



The social revolution has changed the way consumers make purchasing decisions.

Long before they step through your doors, they're researching your skin care facility online, looking for a glimpse of what they can expect: What are your services? Do you have any deals? What's the experience going to be like? Is anyone recommending you? Can they book appointments online?

Here's the thing: They aren't looking at just one site for this information. They're looking in a variety of places. Will they find you there? Are you online in all the right places?

To pinpoint where best to position your facility online, consider how your future clients might search for your services. They'll likely use their computers and mobile devices to track daily deals related to beauty and massage, check out online reviews of spas and search for spa services. Following are a few tips about how best to ensure your spa is where your future clients are searching.

DAILY DEALS

Deal sites such as *Groupon* and *Living Social* send daily deals straight to consumers' phones, as well as their inboxes. *Groupon Now!* adds mobile to the mix by geotargeting your deal to a consumer's location.

If you are considering working with a daily deal site, make sure to:

1. Be prepared to handle large volume by carefully considering the parameters of the deal (time of day/week, duration, etc.) and choose a time when business is typically slow;
2. Consider your current, loyal clients—don't make them feel less important than those redeeming the deals; and
3. Have a way to capture couponers info and a retention plan you can implement immediately after they visit your location.

Couponers are coming to your business because of a relationship they have with a third party; however, this is the chance to build your own relationship with them. It may be tempting to simply leave a sign-in sheet at your front desk for them to fill out on their own, but consider this an opportunity to win them over with your stellar customer service. Be friendly! After you've welcomed your new client, ask if you can include her contact information on your mailing list for future specials and events. You can easily add info into your computer via your customer relationship management (CRM) program or spreadsheet. If you have one available, you could even encourage clients to fill out their own information on a tablet device. Regardless of how you log the info, be sure to capture your new client's name, e-mail address and telephone number for future outreach.

After their visit, follow up with couponers to establish yourself as their go-to service provider. Give them an opportunity to rate their experience either via survey or an online review site. Offer them another promo, such as a thank-you offer designed for new clients—a holiday special, product discount or combo services. Encourage them to follow you on your social media sites, enticing them with exclusive deals offered just to this particular audience. Encourage clients to join your loyalty program or bring a friend next time for a joint discount.

ONLINE SEARCH

Be your own target consumer and search for services like yours online. Does your website show up relatively high and on the first page in the search results? If not, update your site's content to include words and phrases that people are likely to use when searching for your services. Check Google Analytics for a list of the top keywords currently used in searches that drive traffic to your website.

Google Analytics is free and works with any website. To set up your own account, simply go to www.google.com/analytics and click on "create an account." You'll sign up using a Gmail account, which is also free to set up. Then, go to the settings page and access the how-to guide for coding your site so Google can track the traffic to, from and within your site.

There are several website analytics sites on the market; some are free and many are subscription-based. Of the free sites, Google Analytics is the industry leader. It offers the most information, is easy to use and is easy to integrate with your website.

The leading search engine that most of your future clients use is *Google*. When people talk about search engine optimization (SEO), they're not talking about

just any search engine; they're talking about *Google*. After all, people always say "Google it!"

Subscription-based sites usually don't make much financial sense for single-service providers, and small skin care businesses. One site worth considering, however, is Crazy Egg (www.crazyegg.com). It's a relatively inexpensive service that illustrates visually where visitors are clicking on any given Web page. Crazy Egg combined with Google Analytics will give you a complete picture of what content is most appealing to clients, as well as who is visiting your site and how they are finding you. Skin care facilities also can use one of these services in combination with more expensive paid services to monitor website performance.

Review your analytics at least once a month, first to establish a baseline analysis of the health of your site, then monthly to determine what marketing efforts and content are influencing traffic and purchasing decisions—and adjust your offers and content accordingly.



GOING MOBILE

If your clients aren't already accessing your website or appointment-booking platform via mobile, they soon will be. The Pew Research Center reports that 50% of all U.S. adults own a tablet or smartphone. To remain relevant to this mobile clientele, your online presence needs to work on a mobile platform. Google Analytics will give you an idea of your current mobile traffic by showing you how many people already visit your website using mobile devices. To catch up and keep up with this growing demand, upgrade your online presence to work just as well on-the-go.

ONLINE DIRECTORIES AND REVIEW SITES

Consumers also search for services via online directory sites or specific "finder" mobile apps. To ensure that your business is listed, visit the directory's or app's website. There will likely be a section detailing

how to add your business.

Review sites such as *Yelp* and *CitySearch* are favorites for anyone seeking feedback about the value of a specific service or business. Update your business listing on these sites with visuals, videos, contact information and introductory offers. Be sure to monitor reviews often to see what's working and where you can improve.

In addition to *Google* and online directories for your area, two popular directories include *SpaFinder Wellness* (www.spafinderwellness.com) and *Allure* magazine's *Salon & Spa Review* (www.allure.com/salon-spa-review).

SpaFinder is one of the most comprehensive and well-known spa-related directories on the Web. Depending on your listing level, you can include your contact information, list of services, a link to your website, and even allow visitors to book and pay for your services directly through the site. Visitor traffic



is driven to this website through corporate wellness programs, and the company's popular gift cards, which are available for purchase in more than 50,000 retail locations nationwide .

Allure magazine's *Salon & Spa Review* provides first-hand reviews of spas on its website. You can reach out to the editors and invite them to your location to experience your treatments—leading (you hope!) to the inclusion of your location in their listings.

These websites also have corresponding mobile apps, so you should be included in the app if your location is listed with them online. To identify additional mobile app directories, survey your clientele about what sites or apps they are currently using. Make sure you're listed on those. You can also search app stores for "Find a spa/massage" and review the results yourself to determine which apps seem relevant to your audience.

MONITORING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Monitoring your online presence can feel overwhelming. To help you monitor multiple sites, keep a log of where your business is listed online—something you can check off whenever you need to update information. For directories, visit your listings once a month to make sure information is current. For review sites, visit your listings once a week to keep tabs on reviews. Respond when appropriate, as quickly as possible, and really listen to the feedback.

Don't miss Part II of this article, which will appear in the April 2013 issue of *Skin Inc.* magazine, and will address how to make your website the best that it can be, online booking, social media and more. ✂

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