

# How to Set-Up an Aesthetic Clinic

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## INTRODUCTION

Aesthetic dermatology is a unique dermatological practice, setting a standard for cosmetic dermatology focused on improving the appearance along with addressing an underlying disease. Since a few years, it has gained remarkable interest all over the world. In this chapter, we explore the complete guide for the dermatologist to set-up a professional and ethical aesthetic practice. This knowledge is undoubtedly beneficial for newcomer dermatologists as well as clinical dermatologists who wish to establish their aesthetic clinic.

New generation youngsters have a popular belief that the well-being of a person is about being satisfied with one's health, appearance, possessions and the environment in which he or she lives. This resulted in the modern emergence of a medical field, known as aesthetic medical practice, which intends to achieve harmonious physical and psychological balance. This practice is growing globally and is also acquiring popularity nationwide. There is no internationally accepted definition for "aesthetic medical practice". According to the American Board of Cosmetic Surgery, cosmetic surgery is defined as "a subspecialty of medicine and surgery that uniquely restricts itself to the enhancement of appearance through surgical and medical techniques". It specifically concerns with the maintenance of the normal appearance and restores it or improves it

beyond the mean level towards some aesthetic ideal.<sup>1</sup>

Factors associated with the growing demand for aesthetic dermatology procedures are as follows:

- The wish for prolonging youthfulness and self-image
- Economic prosperity
- Advances in the medical field result in the invention of new cosmeceuticals and devices to correct cosmetic disorders with less downtime and complications
- Professional compulsions to undergo cosmetic procedures.
- International exposure
- Growth in the hospitality segment
- Matrimonial purpose
- The craze of selfie/photography
- Excess use of social media<sup>2</sup>

To sum up, aesthetic procedures have been "deemed essential" and, hence, this chapter aims to guide dermatologists regarding set-up of professional and ethical aesthetic practice.

## FACTORS FOR ACHIEVING GREAT SUCCESS IN AESTHETIC PRACTICE

The most significant factors in aesthetic practice that we are going to explain in this chapter in-depth are enlisted in Table 1.1.

### 1. Funding

Obtaining the funds to begin the aesthetics clinic of your dreams is an incredibly

<b>TABLE 1.1: Factors for success in aesthetic practice</b>	
<i>S.no.</i>	<i>Factors</i>
1.	Funding
2.	Hiring business consultant
3.	Location
4.	Layout of the cosmetic clinic
5.	Basic amenities
6.	Interior
7.	Selection of clinic name
8.	Essential software and tools in aesthetic practice
9.	Laser
10.	Photography
11.	Development of professional skills
12.	Competition
13.	Marketing/advertising/branding/signaging
14.	Pricing set up
15.	Complication handling skill
16.	Online bad review handling
17.	Social media optimization
18.	Return on investment
19.	Business/market environment
20.	Vision goal
21.	Benefits to make private limited company
22.	Role of counselor
23.	Role of charted accountant/human resource policies
24.	Consent
25.	Permission and protection
26.	Strategies to increase patient loyalty
27.	Power of referral program
28.	Patient satisfaction versus patient delight
29.	Laser safety
30.	Patient retention versus patient acquisition
31.	How to ask for a testimonial
32.	Employee productivity and engagement
33.	Incompetent service/bad service
34.	Online consultation
35.	Digital prescription
36.	Importance of standard operating procedure and checklist

intimidate first step every business owner has to navigate. The most common sources of funding include a small business loan from the bank or small business association or third-party financing loans, government grants, angel investor, family and friends as creditors.

Further, crowdfunding websites such as Kickstarter and IndieGoGo may also act as a great source of funding.

## 2. Hiring Business Consultant

A business consultant helps you to build your clinic or practice. One must ensure that they have a solid background and track record in clinic creation as well as development. As per our viewpoint, the characteristics of an ideal consultant are displayed in Fig. 1.1.

## 3. Location

The location is one of the most prominent aspects of successful practice. You should thoroughly investigate the geographic area that you would prefer for practice, to determine the demographics of your patients. Further, be familiar with nearby hospitals, dermatology clinics, as well as other aesthetic centres.

