

CALLA MASTERCLASS

Top 10 Things to Know Before Opening Your Aesthetics Clinic



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1. Location, Location, Location

This phrase is just as important to aesthetic clinic owners as it is to estate agents. But location isn't just about a physical address; it's also about convenience, being visible and being in an area where there's a market for aesthetic treatments but not too much competition.

When it comes to the aesthetics industry, convenience matters. Research has found that travel time is the third most important factor for clients when choosing an aesthetics clinic. So, you need to make sure you're in or close to a town that's big enough to support your business. You should also avoid traffic hot spots if you can and choose somewhere that has plenty of on-street or private parking.

But as well as convenience, you also need to think about your ideal patient and where they're likely to live and work. If you make it as easy for them to visit you, they'll do so more often and choose your clinic rather than a competitor.

2. What is your why?

According to the American author Simon Sinek:

“People don’t buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe.”

Now, there’s a lot of truth in this. People buy aesthetic treatments because they want to look younger, healthier, or more vibrant, but when it comes to choosing who to buy from, that’s when your ‘why’ kicks in.

Understanding your why - the reason you do what you do - and communicating this clearly to your customers on your website and your marketing can give you the edge and inspire your customers.

Think about:

- Why does your clinic exist?
- Why do you get out of bed in the morning?
- And why should anyone care?

Very few businesses know why they do what they do. Your why is not about making money. That’s a result. Your why is your purpose, cause or belief. It’s the very reason your organisation exists. Once you’ve figured out your why, the next job is to make it a core part of your messaging.

3. What are your peacock points?

Your peacock points are the things that make you stand out from the crowd. They can be linked to your 'why', but they can also be related to your clinical experience and expertise, the clinic itself and the treatments you offer.

Once you've found your peacock points, shout about them and share them consistently in your PR and marketing. Here, repetition matters. Make sure your peacock points are clear on every touchpoint your clients have with you. That's your website, in-clinic marketing materials, social media platforms and any offline advertising you do.

4. Who are your clients?

When thinking about your clients, you want to identify the 'thirsty', the 'sneezers' and your 'hive'. You're probably thinking "what on earth is she talking about", but please bear me with.

Your thirsty customers are those that are quick to convert and subscribe, they can't buy your treatments quickly enough and they keep on coming back for more. Thirsty customers are great, we love them!

Next are the sneezers. Your sneezers are influential people who share your content and tell others about what a great experience they've had at your clinic. They may not spend as much as your thirsty customers, but when they tell 10 or 20 people about how great your clinic is, they believe them.

Your hive is a very targeted group of people who are interested in your products and treatments. It's made up of the thirsty customers and your sneezers, but it also includes prospects who may not have bought from you yet but could convert with the right messaging.

How do you create your hive? It's all down to marketing. You can learn more about this in our video masterclass, the 'Top 10 atomic habits every clinic should know,' which you can find on the Calla Training website.

5. What is the client journey going to look like?

Customer experience is critical in the aesthetics industry, and if you want to grow a successful clinic, it's something you should take very seriously.

When it comes to mapping out the client journey, put yourself in the customers' shoes and consider every interaction they're likely to have with your clinic and then think about how you can make it better.

Here, you should follow best practice but also think about the steps that you can take to be different and create the signature moves that will reinforce your brand.

A great place to start is to remember the customer care experiences that you've really enjoyed. They don't have to be in aesthetics clinics, they could be in any setting where customer service is central, such as a spa, a hotel or a restaurant. Any nice little touches you've noticed that have made you feel good are exactly the sort of elements you want to include in your offering.

And here, the devil is in the detail. Think about everything from how you can make your clinic look and smell amazing to providing precise driving and parking instructions so customers can travel to you without feeling stressed.

The way you communicate with clients through the process is also very important. For example, if a client wants to book an appointment, think about how that process will work:

- How do they contact you?
- How quickly will you respond?
- Who answers the phone?
- How do you answer the phone?
- How do you respond to emails?
- How do you reply if you receive a voicemail?

What if a client books an appointment for next week, how does that process work?

- Will you send them a reminder about their appointment?
- If so, what method of communication will you use?
- What information will you give them before they arrive?

And on the day of the treatment, there's a huge amount to get right.

