your database who are either not suitable, or unwilling to have further treatments. For the remainder (hopefully the majority) incorporate feedback and address any concerns in your tailored communications.

#### Some ways to reconnect:

- **'We miss you – come back' offers** – acknowledge the time since their last visit and give an exclusive 'come back' offer or discount relating to their previous treatment or to an entry-level therapy.
- **Since you've been gone** – highlight latest treatments/new offerings now available since their last visit and provide an incentive to book again. Potentially tie-in an exclusive event just for lapsed patients.
- **Unveiling The 'New Natural' Look** – highlight latest non-invasive treatments with 'safety' oriented messaging to reflect gentle, non-permanent effects for a refreshed and rejuvenated appearance.

#### The right message for the right group...

When your database is optimised and your patients profiled into clear categories, you can start tailoring your marketing tools to deliver the right messages to these key groups. There are several different channels open to you – emails, post, texts, social media – providing you tailor messages to each group and avoid a 'blanket' approach, these can be highly successful communication tools. Whichever 'channel' you use, ensure you adhere to some key principles for the content; keep communications short and focused (less words and more pictures to retain attention), make sure the format isn't too large and is compatible across all electronic devices, ensure the distribution list is hidden in emails and check that your clinic details are clearly visible.

#### Go one step further...

Additional content options to consider including in your communications could include videos. Directing your patients to your clinic channel for new videos is great for profiling your clinic team, and easily measurable via views. Patient case study testimonials can also be shared via video, or, alternatively, a written format. Testimonials work as a powerful tool to highlight results that can be achieved through certain treatments and emphasise how good the patient feels afterwards. This can reassure those unsure about a procedure. You must ensure, however, that you have full patient consent prior to sharing their image, quotes and videos. Arguably crucial for marketing are before and after images, which may encourage potential patients to make a firm decision on treatment.

Unfortunately, image editing is increasing scepticism surrounding photo authenticity. Make sure your images truly reflect the great results of treatment by using original images, and ensure they are correctly aligned to show the same angles of the area treated, with a plain background. It is also worth highlighting the fact that no image editing has taken place and full patient consent to use the images was obtained. Then, utilise these images through social media marketing. By incorporating these strategies into your clinic and examining your database goldmine, profiling your patients and tailoring your communications, you can truly pave the way to increased business growth and optimised patient retention. By personalising your connection with your patients, you will strengthen loyalty, building trust for long-lasting relationships.

#### IN PRACTICE:



"Having just launched a new clinic in Beaconsfield, most of my database are 'new' patients looking for information about my treatments and services. I have therefore profiled them by age and sex, to ensure my marketing communications are as tailored as possible to their needs."

**Miss Sherina Balaratnam, founder of S-Thetics Clinic, Beaconsfield**



"Being an established clinic, we have focused on 'lapsed' patients, using e-mail with a telephone follow up a few days later. An offer of a free skin health assessment encourages patients to come back to see us, and they are then offered the opportunity to sign up to our monthly payment plan, which has been very successful."

**Dr David Eccleston, clinical director of the MediZen Clinic, Birmingham**



**Julia Kendrick** has ten years of experience in public relations and communications, and is the founder of new start-up Kendrick PR Consulting, a bespoke strategic consultancy service specialising in medical aesthetics and healthcare PR.

#### REFERENCES

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