## 4. Layout of the Cosmetic Clinic

A cosmetic dermatology clinic necessitates having a spacious room for treatment and, should have dedicated private premises for individual treatments with qualified entry. Each treatment room should have enough space for devices, patient bed, table and chairs, storage cupboards, washing area, etc. Also, there should be an extra storage room for stocks, medical devices, medications, uniforms, gloves, etc. The patient waiting area should be competent to accommodate the scheduled appointments and walk-ins. Further, the reception desk should be easily accessible and visible from the entrance.



**Fig. 1.1:** Characteristics of an ideal consultant



**Fig. 1.2:** Exterior of an aesthetic clinic

Exterior of an aesthetic clinic is shown in Fig. 1.2.

## 5. Basic Amenities

Basic amenities like drinking water, tea-coffee machine, free wifi, magazines or newspapers should be provided.

## 6. Interior

The interior and décor of an aesthetic clinic are most vital to the overall patient experience. It would help to produce a welcoming environment for patients to feel comfortable. Designing the proper ambience in your clinic is essential for creating a great impression on first-time visitors.

## 7. Selection of Clinic Name

The name of the aesthetic clinic should convey strong feelings which can make it to be a memorable one. When you have an idea for the name with a meaningful term but it does not make sense to other people, your services may be ignored. In a broad sense, think of a name that conveys an emotional feeling of what your business stands for.

## 8. Essential Software and Tools in Aesthetic Practice

**Customer relationship management (CRM):** It is the most popular software in aesthetic practice as well as other healthcare and

business fields. It is a category of integrated, data-driven software solutions that improve how you interact and conduct business with your clients. CRM serves to manage and maintain customer relationships, track sales leads, marketing, and pipeline, and deliver actionable data from a range of different communication channels, including a company's website, telephone, email, live chat, marketing materials and more recently, social media.<sup>3,4</sup>

Apart from this, other multiple softwares are also required in aesthetic practice to keep an electronic medical record, appointment scheduling, Email marketing, call tracking, text to both prospects and patients, track the website, search ranking tracking, review/reputation management, gather RSVPs (*Répondez s'il vous plaît* means "Please respond" to require confirmation of an invitation) for your next event.<sup>5</sup> Advanced CRM software is also available, which contains one or more above mentioned features in a single software.

## 9. Lasers

In the initial phase, you cannot invest more to purchase different types of lasers, so always explore which one is basic in regular practice. First, you should purchase hair removal device and then subsequently device for pigmentation, a fractional device for scar, tissue tightening device, body counteracting device and device for the vascular lesion. Some lasers have no secondary market means once they are broken, you have to throw out. Others are really good, that can be repaired and used again. Also, if you handle them in the right way, it will last throughout your career. So always choose the best in terms of brands without thinking about the cost.

## 10. Photography

"A picture is worth a thousand words" Visible and standardized imaging is, therefore, really worthwhile. In the field of dermatology, good pictures assist in monitoring the disease

progression and also, beneficial to interact efficiently with scientific associations during presentations and publications. DSLR/SLR (digital single lens reflex and single lens reflex) cameras are used in most of the dermatological settings. The plain light blue, black or green non-reflective surface would be the most suitable background for photographs. Broad daylight is the most reliable.<sup>6</sup>

## 11. Development of Professional Skills

Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists (IADVL) observership is outstanding option to gain professional experience once you have completed an MD or diploma or DNB in dermatology. Besides, many fellowship programs are organized to furnish you with requisite skills to practice in the field of cosmetic dermatology. Working as a proxy to a cosmetic dermatologist will also be beneficial to achieve good experience. At the beginning phase of aesthetic practice, always keep in mind to start with fundamental procedures rather than complicated or advanced, then, progressively earn confidence which ultimately improves one's skill.

## 12. Competition

Over the past two decades, the aesthetic market has become much more crowded. Everywhere there are high-end practices which directly compete with you. Meanwhile, low-end providers are setting up shop on practically every street corner.<sup>7</sup> Some essential tips like good ambience, comfortable consulting chamber with digital set-up stand out amidst all this noise are compiled in Fig. 1.3.

