

Create a "Wow" Service Menu

What spa owners don't dream of attracting new clients to their business on a continuous basis? What are the best ways to let new and existing clients know about your business, products and service offerings? How can all this be done while running a business on a tight budget and narrow profit margin? Where should you start first? The place to begin is with your service menu. This is one of the most essential elements of your marketing efforts. A "wow" service menu doesn't have to break the bank. Service menus can take many forms from simple black-and-white pamphlets to four-color pieces with inserts and photography. Just make sure that your menu reflects your spa's style, image and uniqueness. This is your calling card.

Begin with the end in mind. What do you want your menu to say to your clients? How are you going to use the menu to garner more business? Start by gathering menus from other spas and incorporating details that you like from them into yours. There are five key steps to creating and using a menu that is distinctive and cost-effective.

Use color

Color and powerful graphics get attention. A front cover with a powerful image and design will arouse interest in your menu and inspire people to pick it up and open it. It pays to invest in the quality. This could be a potential client's first impression of your business. Buy the best that you can afford. You will attract more people to your spa and services as well as increase client awareness and spending.

Think carefully about your color selections and try to tie them into the color scheme you have within your business. This creates consistency from the initial menu impression to the first visit to your establishment. Colors have a psychological effect and say a great deal about who you are. Is your message bold, dramatic and upbeat, or is it soft, soothing and serene? Choose colors based upon this and consider what it is you are trying to say with color. Red, black or purple command attention and catch the eye. Colors such as sand, sage and lavender evoke a peaceful response.

The service menu is one of the most essential elements of your marketing efforts.

Use images

A picture says a thousand words and your menu is no exception. Sometimes you forget about clients' perceptions of your services because you perform them all day long. Including images of satisfied clients experiencing your spa services in the menu is very powerful. They create a visual, emotional feeling and allow the person reading the menu to imagine what it would be like to experience the service. If possible, include a selection of pictures that show off various service offerings such as a massage, a facial or a nail service. Also include pictures of your spa. This gives readers an image of your business and what they can expect to see when they arrive. This type of familiarity creates a comfortable feeling for the client who is coming to visit for the first time.

Photography does not have to be expensive. A creative way to offset the cost is to partner or barter with professional photographers in your community. You could trade for personal services in the spa or offer to provide skin care, makeup or other services for one of their photography shoots. Collaborating on a shoot has the advantage of both parties gaining exposure for their respective businesses and reaching new client sources. Credit the photographer for the images used in your menu.

Another cost effective option is to buy images from a media broker. You can easily go on-line and research the stock photography on company sites such as Getty Images, www.gettyimages.com, and find an excellent



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selection of pictures to purchase for use in your menu. With these sites you have the option to buy individual images or a grouping of them on a CD. Some images are available royalty-free and you can use them as many times as you want. Others require a per-use fee. These photographs will not be exclusive to your spa, however, and you may see them in other industry publications.

Describe your treatments

Spa treatments are more diverse than ever. Educate your team members on your menu offerings. Technicians may be focused on their areas of expertise and may not be aware of other service department offerings. Role play with them on how to recommend what treatments you have available. Have them experience the treatments if possible. It makes them easier to describe and sell. When a client asks a question about a service from the menu, team members should be able to answer it with intelligence and confidence.

In your desire to have unique and specialized offerings, it is important to give your clients an understanding of what your treatments include. Educate your clients on what they can expect. Treatment descriptions entice clients to try treatments they never have experienced. This also is true when clients purchase gift certificate packages. Use words that create a picture and feeling of what the service is like with a call to action for the reader. Focus on what the five senses will experience during the service. Keep your descriptions to the point with space consideration in mind. Have similar treatments grouped together for the client to find easily.

Here's a good example of a treatment description:

Aromatherapy Facial. Since ancient Egypt, aromatherapy has been used to rejuvenate and detoxify the skin. Let essential oils take you on a sensory journey through this 60-minute treatment. It includes a deep cleanse, exfoliation, skin analysis, extractions, a relaxing massage of the

face, neck, décolleté and a masking. A luxurious treatment custom-tailored to each client with personalized aromatherapy oils to calm, soothe and relax you.

Describing services in your menu may take more time, thought and financial resources to produce the menu, but it will pay off in higher sales and all treatments being utilized. It also is important to include your cancellation policy, directions to your spa, hours of operation, service etiquette and your spa's mission statement in the treatment menu.

Incorporate growing room

How do you create a menu that grows with your business? After all, you have invested a lot of time, effort and energy into creating a beautiful four-color menu with images and enticing descriptions. What about price increases or new service offerings? The answer might be

to use a four-color outer shell with interchangeable insert cards. This can be as simple as an 8- by 14-inch legal paper size menu folded into four panels on each side and 3½- by 8-inch insert cards that can be placed in the menu outlining service prices. Or you could put individual cards with information and prices into a beautiful decorative envelope. This allows for new prices and services to be altered or added without incurring the expense of creating an entirely new menu. Interchangeable pieces keep your costs down and your menu current.

Develop a marketing strategy

Now that you have a beautiful menu, what is the best way to utilize it? Your menu needs to encourage publicity for your spa. Finding multiple distribution sources where people see your menu supports this. Include a menu in every new client package. Highlight your menu's features when giving spa tours.

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What do you want your menu to say to your clients?

Mail the new menu to your current database of clients. You will be surprised by how many of your current longtime clients are not familiar with all of your services. This also will remind them to come back if they have not been in recently. Offer a special incentive with the mailing to try a new service. Use your menu as a marketing tool enclosed with gift certificates, baskets and charitable donations. Cross market with other businesses. Place your menu at bridal shops and with photographers, florists and dry cleaners. Build a networking community where you can have each other's collateral materials at your respective businesses and pass them out. Word-of-mouth referrals for businesses are the most powerful.

Send your menu out with press releases to local media. It could inspire a story about your business. Put the menu on your Web site for easily accessibility to anyone who wants to review it. This can save you a great deal of time answering questions on the phone. It allows your clients to review your information at their own pace. Distribute your menu in key neighborhoods where your ideal and best clients live. There are numerous possibilities.

The "wow" effect

Your service menu is the cornerstone of your marketing materials. It can generate interest, excitement, and most importantly, sales. Take the time to work with experts such as a quality designer and printer when producing your menu and choose at least three different professionals to provide quotes. Make sure to get references on their work quality and timeliness. Creating a "wow" menu takes patience and planning, but it will pay off in a greater understanding of your business and a healthier bottom line. ■