- Is there parking available and are there any restrictions that apply?
- How does the outside of your clinic look?
- How will you greet the patient?
- What drinks can you offer them?
- Do you have a waiting room?
- Is there somewhere secure where your client can leave their coat and bag?
- Have you checked the bathroom since your last patient's visit?
- Is there music playing and is it appropriate and at the right volume?

There's an awful lot to get through, and this is before the consultation even begins, but thinking about the customer experience in this detail will help you create memorable experiences for all the right reasons.

6. How will you reach potential clients?

There are all sorts of different ways that you can communicate with new and potential clients – newsletters, emails, press articles and interviews, and local events are just a few – but what are the best ways to market to your clients in the very early days?

Create a website

One of the first steps is to develop a mobile-responsive website. A mobile-responsive website is one that looks equally good on a computer or a smartphone. It used to be the case that developing a website for your clinic required a major investment, but these days, with so many great website builders out there, you can do it yourself. Wix and Jimdo are both simple website builders for beginners that have loads of readymade templates you can use as well as lots of customizable page elements.

Encourage online reviews

Another important step in the early days is to think about how you'll attract online reviews. Online reviews provide social proof that your treatments are safe, you know what you're doing and you deliver a great service. Incentivising customers to leave online reviews can be as simple as sending them a follow-up email and offering them a discount on their next treatment or putting all review writers into a monthly draw for a prize.

Rather than having your reviews spread across several platforms, it's beneficial to have them all in one place, whether it's Google, Trustpilot or Facebook.

7. How do you want your clients to feel about your clinic?

With so many aesthetics practitioners out there, it can feel like a challenge to make yourself visible. The key is to think about what your clients want from an aesthetic practitioner. You can then look at what you can put in place to encourage those feelings. For example, my clients feel safe. They trust me and they like that I say no sometimes based on my experience of what works for different people, so I share content, imagery and reviews that can reinforce those feelings.

So, what do clients really want from an aesthetics practitioner?

1. Someone they can trust

Your clients put their faces in your hands, so it goes without saying that trust is essential. Trust can be built over time between a client and a practitioner, but as a new clinic, you haven't had that chance. This is why your brand messaging and consultations are key.

Showing that you genuinely care about the client and want to create the best results for them is imperative, and a big part of that is knowing when to say no. They say the customer is always right, but not in aesthetics. In a world where reality TV and social media rule, you need to be prepared to say no when necessary and explain how and why you're acting in the best interests of the client. Even if the client decides to go elsewhere, at least their wellbeing and your professional integrity are intact.

2. Expertise and knowledge

In aesthetics, there's no room for complacency. Even when qualified, You should continue learning and keep up to date with the latest techniques, treatments and products or you risk being left behind. It's also important to display your credentials and qualifications on your website and across your social media platforms.

Creating quality content about the treatments you offer is a great way to be seen as an authority in the industry. You can also answer aesthetics questions on social media and sign up as a press source for media requests to get your name out there as a local expert.

3. A friend

Becoming a friend to your clients can take your client-practitioner relationship to the next level. We're not talking about messaging them every evening and going out for drinks on the weekend. But by being 'present' in your consultations, listening to their concerns, remembering your conversations from previous treatments, and sending follow-up messages after a treatment, you can build that relationship.

Skin issues and signs of ageing can be a source of anxiety for your clients. Being the person they confide in about those issues and helping to build their confidence can put strong bonds in place.

8. What are your values and boundaries?

How do you want your business to feel for you and your team?

If you want it to feel fun, relaxed and enjoyable but also organised, professional and successful, then you need to set boundaries. We all need to be taught and re-taught routinely that boundaries make us brilliant!

Without boundaries, you can stay on a merry-go-round of bad habits. To support you with setting boundaries alongside your goal and intention setting, here are some things to remember:

- Saying no in business is at least as important as saying yes
- If in doubt, cross it out
- Clutter removes clarity
- Busy blocks productivity
- Don't get distracted by things that have nothing to do with your goals

Setting boundaries and knowing when to say no is important, but values are too. Values are our personal sat navs to joy. Values determine what success really means for you and what's important among the noise of life.

Values can help you prioritise and focus your attention where it counts and be intentional when it comes to the daily running of your clinic. Decluttering is also important in every area of your life. It can help you create a work-life balance that lights you up rather than wears you down.