## 13. Marketing/Advertising/ Branding/Signaging

First of all, you should be aware of real difference among the definition of marketing, advertising and branding. Marketing implies to show others what are you doing excellent in your establishment. Advertising is medium to support marketing. Branding is an impact

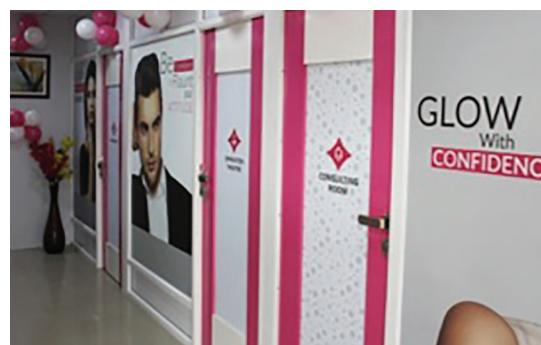


**Fig. 1.3:** Consulting chamber—good ambience with good digital set-up

created by both elements. As stated by the Code of Medical Ethics, "Soliciting of patients directly or indirectly, by a physician, by a group of physicians or by institutions or organizations is unethical". A medical practitioner is, however, permitted to make a formal announcement in press regarding the following:

- On starting practice
- On change of type of practice
- On changing address
- On temporary absence from duty
- On resumption of another practice
- On succeeding to another practice
- Public declaration of charges

We have endeavored to gather all potential grey zones for marketing in the healthcare system. Mainly there are two types of marketing: Internal marketing and external marketing. In internal marketing (Fig. 1.4), the advertising



**Fig. 1.4:** Internal marketing

modes like good before/after picture in the waiting room, brochures, practice announcement, enthusiastic educated staff, newsletter, information seminars; postcard targeting particular group, physician networking and letter to referring doctor is involved. Whereas, external marketing includes the use of various advertising modes such as the print media (e.g. magazine and community paper), networking (a fantastic way of getting the word out about your skin clinic either face-to-face or by using some means like newsletter, charity events), bulletin board, slide shows, internet (good website and search engine connections), email blogs (e.g. MailChimp, Campaign Monitor) and displays.

Advertising is just one component, or subset of marketing. One fascinating quote by David Ogilvy is “Advertising is only evil when it advertises evil things”. Make sure that all displayed data is accurate and reliable. AdWords (Google AdWords) is an advertising

service by Google for businesses wanting to display ads on Google and its advertising network. It enables businesses to set a budget for advertising and only pays when people click the ads.

The name, logo, blending of colors, tagline and interiors all should fall in line with the theme selected to attract clients. The waiting room of the clinic should be designed in a way that can create a welcoming, friendly and pleasing environment with all the signage designs supports to achieve their trust and understand your authority in the industry.<sup>8</sup>

#### 14. Pricing Set Up

Understanding of pricing is of great value as you want to distinguish yourself from the competition, maintain good customer relations, stay afloat, and make sure that your work is given the charge which it deserves. Figure 1.5 demonstrates the general tips to finalize the pricing of each treatment.

Build your personal brand	Go for a narrow audience	Identify gaps in the market	Focus on quality and standards	Show thought-leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of practices offer similar treatments to you. But there's one thing none of them can replicate—and that's you, the clinic owner</li> <li>• “Owner often think they would be better off marketing themselves”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once you have a narrow target market, you can tailor your services to that category. It's counter-initiative, but being very specialized typically results in a growth in business, because you become more attractive to a particular set of patients.</li> <li>• “Focus on one niche of patients and do that well before expanding”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even when it seems that everyone is offering all the same treatments, there will always be gaps and opportunities in your local area. If you can identify them, you can offer a unique service that will differentiate you.</li> <li>• “Identify the needs of the market and each product reaches saturation in a couple of years, so you need to know what's coming next. Agrees that you need to find a service of value, or offer a skill level or expertise, that is hard for patients to access elsewhere”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the proliferation of aesthetic providers, you need to differentiate from low-cost, non-medical injectors as well as from your peers. The market is full of discounted treatments. To make that happen, providers are dumbing down what they provide. Really good microdermabrasion might have several layers of treatments within it, but at the cheaper end they are stripping out elements to lower the price.</li> <li>• “You need to educate them about the difference between a \$49 microdermabrasion and a more expansive and efficient one. “Show thought-leadership”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All our marketing channels are geared towards educating people about procedure, and we try to do so at a beginner practitioner's level rather than aiming at the layperson.</li> <li>• “We think that laypeople understand what we're talking about, as long as it's explained well. We don't hold back, giving them everything a doctor or nurse would know at the beginning of their journey”</li> </ul>

Fig. 1.5: Five tips to pick the perfect price

## 15. Complication Handling Skill

Adopt a traditionalistic approach. Following the oath of Hippocrates, practitioners must remember the Latin phrase that is “*primum nil nocere*” implies First do not harm. You can still return and do more. Further, assure that the patients have factual expectations. In case any complication arises, offer the patient to visit more often to dissipate his/her fears. Corrective therapy should be provided without any charges.

