

# Growing an Aesthetic Practice: Start With the Data

By Kirstie Jackson

**The medical spa industry has been valued at over $17 billion and employs more than 100,000 people. Business is booming. We are privileged to help people look and feel their best while building rewarding and profitable careers. It's no wonder one of the most common questions I hear is:**

**"How do we grow our aesthetic practice?"**

My answer is painfully simple. The secret to growth isn't a new laser, a marketing campaign, or the latest trend. It's simply knowing your starting point. Before you can grow, you need to understand your where your business is today.

KPI fatigue is real—the mere mention can be exhausting. While industry benchmarks have value, they often fail to account for your unique starting point. If your cosmetic consultation conversion rate is currently 50%, being told it should be 80% may be technically accurate but practically unhelpful. Large gaps can feel overwhelming and demoralizing.

Instead, focus on internal benchmarking. Set realistic, incremental goals based on current performance and measure improvement over time. Better yet, make metrics procedure specific. The consultation to treatment conversion rate for neuromodulators will differ significantly from laser resurfacing. Broad industry averages rarely tell the whole story.

Track your own data, identify trends, and establish meaningful goals. Common KPIs include consultation conversion rates, treatment conversion rates, service mix, revenue by service, scheduling efficiency, patient retention, and rebooking rates. Follow the money whenever possible—it tends to be a more accurate reflection of performance than scheduling reports alone. Collect data consistently, review it regularly, identify patterns, and create action plans. Growth becomes much easier when decisions are informed by evidence rather than assumptions.

Many of us have experienced the excitement of a provider returning from a conference having purchased a six-figure laser system. While I appreciate inspired decisiveness, I do not recommend this strategy. Focus on business need.

Most aesthetic practices hold valuable information within their EMR which often can tell you how many patients you see with acne, melasma, rosacea, photoaging, hyperhidrosis, and other conditions. This provides an excellent starting point when evaluating whether a new device or service is warranted.

Before investing in other newfangled technology, determine whether the demand exists within your patient population. You can also survey patients directly. Ask whether they would pursue a treatment and what they would be willing to pay. Research local competitors and understand how your market is positioned. An upscale boutique practice should not benchmark itself against a high-volume membership model. Different businesses require different strategies.

New services rarely succeed without staff buy-in. You must create a formal onboarding process and educational plan. Providers and team members need a clear understanding of the business objective and confidence in the treatment being offered. Staff who do not believe in or understand it—will never effectively educate patients.

Invest in demonstrations, training sessions, treatment protocols, and ongoing education. It should not be a one and done. When teams understand the clinical benefits, patient journey, and expected outcomes, they become stronger advocates for both patients and the practice. Continued education improves engagement, confidence, and retention. Having a team that genuinely enjoys what they do is one of the most valuable assets a practice can possess.

I hear the concern "we're medical, upselling feels icky" frequently. I rebuttal by asking if the best care for a dermatology patient is simply billing an annual full body skin exam to insurance? Or is it performing the exam, recommending sunscreen, and scheduling appropriate follow-up care? Sunscreen is not covered by insurance, but we all recognize its value. Aesthetics follows the same principle on a larger scale. Patients seek our expertise because they want the best possible outcomes. I often think about treatment planning through the lens of "good, better, best." For a patient with melasma, good may be clinical-grade skincare. Better may be skincare plus chemical peels. Best may include skincare, peels, and laser maintenance. Each option is elective, but each brings the patient closer to an optimal outcome. The goal is not selling for the sake of selling. The goal is educating patients on their options and helping them achieve the best result possible.

Whether you are investing in equipment, staffing, or additional services, every decision should be backed by financial analysis. Understand the overhead associated with the provider, device, supplies, and treatment room required to deliver a service. If you do not know your costs, you cannot accurately determine profitability or pricing.

As a rule, major capital purchases should have a clear path to recouping investment within 18 months or less. A word on pricing: if you've done all the work to analyze your business, don't default to industry averages when setting fees. Pricing should cover your overhead and provide an appropriate margin. If it cannot, the service may not belong in your portfolio.

Most aesthetic concerns fall into a few major categories: dynamic wrinkles, volume loss, pigmentation, texture, and skin quality. A foundational service menu consisting of neuromodulators, hyaluronic acid fillers, chemical peels, and medical-grade skincare

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