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Social media is a major game changer for businesses. If not utilizing social media, a skin care professional is missing out on free marketing and exposure. Social media can be tricky but knowing the dos and don'ts of marketing and branding through social media can yield positive results.

BE AUTHENTIC

Beauty professionals often ask how to grow a following on Instagram. The best advice to take note of is to be authentic. The most common mistake people make while trying to market on social media is copying or mimicking other accounts and businesses. This is not the way to do it. People are drawn to authenticity and uniqueness. It is extremely hard to stand out in this industry, but it does not have to be. Skin care professionals should consider their profile – are the majority of the posts from Pinterest or other accounts? A good question to ask is what are the benefits of following a page that reposts content from other accounts? Why not just follow the direct source? Spas and skin care professionals should want their account to stand out and be different from other accounts. This give people a reason to follow the account. Creating original content is essential to growing clientele and a social media following.

Pick three things the spa business is known for or is good at and utilize them throughout social media. What is the color scheme? What is the aesthetic? Be specific and know the targeted audience. If unsure who the demographic is, this can be found by clicking on the insights button on the Instagram profile. Here one can find what city the majority of followers live in, their age and gender, and what days and times they are most active on Instagram. Utilize this information when creating content for the page. Take all of these factors into consideration and always post when the audience is most active.

POST CONSISTENTLY

Now, let's talk about how often to post content. First and foremost, consistency is key. Do not be absent for a month on social media and do not post more than once a day. Post with intention. What are you trying to tell people? Who are you trying to target? These are questions to ask before posting. Do not post just because of the need to post something. If there is not anything meaning-

ful to post, do not post. It is better to not post at all than to post something random on a social media page. Take a day once a week or once a month to create captions, edit pictures, and make quotes and, then, save them until it is time post. Batching content will help an individual not feel pressured to throw something together last minute.

USE A SCHEDULING APP

Another helpful tip is to download a post scheduling app. This is a game changer for social media marketing. These apps will post for the spa or skin care professional, so that they do not have to take time out of their day to post content. It is simple and all that is required is that an individual put the caption and the picture needed to post on the app's calendar and it will post it at the exact day and time selected. Schedule to post one to two times a week. Remember, it is not necessary to post every day – quality over quantity.

MANAGE POSTS

When it comes to managing posts, click on the insights button located at the bottom of the picture. Here it shows how many followed the post, how many people liked it, how many people shared it, how many people saved it, the profile reach, and so on. This gives an idea of what kind of content the audience responds to best. It is imperative to utilize this information when creating content for a social media account. Always respond to comments on pictures to increase engagement. Creating shortcuts can even make commenting easier. For example, when typing "thank you" one can create an automated message to take its place.

To sum things up, make sure that whatever is being posted is meaningful and has a purpose or message. Filler posts are not ideal when it comes to marketing a business. Nowadays, people often search through social media to find professionals to provide their service. A spa or skin care professional could be the best in the area, but if their social media is subpar, potential clients are bound to go to someone else. Spas and skin care professionals should always think of their social media feed as a portfolio or resume. The advantage of using social media allows spas and skin care professionals to showcase their talents and specialties.