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CONFERENCE REPORT

GLOBAL AESTHETICS CONFERENCE 2026 · MIAMI BEACH

The 10 Biggest Takeaways From *GAC 2026*

The best ideas from nearly 50 aesthetic business experts, organized by the Salted Edge Framework, with action steps you can put to work this week.

ATTRACT CONVERT CREATE RAVING FANS AUTOMATE MEASURE & SCALE

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WHY I WENT

Three days, nearly 50 speakers, and one goal

I spent this week at the Global Aesthetics Conference at the Loews Miami Beach with one goal: collect the best, most powerful ideas I could find and bring them home to you.

I planted myself in the Aesthetic Practice Solutions track, the business side of the conference. Over three days, nearly 50 practice owners, surgeons, patient coordinators, consultants, CFOs and marketers took the stage. Most had 15 minutes. All of them came ready to share what's working in practices right now. I filled page after page of notes.

Then I sorted them. When I mapped the strongest ideas against the five systems we use at Salt to diagnose a practice's growth, our Salted Edge Framework, every single one found a home. So that's how this report is organized: **Attract, Convert, Create Raving Fans, Automate, and Measure & Scale.**

For each takeaway, you'll see who said it, why it matters for an established med spa, and exactly what to do next. You don't need to tackle all ten. Pick the one or two that made you wince a little, and start there.

The 10 takeaways at a glance

ATTRACT	1	Build a social presence patients want to belong to
	2	AI search is reshaping how patients choose a provider, and the fundamentals still win
CONVERT	3	Speed and persistence win the leads you've already paid for
	4	The first phone call decides whether a lead becomes a consult
	5	Sell the outcome, and protect your price
CREATE RAVING FANS	6	Your existing patients are your most profitable growth channel
	7	Rebooking is a provider behavior you can coach
	8	Hospitality turns satisfied patients into reviewers and referrers
AUTOMATE	9	Let technology handle the busywork so your team can handle the people
MEASURE & SCALE	10	Know your numbers, and coach to the ones that predict growth

ATTRACT PILLAR 1 OF 5

Are the right patients finding you?

01 Build a social presence patients want to belong to

WHAT WE HEARD

Dr. Pamela Brownlee, a double board-certified plastic surgeon and founder of Bombshelled Aesthetics in Dallas, built her entire practice on organic social media. She told a story every provider will recognize: a patient who followed her obsessively, had surgery, healed beautifully, and then showed up commenting on a competitor's page. Her content had served a single need. Once the need was met, the patient had no reason to stay.

Her fix is to give followers "a world to belong to": recurring characters, ongoing storylines, a series people expect every week. Her cat, Peyton, became so familiar to followers that brand-new consult patients asked about the cat's recovery before discussing their own procedure. She cited research showing 67% of aesthetic patients want personal content from their provider, rising to 80% among Gen Z.

Jasmine Hill, MBA, co-founder of Aesthetic Influencer, called every video a "digital consult": the same reassurance you give one patient in the room, delivered to many. **Mary Robb**, founder and CEO of Social Practice, recommended planning content across five pillars (discovery, trust, desire, intent and conversion) and ending every post with a clear call to action. **Dr. Melanie Petro** of Petro Plastic Surgery in Birmingham reminded us that each generation wants something different, from a printed treatment plan for boomers to a quick personal voice message for Gen Z.

WHY IT MATTERS

Before-and-afters and education earn attention once. A familiar face and an ongoing story earn it every time you post, and they bring patients back when the next need arises.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Ask your front desk for the questions patients asked last week, and film a short answer to each.
- [ ] Launch one recurring series with a name and a day of the week.
- [ ] Make 10 to 20% of your content personal, the kind of thing you'd share with a patient in the chair.

02 AI search is reshaping how patients choose a provider, and the fundamentals still win

WHAT WE HEARD

Mona Sharif, Chief Innovation Officer at Incredible Marketing, shared data showing 52% of millennials and 64% of Gen X and older patients use AI to compare healthcare providers. Patients are having full conversations with ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude about their concerns, and the practice AI recommends often arrives ready to book. Her advice: search for your own procedures, city and provider names in each tool, and see who shows up. Write pages around concerns patients actually type ("how do I fix melasma") as well as device names, and add direct quotes from your providers to your top revenue pages.

Jamie Butterworth of Studio 3 Marketing shared his firm's citation data: roughly 65% of what AI draws on still comes from your own website, followed by review directories, earned media and social. **Max Baybak**, co-founder of Influx Marketing, added that brand mentions now count even without a link, and urged practices to match or beat competitors' monthly review velocity. Both warned against anyone guaranteeing AI rankings. **Tara Leifer**, Director of Plastic Surgery Marketing at LocaliQ, recommended rewriting procedure pages for the full-sentence questions people now search.

One note from Dr. Brownlee: patients who find her through AI often go home to "check with Chat" before booking. Plan for a slightly longer decision.

WHY IT MATTERS

AI rewards practices whose excellence is visible everywhere. A strong website, steady reviews and local press do double duty for Google and for AI.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Run an AI visibility check on your top three procedures in your city.
- [ ] Rewrite your three highest-revenue service pages in your provider's own voice.
- [ ] Pursue one local PR placement each quarter.

CONVERT PILLAR 2 OF 5

Are interested patients becoming booked patients?

