

I THINK I WANT TO BUY A NEW DEVICE. WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE?

Today's energy-based devices can reduce fat, tighten skin, tone muscles, and more—and each shiny new device comes with all sorts of bells and whistles. It's no wonder you are thinking of taking the plunge. Before you sign that dotted line, take advice from our marketing experts on how to do it right.



TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Purchasing a piece of capital equipment for your practice requires extensive research in this competitive market. Many practices have had to close their doors because they took on too many lasers and light-based devices (or the wrong ones) and didn't market them effectively. A \$200,000 laser can become an expensive coat hanger if you aren't prepared to launch it with a well thought-out plan.

The first question to ask is: Why do you need this device? Does it fill an unmet need in your practice? Do you want to upgrade an existing system that may be ineffective or outdated? (In that case, ask for a trade-in to offset the price.) Does it provide a treatment that your patients are asking for and going to your competition for because you don't have it? For example, if you don't see patients currently who want their tattoos removed, investing in a high-priced tattoo removal system may not be a wise business decision.

Next, do your homework by going to workshops, reading consumer and physician reviews, and evaluating other brands on the market. Talk to users about how the system has worked out for them. If you're considering buying a device, try out a treatment, have a staff member try it, or both. If you cringe in pain, your patients will too. If the experience is not pleasant, or there is considerable downtime of a week or more, it could be a deal breaker.

Other key considerations include the service profile of the company you are dealing with, your relationship and confidence in the rep, and the reputation of the company's technologies in the industry. Try to avoid buying "me too" devices that may be cheaper, but won't necessarily help differentiate your practice from all your competitors. Aesthetic patients are savvy and know to ask for brands they are familiar with.

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Before you sign a contract, consider how many treatments you have to do to break even and whether that number is realistic for your current practice and patient base.

You must also formulate a launch plan that includes details on how you will introduce the new treatment to your patients, including timing and staff training. Set aside a reasonable budget for a marketing strategy that includes a targeted social media and email blast campaign, a dedicated landing page on your practice website that explains what the device is, what it does, how it works, and who is a good candidate, signage in patient areas, and a launch event for patients.

Lastly, you will also need to get your own before and after photos to add to those that you get from the company. A robust portfolio of real patient results is an essential marketing tool. Patient testimonials are the next level up and can go far in promoting the treatment online.

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