

WHEN BAD ADVICE HAPPENS TO GOOD PRACTICES: CAN YOU FIX IT?

Marketing pros weigh in on the worst practice management advice someone ever gave a client.

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From web building and public relations to search engine optimization and lead retrieval, today's aesthetic practices must consider multiple services to reach patients and grow their base in the face of increasing competition. But what happens when the counsel is flawed? *Modern Aesthetics** marketing pros share the worst practice management advice someone ever gave one of their clients and how they helped undo any damage. These cautionary tales may save your practice a lot of aggravation and money.



HIGH PRICE DOESN'T MEAN HIGH QUALITY

A dermatology practice we were talking to about handling their marketing was referred by a colleague to a high-priced ad agency that had no experience in working with physicians (huge red flag). They claimed to have "beauty" experience, as in they had worked with some cosmetics and skincare companies, which is not relevant to a busy dermatology practice. It was obvious that the person who referred this agency had some ulterior motive. The practice went along and chose this agency based on the referral. Quite a while later, they called us to talk again and came clean that they chose the other group under pressure and asked if we would look at what they had done and consider working with them.

The first thing we did was to tell the doctor to check the contract they had signed. He did and it was for one year (ouch!) requiring 30 days written notice to cancel before it autorenewed for another year. They were dangerously close to the 11-month mark, and the doctor did not realize what he had signed.

We reviewed the work the agency had done for the practice and submitted a report to the now-angry doctor. The agency only did Instagram for the practice and although the follower count was substantial, engagement was quite low and content was underwhelming. The agency in question had never shared a content strategy

with the practice or submitted a calendar for approvals and input.

Our digital team also analyzed their website's structure, navigation, and performance, none of which were optimal. Navigation was very outdated and the only photos on the site were thumbnails. The blog the agency was commissioned to write was not a blog, but posts containing articles the doctors were quoted in and content lifted from the American Academy of Dermatology website. The site's content was poorly written and showed a lack of understanding of the nature of the services offered and the words and phrases that resonate with the practice's target audiences. In short, it was one big mess.

We opted not to work with the practice. The doctor had been badly burned and was already in an understandably hostile state. The practice was also out of money to put toward a suitable marketing budget, having spent so much for the previous contract. We calculated how many hours it would take to revise everything the previous agency had done, as most of their work was not really salvageable. This would be a costly and labor intensive undertaking, and the practice didn't have the budget or bandwidth to do it justice at the time.

We suggested that they cancel their contract and hire a marketing coordinator with web experience to take some of the work in-house, such as content writing, Google ad words, and social media. They liked that plan as a workaround and we helped them prioritize what needed to be done and in what order.

The moral of this story is threefold:

1. Don't sign contracts without reading them and having a business advisor or attorney review the terms.
2. Don't hire anyone without checking their references and seeing their work.
3. Don't enlist vendors for your practice who do not have direct expertise in your field: healthcare, medical practices, dermatology, cosmetic surgery, etc. Why should they learn on your dime?