## 16. Online Bad Review Handling

Always respond to a negative review. The worst experience even can be made slightly better, if a doctor or office staff member replies in a well manner. If their complaint is resolved (as much as it can be), they will be even more likely to return for a repeat visit. Never ask the patient to take their review down. In case of a fake review, try to contact the review site. Remember, protection of patient confidentiality and evaluation of whether to respond publicly or privately is your responsibility. Also, give thanks to the reviewer. Stay up-to-date with online review sites and ask more patients/ STAFF to post their opinions online.

## 17. Social Media Optimization

Social media optimization uses social media as a catalyst to develop the online presence of your company. It is about strategically creating, building and maximizing your social media plan on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter to be where there are customers to link with your target audience. It enables you to strengthen your brand, generate leads, get more visibility online and connect with your audience.

## 18. Return on Investment (ROI)

ROI is a performance measure used to estimate the efficiency of an investment or compare the efficiency of several different investments. It attempts to directly measure the amount of return on a particular

investment, relative to the investment's cost. A high ROI means the investment's gains compare favorably to its cost.<sup>9</sup>

The formula of ROI is as follows:

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Current value of investment} - \text{Cost of investment}}{\text{Cost of investment}}$$

## 19. Business/Market Environment

By introducing the latest technology and educating or promoting patients in this regards, we can create an aesthetic market environment. Nowadays, people are also more conscious about their look and appearance, which is one of the factors for growth in aesthetic practice. Therefore, you need to put only a few efforts to encourage the clients.

## 20. Vision Goal

You should have clear vision either you want to establish a single clinic or your brand chain and plan according to it.

## 21. Benefits to Make the Private Limited Company

Several associated advantages with private limited companies including separate legal entity, uninterrupted existence, limited liability, free and easy transferability of shares, owning property, capacity to sue and be sued, dual relationship, borrowing capacity, tax reduction, education tour allowances, etc. make them more influential than solo practice.

## 22. Role of Counselor

Recently, counselors are the most influential body of aesthetic practices as in dermatological procedure practitioner has to give ample of time and effort. For aesthetic practice, there is no authorized certification for counselors, so we have to rely on well-trained clinic staff to perform this function. The counselor can explain patients and relatives about how the healthcare system works, the diagnosis of the

patient, condition of the patient, information about treatment options, their pros and cons and treatment packages. Thus, it builds a communication bridge between the practitioner and the patient.

### **23. Role of Charted Accountant/ Human Resource Policies**

Once your practice has been established, you can appoint charted accountant in your firm, or you can tie up with freelancer working for the same and, he will definitely become a helping hand for you. He/she will deal with the important functions of cost accountancy, special company work, companies' secretarial work, account management, directorship, executors and trustees and so on. Make your own human resource policy including originated policies, appealed policies, imposed policies, general policies, specific policies and written or implied policies that will be beneficial to manage various functions like employee onboarding, provident fund and other related functions.

### **24. Consent**

Written consent should always be obtained, even if it is a minor procedure. The consent is indicated as the patient has come to you voluntarily for the minor/major surgery. As per the Indian Penal Code, in the case of operating on a patient without the valid consent, criminal charge of assault can be raised against the doctor.

### **25. Permission and Protection**

Registration under the Shops and Establishments Act and bio-medical waste management authorization are the most important legal aspects for starting up the aesthetic practice.

“Good regulation should be conducive to business and customer protection”.

—*Jamie Dimon*

Property damage insurance coverage is a must after the installation of the machine.

Electronic insurance, fire and burglary insurance and mobility insurance for transfer from one clinic to another are also prerequisite to be fulfilled. A professional indemnity policy is essential for professionals to cover liability falling on them as a result of errors and omissions committed by them while providing professional services such as misdiagnosis, inaccurate medicine dosage, surgery-related procedures or incorrect course of treatment.

### **26. Strategies to Increase Patient Loyalty**

Acquiring new patients is an ongoing challenge for any healthcare providers, but may be the greater challenge, with longer-term rewards, is the continuous attempt to develop trust and loyalty with existing patients. As shown in Fig. 1.6, we can increase patient loyalty with a few tips.

