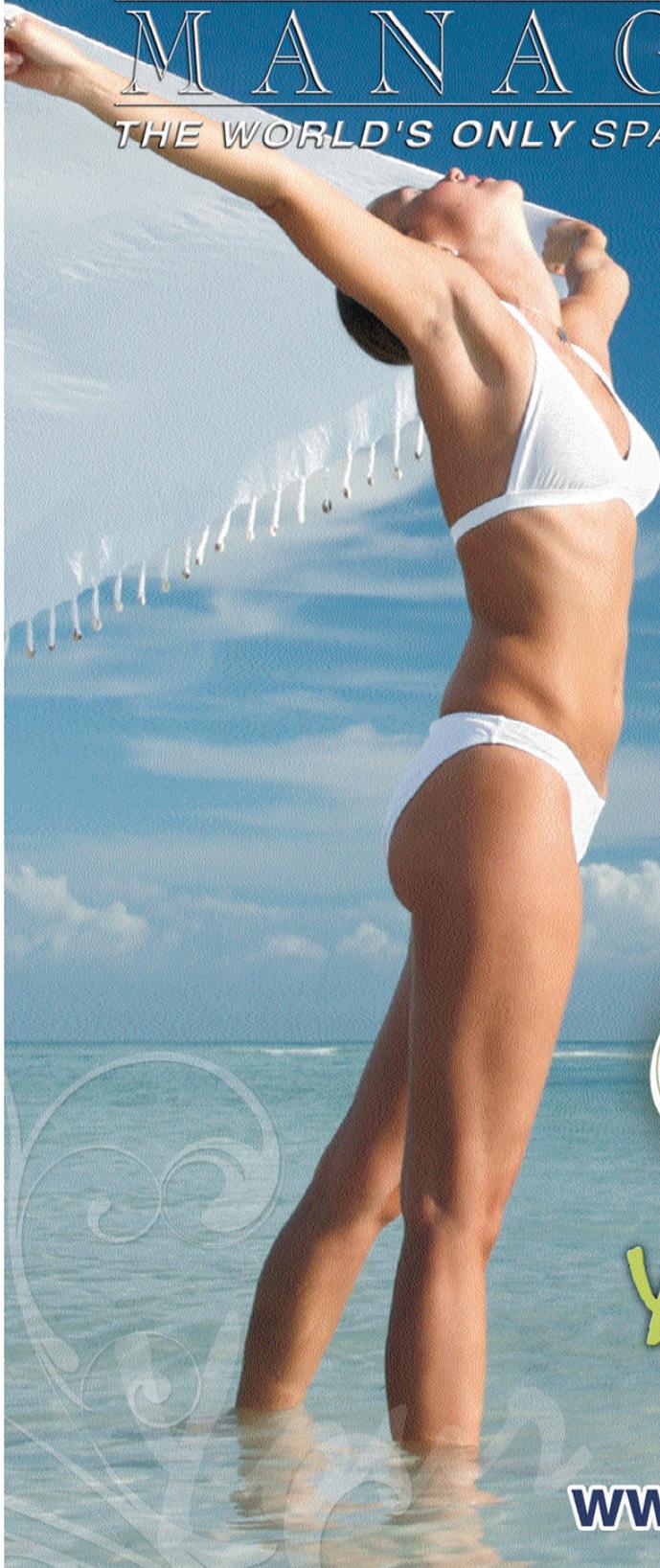


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*Skin Care Investments*



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*Mr. Linder's long-standing interest in the healthcare field dates back to his studies at Harvard Business School, where he earned his MBA.*

*While there, he was awarded a grant from Harvard University to study the purchasing behaviors and preferences of the aging baby boomers.*

*www.pcaskin.com*



DESPITE THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY RECENT STUDIES INDICATE CONSUMERS WILL NOT SKIMP ON SKIN CARE IF THEY SEE RESULTS

# Build Your Skin Care Business Now!

The past year has been more than your current marketing expenditures. a challenging one Simply reallocate those expenses to activities with a higher return on investment on a smaller cost base. for the economy. The credit crisis has had far-reaching effects across all industries. Medical and skin care practices have felt these effects directly, and many are struggling to keep their doors open. Three of the most cost-effective investments you can make focus on serving your customers better, building your base of clients, and developing your and your staff's expertise.

There is a glimmer of hope for our industry, however. Some recent studies indicate that consumers are likely not to skimp on their skin care, provided they continue to see their desired results. That means now is the perfect time to invest in building your business. Yes, you read that correctly—invest.

Companies that invest in their business often emerge from downturns stronger than before with the momentum necessary to outperform the competition. Investing, however, doesn't have to come with a large price tag. It doesn't even need to cost

**When you do organize compelling events, remember to include the media. Have a local television or radio station do a live remote. You will get a tremendous amount of exposure at only a fraction of the cost of advertising.**

First and foremost, improve your customer service. Find new, innovative ways to interact with your patients. Learn their specific wants and needs and address them directly. Understand what is important to them and what isn't.

Form deep relationships that last when your patients leave your facility. Make sure they look forward to their next visit by creating valuable and measurable treatment plans that allow them to see or feel results.

Train your staff to help patients measure their progress toward their long-

## NOW IS THE PERFECT TIME TO INVEST IN BUILDING YOUR SKIN CARE BUSINESS

term health goals. This will increase their willingness to pay for your services.

By providing a high level of service, you can avoid pricing wars with other practices, seeing who can offer the lowest discount. Deep discounts devalue your offerings and reduce your credibility. Over the long-term your business is better-served by staying true to your pricing strategy while being creative with your customer service.

Next, add to your client base through networking. The best place to start is with those you treat most frequently. When you offer outstanding customer service and produce visible results for their skin care needs, they will rave about you and your practice.

Perhaps they will want to share their experiences with their friends. Design a rewards program for your clients who refer new people to you or who book a small group for a treatment.

But don't stop there. Look to family, friends and acquaintances, and make them ambassadors for you. Go to local social events and popular gathering spots to meet potential clients. If you have the space, organize your own happy hour, inviting key influencers from the community. Some people to identify are socialites, local celebrities and business leaders. Reach out to the community and offer workshops and demonstrations focused on caring for your skin, or offer your space and services for fundraising opportunities.

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tremendous amount of exposure at only a fraction of the cost of advertising.

Finally, invest in training and education for you and your staff. This will add credibility to your practice and will give potential customers confidence in spending their discretionary dollars with you.

Use this time to develop technical skills and expand your knowledge base. Learn new techniques, establishing an expertise in different treatment protocols. Earn certifications demonstrating that your staff has achieved specific training milestones.

Help your staff develop other talents that are beneficial to your business such as writing, photography or graphic design.

When you support and invest in your staff, you create loyalty, which leads to outstanding customer service and a better network effect.

Positioning your business to survive then thrive through a slumping economy is a real challenge. This particular economic situation likely will be the most difficult in our lifetime. The most common reaction is to stop spending money altogether, including laying off staff. Doing so, however, limits your ability to serve your customers and build your client base.

It also means that you will be several steps behind once the market starts to rebound.

By making shrewd, cost-effective investments in your business today, you will be ready to lead the market when we emerge from this recession. ■