



How the Pandemic Brought the Future Forward **Wendy Lewis shares insights on how to automate your practice**

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All businesses have been greatly affected by the current global health crisis caused by COVID-19. The changes to how we do things will be long-lasting, even as the outbreak is eventually under control and everyone can return to a more normal life.

In many ways, aesthetics practices are forced to operate a “virtual practice” for at least some of the traditional systems that were formerly in place. You are likely scrambling to get up to speed with the new regulations, social distancing constraints and protocols that have impacted doctor-patient face time and traffic in your practice. As such, you are left to adopt a more technologically advanced practice model or risk a healthy future for your business.

As practices are open in all or most states, the coronavirus is still out there, so all precautions must be taken to ensure the safety of your patients and staff. Since this requires reducing the number of people around you, your capacity may be impacted by as much as one third to one half. It may also be imperative to reconfigure your space and the schedule for staff hours by staggering shifts. Each room will need to be sanitized in between patients which can take up valuable time. Your days will be longer (or seem longer) to maximize the number of patients and treatments in a given period. Visitors will be prohibited except in the case of minors. The waiting areas in smaller facilities may be converted to treatment areas or storage space.

If you are accustomed to seeing 30 patients per day, you may only be able to see 15 with social distancing. Therefore, you will need to make the most of each patient visit and treatment time for maximum efficiency. For example, lingering around numbing before an injectable treatment may need to be cut down by offering a nitrous oxide system. Many office visits can be accomplished virtually through one of the many encrypted programs available. In addition, doing several treatments at the same day, even at a reduced fee to the patient, will be more efficient for you and the patient than bringing them back again.

Think of it this way; technology is your BFF. By revamping your practice to streamline systems and patient interactions quickly, you will be well positioned to thrive now and for the future. It is not as hard as it appears and will prove to be a critical success factor. Start by reviewing all the systems in the practice to determine which can be automated, including scheduling, consults, follow-ups, confirmations, payments, medical records, receipts, chart notes, prescriptions, pre and post procedure instructions, etc. Anything you can do remotely will save time, enhance efficiency, and ultimately reduce costs.

Lastly, be careful to implement the necessary changes in how you practice without losing the personal connection with patients. Aesthetic patients are not medical patients; they want to hang onto that warm and fuzzy feeling that instills loyalty. The winners will be the practitioners who can offer both; the Apple style efficiency they need with the human touch they crave.

The aesthetics industry has faced crises before, and we have weathered those storms. There will be life after this one too.