### **27. Power of the Referral Program**

Word of mouth is the prime factor behind purchasing decisions. Referred patients also appear to be the most precious type of patient. They are easily converted into customers and have greater lifetime value and a higher retention rate. Beyond the quantitative, if patients are referring to your practice that indicates your practice is share-worthy. Referrals show that patients who have received your services were satisfied enough to share their experience with a friend. Referral metrics, therefore, should not be tracked; they should be at the top of the priority list.

### **28. Patient Satisfaction versus Patient Delight**

Patient delight is one of the most neglected aspects of healthcare organizations. This makes the environment more volatile and requires deft handling at all patient touchpoints. Compassion and empathy can win the day. Patient satisfaction is the extent to which patients are happy with their healthcare into various aspects of medicine, including the effectiveness of their care and their level of empathy.

Grey zone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize camp</li> <li>• TV talk in the local or national channel</li> <li>• Seminar to the general public</li> <li>• Educational article in newspaper and magazines</li> <li>• FM radio bite on various days and festival</li> <li>• Press conference about new technology acquire in your clinic</li> <li>• Take part in activities like rotary club, lions club, giants club, chamber of commerce</li> <li>• Paid or unpaid chief guest or guest of honour in various reputed gathering</li> <li>• Attachment with various corporate and employees state insurance corporations</li> <li>• Honours of dermatologist of the governor</li> <li>• Sponsor in various events</li> <li>• Give gift voucher of your clinic services with clinics name</li> <li>• To become judge in various events</li> <li>• Tie up with various gym and clubs</li> <li>• Make own product and dispense</li> <li>• Written or video testimonial</li> <li>• Mobile app</li> <li>• Acquire some awards</li> <li>• Social media digital marketing</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Search engine optimization</li> <li>• Marketing educational book, brochure</li> <li>• Patient retention</li> <li>• Patient loyalty program</li> <li>• Gift of calendar/diary</li> <li>• General practitioner—talk lecture</li> <li>• Barter system</li> <li>• Make private limited company</li> <li>• Public relations agency</li> <li>• Video or audio testimonial</li> <li>• Endorsement by celebrities</li> <li>• Cinema theater</li> <li>• Sponsorship in various association and annual day of medical colleges</li> <li>• Various day celebration—woman day, mother day, father day, valentine day</li> </ul>

**Fig. 1.6:** Few key points to increase patient loyalty

## 29. Laser Safety

Laser pointers have the potential to permanently damage your eyesight, if misused. So, below-mentioned precaution should be taken when worked with it.

- Before turning on the laser pointer, always be sure that it is pointed away from yourself and others.
- Never look directly into a laser pointer.
- Never direct a laser pointer at another person.
- Follow the same rules for direct reflections of laser light from reflective surfaces.
- Wear appropriate laser protective eyewear.<sup>10</sup>

## 30. Patient Retention versus Patient Acquisition

Retention is more important than acquisition. It costs a lot more to gain a new customer than to retain an existing one. Strategies like keeping patients apprised of upcoming health needs, offering user-friendly dashboards like MyChart to track health

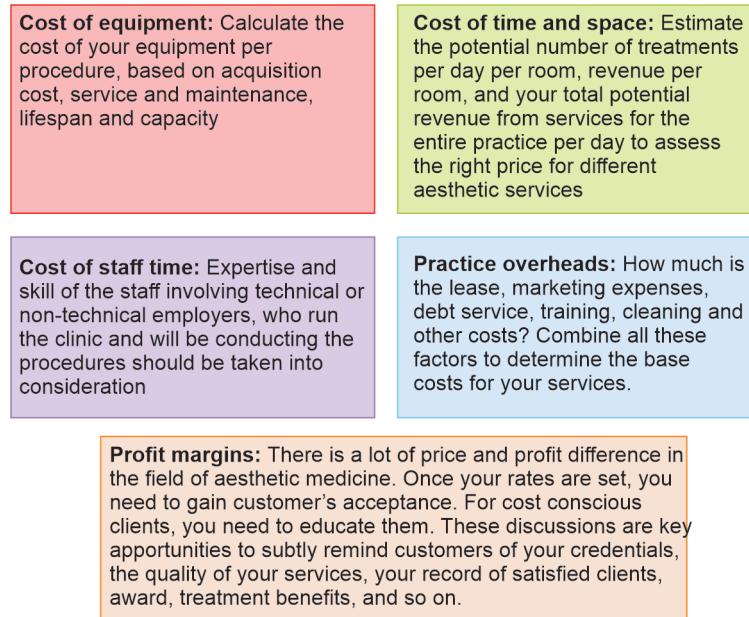
information, and sending personalized follow-up emails encourage patients to stay loyal to your system, and even to bring their families to your hospital when they need care (Fig. 1.7).