9. How much is it going to cost?

The start-up costs for your clinic can vary considerably depending on where you are and the type of clinic you want to open. However, even if your clinic is going to start as a side hustle while you build a customer base, you can still expect a sizable upfront investment.

Firstly, you need to think about where you're going to deliver your treatments. If you're going to perform dermal filler treatments then you need a sterile environment. The cheapest way to do that could be to rent an office or a room in a local salon, spa, gym or yoga studio. The price will vary depending on the location.

Another ongoing cost is the Botox and filler. Botox costs around £500 for a 100-unit vial, while a 1cc syringe of filler is between £200 and £400. This cost is also something to factor in when pricing your treatments.

Other upfront costs you'll need to consider are:

- Botox and dermal filler training courses - £1,000-£2,000
- Business courses - £500+
- Registering as a limited company - £50
- Malpractice insurance - £1,500
- Website creation and hosting - £500
- Initial marketing costs (social media ads, digital advertising, ads in the local press, etc.) - £1,000+
- Textbooks - £200
- Locked refrigerator for treatment products - £100
- Locked travel cooler for treatment products - £50
- Start-up business supplies - £500
- Hyaluronic acid filler reversal - £300

So, you're looking at a minimum of around £6,000 to get yourself set up without factoring in the room rental costs. And that's for a side business rather than a full clinic. However, don't let that dissuade you. The aesthetics treatment market is forecast to expand by 14.5% a year to 2030, so if you get the basics right, you'll be able to build your business as time goes by and generate a healthy return.

10. How will you grow?

A website and social media presence are essential for new clinics. You can also create a business profile on Google, Bing and the other major search engines. Business pages on platforms like Facebook and Instagram are easy to build, but creating a website that potential clients in your area can actually find requires a little more know-how.

Learning the basics of search engine optimisation (SEO) – which helps your website rank high on the results pages for searches related to your business, for example, Botox treatments in York – is a big advantage. If you don't, an SEO or digital agency will be able to build you a website that's easy to find, but it will cost you.

Invest in marketing beyond word-of-mouth referrals

Word-of-mouth referrals provide the solid foundations that many businesses are built on, but if your priority is to grow, other marketing strategies such as social media advertising, direct mail, email marketing and digital marketing can help you reach a new audience.

Getting involved in your local community can be a great way to get your name out there. Sponsoring local events, doing interviews in the local press, hosting educational seminars and sponsoring sports teams are all ways to introduce your clinic to new patients in your area.

Encourage patients to write reviews

In the world of aesthetics, having a positive online reputation is very important, yet less than half of practitioners actively ask their clients for their feedback. Sending a follow-up email to patients after a treatment is a great way to ask for a review.

You can incentivise them with offers, such as discounts on their next treatment or the chance to win a monthly prize. You should also take the time to respond to every review about your clinic, both positive and negative, to show that you care about customer satisfaction and to send strong positive signals to new patients.

Offer new treatments and services

Expanding your clinic's offering in line with the latest aesthetic trends and treatments can help you earn more revenue from existing customers and attract new patients to your business. Continuing to learn and grow your skills is important, so be prepared to take new courses when necessary. Short-term funding can help you finance these courses, particularly if you run a new clinic.

Take on new staff

Hiring staff can feel like a daunting move, but having competent, friendly and compassionate people on your team can make a big difference in your growth. Think carefully about the kind of staff you need to hire and how they align with your growth goals. For example, if you're spending more time than you'd like on paperwork and administrative tasks rather than providing treatments, consider hiring an office administrator or PA. Alternatively, if you're finding that you're having to refer treatments to other practitioners because you're too busy, consider hiring another practitioner.

Create a referral network

There will be businesses in your local area, such as spas, gyms and wellness facilities, that are well aligned with your brand. Creating mutually beneficial offers and referring customers to each other can be effective ways to drive growth.

You can also create referral programmes for your customers by rewarding existing clients who recommend your clinic to their friends and families. You can incentivise them by offering money off their next treatment or giving them a gift card for skin care and beauty products.

If you're ready to set up a flourishing aesthetics business, our courses set the benchmark for clinical injectable therapies.

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