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The Multitasker

Steven H. Dayan, MD, FACS, has grown his practice into six businesses—and he's not finished

The Multitasker

Star Power

The magazines—fashion or otherwise—that Dayan likes best for his existing and prospective patients to read are the ones in which he has been quoted. A favorite of the media, the articulate and informative Dayan turns up a lot in print (more so now that he has a consumer-oriented book on aesthetic procedures coming out later this year from Hatherleigh Publishers), but it really is on radio and television where he shines the most.



Assistant Leslie Manuilow photographs a patient prior to surgery.

"I frequently appear on the local Fox News morning show—they have me on for a 3½-minute segment in which I introduce the latest advances in the aesthetic

world," says Dayan, who also has been a guest on programs aired over CNN, ABC, NBC, and local Chicago station WGN-TV.

Dayan appreciates being a media source. It is good for business, yes. But, equally important, it costs nothing, unlike display advertising. "I'm not fond of advertising in newspapers and magazines because that can be very expensive," he says. "I do not believe the yet-to-be-established physician should put money into print advertising for building his or her brand.

"I believe in building your brand with free publicity. The time for paid advertising is after you've built the brand and then need to defend it, although print advertising would still be a low-priority investment even then."

Publicity—PR, if you will—is therefore tremendously valuable for growing a fledgling practice. However, PR also is difficult to produce. "It takes a serious investment of time, effort, and creativity," Dayan cautions.



Tracy Drumm, marketing director for If Marketing, and Dayan review a presentation for a client.

"Early in my practice I wasn't very busy, so I had a lot of time to sit around, think, and work on ways to get busy. PR was one of those ways I came up with. I had marketing consultants soliciting me all the time, but they wanted to charge fees I couldn't possibly afford. I realized that the only way I was going to generate PR for my practice was if I did the work myself."

Dayan became so good at creating buzz in the media that other physicians and local companies sought him for advice on getting their own businesses recognized. From this emerged If Marketing, Dayan's in-house PR and marketing agency that also offers outside consulting and support. "We currently have a dozen clients and are in the process of expanding," he says.

Speak to the Need

Physicians who try their own hand at marketing do not always succeed. Dayan suspects this is because they have no clear notion of what they want to achieve and, if they do, no solid plan for how they will go about it.

"You have to start by knowing who your target market is and knowing what are the plastic surgery procedures they want most," he says. "Then, you have to figure out the best way to communicate to those markets, using the most efficient means at your disposal."

As to the message carried by such marketing communications, Dayan asserts it must contain elements designed to capture audience attention. These elements are best expressed by a pair of acronyms—WIIFM and TOIB.

"WIIFM stands for 'what's in it for me?'" he says. "This is what every person thinks when they look at your marketing materials. If what you've disseminated doesn't immediately answer the question 'what's in it for me?' then your materials are not likely to have any impact and will be wasted.

Enhancement Beyond Facial

One of the business divisions set up by Steven H. Dayan, MD, FACS, exists not to benefit his Chicago plastic surgery practice but to enhance public education. Accordingly, he named this unit Enhance Educational Foundation.

"Through Enhance, I have leveraged my influence in the aesthetic industry to stage an annual health, wellness, and beauty event that brings industry and consumers together in a highly sophisticated gala evening at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, with all proceeds going to benefit disadvantaged students," Dayan says.

"For the women and men who attend, this is an opportunity to talk directly to physicians and over 40 distributors and manufacturers of products including injectables, fillers, breast implants, you name it. Many of the products displayed are new to the market, so there is considerable excitement associated with this widely publicized event."

Last year's gathering sold out—more than 650 people attended—and resulted in the Chicago school system receiving \$35,000 in the form of scholarship money earmarked for a deserving inner-city high school senior with big dreams of continuing on to college.

This year, Dayan's Enhance Educational Foundation has teamed up locally with a pair of name-brand cosponsors—Borders bookstores and Starbucks coffeehouses—to promote literacy in the inner city.

Dayan, a clinical assistant professor at the University of Illinois, is an ardent advocate of education for kids from hardscrabble neighborhoods—so much so that he himself teaches a lecture series at an inner-city high school. "These kids are really motivated to learn; they're wonderful to work with," Dayan says.

In addition to the health, wellness, and beauty event, Enhance Educational Foundation oversees book drives on behalf of the students and coordinates mentorship programs for them.

"Everyone always asks why I do this and, honestly, it's because I love it," Dayan explains. "You can't devote this much time, energy, and resources to a charity if you don't truly believe in it."

—RS