## 31. How to Ask for a Testimonial

Testimonials are written or recorded statements that support your credibility and level of expertise. They also strengthen your reputation by showing the trust that other people have in you and your business offerings. We can get testimonial via email and postal mail and can put them in our website at three places including homepage, sidebars and dedicated client testimonial page. If possible, a video testimonial is also a good option. Remember, it is unethical to bribe your clients for positive testimonials, but you can offer some gift card.

## 32. Employee Productivity and Engagement

Employee engagement is a workplace approach which motivates employees to stay committed to their organizational goals and



**Fig. 1.7:** Strategies to increase patient retention

do their best at work. One engaged employee can contribute more to organizational productivity than ten employees who are disengaged. This way employee engagement can have a positive impact on your business.

### 33. Incompetent Service/Bad Service

The representative's attitude may be good with incompetent service, but their execution does not meet your expectations. With poor service, you may get that you want at the end, but you are left with a bad taste in your mouth. In both cases, you wind up with a lousy customer service experience that undermines your faith and erodes your confidence in the company.

### 34. Online Consultation

Online consultation with doctors is good enough as participants can get equal opportunity. Secondly, shorter timeframe permits faster decision-making and more frequent engagement. At last, many people are involved which provide more diversity and ultimately more advertising.

## 35. Digital Prescription

A digital prescription is an electronic prescription for medicine that the doctor writes on the computer for the patient. It is not printed on paper and, an individual no longer has to carry a prescription slip around. But, it is directly sent from the doctor's computer through the internet to the prescription centre. The prescription centre is an electronic database organized for the issuing and processing of prescriptions.

## 36. Importance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Checklist

In the aesthetic field, if the procedures for skin care treatments are described well, your employees can provide consistent services to customers. With the help of SOPs, confusion can be minimized to a certain level among staff members in regards to chemical handling and emergency procedures that are specific to your facility.<sup>11</sup> Here we attached Annexure I which enlists the checklist for setting up your aesthetics business.

**Key Points** 

- With a realistic business plan, prudent decision-making and smart equipment purchasing, you can create the best aesthetic set-up.
- A successful cosmetic practice needs not only excellent skills but a commitment to marketing, team-building, technology, and vision.
- The practitioners should be clear in mind that we are in the professional field not in business. Your comforting and reassuring words can make a great influence on patients. We should focus on the quality of service, in turn; you will get success as well.

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**ANNEXURE I:** Checklist for setting up your aesthetics business

<b>Your business name:</b>		
<i>Task</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Done</i>
Get quotes from 3 insurance companies and then buy	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buy in clinical supplies (e.g. swab, needles) [list available on our website]	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do market research on competitor prices	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Estimate your costs, sales and profit using our free profitability calculator	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decide on your prices	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research training companies (ask how many people are on the course)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start promoting/networking to build up initial interest	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book training course (ask how you can prepare before attending)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact salons/gyms/hairdressers to see how you can work together	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up Facebook page (and any other social media accounts you value)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ask friends to share your Facebook posts	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decide your core market (e.g. female, 35–45, professionals)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Join an online support group (e.g. SkinViva Trainee Network on Facebook)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduce yourself to your pharma company reps and ask for support	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact an accountant for a free meeting for tax advice	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decide if going to be self-employed or limited company	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up accounts at minimum 2 pharmacies	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Find a prescriber (if required) and agree ways of working together	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up a spreadsheet, database or paper forms to record patient info	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare patient forms, e.g. consent form (we have free templates)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set rules around patient follow-up appointments, e.g. max 4 weeks	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write your emergency protocols out (how handle adverse reactions)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Register your business in the free online directories (e.g. Yell.com)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get a logo designed (sites like 99designs.co.uk can inspire!)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sort some business cards out (vistaprint.com)	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talk to your patients and learn about what they don't like with their face	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a plan for what advanced training you need to help your patients	[Date]	<input type="checkbox"/>