

# DIGITAL DIRECTION



## More Conversations, More Consultations: A Simple Guide to Text Message Marketing

### Your Practice, Ready to Grow

You care about delivering outstanding patient care. You want your schedule full, your consult rooms busy and your patients engaged in their treatment plans. Lately though, you are seeing empty slots, late arrivals and missed opportunities. You need a way to reach patients quickly, remind them of appointments and keep them excited about new services.

#### No-Shows, Open Slots and Fading Engagement

Many dermatology practices face the same challenges:

- 1. High No-Show Rates** —Patients forget appointments, leading to empty chairs and wasted time.
- 2. Difficulty Filling Consult Slots** — Last-minute cancellations leave gaps in the schedule that are hard to fill.

**3. Low Patient Engagement** — Email inboxes are cluttered, social media posts get buried and patients lose sight of special offers or new treatments.

**4. Staying Top of Mind** — In a competitive market, keeping your practice at the forefront of patients' minds feels like an uphill battle.

These issues cost you revenue and keep you from focusing on what matters most: caring for your patients.

## Text Message Marketing Made Simple

Dermatologic surgery practices can solve these exact challenges with straightforward, effective text messaging. Think of this as your guide, providing a clear plan to boost engagement, reduce no-shows and fill your consult schedule. This helps keep the process easy to manage, even if your front desk staff or practice manager is new to marketing.

### Five Easy Steps to Get Started

- 1. Collect Patient Consent** — Before sending any marketing texts, ask patients to opt in. A quick checkbox on your intake form or a simple consent form at checkout works well. Always get written permission to comply with patient privacy laws and the [CAN-SPAM Act](#).
- 2. Choose a HIPAA-Compliant Platform** — Many practice management systems include secure texting features. Verify that your system encrypts messages and does not store protected health information (PHI) in plain text. If in doubt, consult your legal counsel to ensure full compliance with HIPAA and other privacy regulations.
- 3. Craft Clear, Brief Messages** — Keep texts under 160 characters. Use plain language that feels personal and helpful. If possible, set up automated systems for easy replies. For example:
  - “Hello, Dr. Nguyen’s office here. Just a reminder of your dermatology consult tomorrow at 3 p.m. Reply YES to confirm or CALL to reschedule.”
  - “Hi Sarah, it’s been six months since your last filler treatment. Ready for a refresh? Reply BOOK to schedule a consultation.”
- 4. Send at the Right Time** — Text messages should arrive during regular business hours. Avoid early mornings, late evenings and weekends. A good rule is to send reminders 24 hours before the appointment and a follow-up message six months after a procedure. For special offers, pick a weekday mid-morning when patients are most likely to notice and respond.

- 5. Monitor and Adjust** — Keep track of responses, appointment confirmations and any feedback. If you notice a high number of opt-outs or no responses, consider tweaking your message tone or timing. Regularly review your analytics to see which types of texts drive appointment bookings and which need improvement.

### Full Schedules, Engaged Patients and a Stronger Practice

After implementing text message marketing, you can expect to see:

- 1. Fewer No-Shows** — Automated reminders mean patients remember their appointments and confirm ahead of time. Empty chairs become rare.
- 2. Fuller Schedules** — Last-minute cancellations no longer trip you up. By sending a quick notice to patients who asked for sooner availability, you keep your consult rooms busy and your doctors productive.
- 3. Improved Engagement with Special Offers** — Patients respond to concise, timely messages about new treatments or seasonal promotions. You see more clicks on scheduling links and more appointments booked for services like laser therapy or cosmetic injectables.
- 4. Stronger Brand Recall** — Regular, respectful texts keep your practice top of mind. Whether you announce a new procedure or simply check in six months after treatment, patients see your name on their phone and feel taken care of.
- 5. Enhance Brand Reputation** — Using text messaging to encourage reviews on popular websites can increase your positive reviews without the use of a third-party service.

### A Note on Legal Compliance

Text message marketing in a medical setting involves more than just picking up your phone and typing. Always follow these guidelines:



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- **Obtain Written Patient Consent** — Before you send promotional or educational texts, make sure patients have signed a consent form. This protects their privacy and your practice.
- **Protect Patient Privacy** — Do not include personal health information in text messages. Keep content general (“It’s time for your follow-up”) rather than specific (“Your mole check results are ready”).
- **Follow the CAN-SPAM Act** — Include a way for patients to opt out of future messages. For instance, “Reply STOP to unsubscribe.” Honor all opt-out requests within the required timeframe.
- **Consult Legal Counsel** — Regulations around electronic communications can change. Before launching your text messaging program, have your legal team review your process, consent forms and message templates.

### Let’s Get Your Practice Texting

Text message marketing is a low-cost, high-impact way to boost consult bookings, reduce no-shows and keep patients engaged. Your front desk or practice manager can manage it with minimal training. ●