03 Speed and persistence win the leads you've already paid for

WHAT WE HEARD

Amy Anderson, MBA, founder and CEO of ACG Practice Partners, set the bar plainly: respond to every new lead within five minutes. Then make six to seven contact attempts over the first week to ten days, mostly by phone and text. Practices worry that feels pushy. Her answer: the patient raised their hand, so following up is your obligation. One of her favorite automations texts every new lead a link to book a short call with the patient coordinator, which ends the voicemail tag.

Christin Trujillo, co-founder of Maven Financial Partners, put it bluntly from the CFO's chair: if your team isn't answering leads fast, you've lost the right to blame your marketing. Her CRM audits regularly uncover beautiful, busy practices where callers hang up without anyone capturing their contact information.

Vahe Tirakyan, CEO of MD Logica, added that automated texts alone don't count as follow-up. On the marketing panel, he described a practice spending $50,000 a month on ads with two people answering the phones. His habit: on a fixed schedule, print every lead and sit down with the front desk and patient coordinator to ask where each one stands.

WHY IT MATTERS

Every lead that goes unanswered is ad spend you've already lost. Tightening response time is often the fastest revenue win available to an established practice.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Secret-shop your own web form at 8 p.m. on a weeknight and time the response.
- [ ] Build a seven-touch follow-up sequence across phone, text and email.
- [ ] Give every lead one home and one owner, with a status: active, scheduled, unresponsive or unqualified.

04 The first phone call decides whether a lead becomes a consult

WHAT WE HEARD

Catherine Maley, MBA, of Cosmetic Image Marketing, played a real mystery-shop call that made the room cringe: an untrained receptionist, no price range, no recovery answers, no appointment offered. Her reminder: someone who picks up the phone today is your hottest possible lead. She wants the person answering to act as a "control tower" who leads with questions, because whoever asks the questions controls the call. Her price formula: share a credential, state the price, soften it, then immediately offer a specific date and time and ask, "Does that work for you?"

Dan Grantham, Senior Consultant at Yellow Telescope and a former patient care coordinator, treats the first call like a first date. Deliver a short "stump speech" about the provider before discussing procedure details, so patients trust the recommendation that follows. One clever move: ask who will drive them home after the procedure. It surfaces the "I need to talk to my spouse" conversation early.

Annie Johnson, Patient Care Coordinator at Starkman Facial Plastic Surgery in Scottsdale, builds value before ever sharing price, then gives a tight range of about $5,000 so nothing surprises the patient later. Her goal is a fully prepared consultation. In her words, "the consultation isn't an introduction, it's confirmation." **Ramona Stewart**, Clinic Director at Palmer Cosmetic Surgery, closes the loop by handing the surgeon each patient's top goal and top concern before they walk into the room.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your marketing earns the call. Your phone skills decide whether the money you spent turns into revenue.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Listen to 10 recorded calls this week against a simple checklist.
- [ ] Write a 30-second introduction to each provider that your whole team can use.
- [ ] Keep current price ranges in one shared document, and take a consult fee or card on file at booking.

05 Sell the outcome, and protect your price

WHAT WE HEARD

"No one actually wants a facelift," Annie Johnson said. "They want to look as young as they feel." **Kara McClanahan**, CEO of Aesthetic Practice Partners, built a whole talk around that idea. Name your services for the result patients want, like looking well rested. Bundle pre-treatment, treatment and maintenance into complete programs. She even suggested making the consultation itself a paid service, an approach she piloted successfully in five practices.

George Fox, founder of Unveil, pointed out that nearly every practice promotes the same things: natural results, personalized treatment, state-of-the-art technology. He also shared the math on loss leaders: one practice spending $10,000 a month to promote $59 facials saw roughly 20% of those patients return. **Vanessa Bird**, Managing Director of The Aesthetic Consultant, urged practices to train every team member to explain value before price.

On pricing itself, the room was remarkably aligned. Max Baybak recommended raising prices with new patients first, giving loyal patients several weeks' notice, and tying increases to added value. During the profitability panel, **Dr. Jason Bloom** of Bloom Facial Plastic Surgery shared that his monthly numbers review flagged an 80% conversion rate as a sign his prices were too low. He's raising them in January.

WHY IT MATTERS

When patients can't tell practices apart, they compare price. Outcome-based messaging and complete programs give them a reason to choose you.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Rewrite your five most popular menu items around the result the patient gets.
- [ ] Replace one recurring discount with a bundled program.
- [ ] List three proof points only your practice can claim, and use them on every call.

CREATE RAVING FANS PILLAR 3 OF 5

Are patients returning, referring and reviewing?

06 Your existing patients are your most profitable growth channel

WHAT WE HEARD

Christin Trujillo gave the room an exercise she called “hurt your feelings.” Pull your full list of patients of record, then compare it to who has visited in the last two years and the last 12 months. Across her firm's established practice clients, about 55% of patients had returned within two years, and only 34% within the past year.

Jay Shorr, founder and CEO of Shorr Solutions, presenting with partner **Ana Suarez**, did the math on a typical toxin patient. Four visits a year at $500 is $2,000. Let that patient slip a few weeks each time and they come three times a year, which cuts their revenue by 25%. Multiply that across your patient base and the number gets big fast. He also recommended a cosmetic interest questionnaire at every visit to uncover what patients will want next.

Catherine Maley shared that loyal patients spend 31% more and are five times more likely to refer. **Dr. Jeffrey Spiegel** of The Spiegel Center in Newton, Massachusetts, showed what reactivation can look like: his team used AI to find 600 consults that never booked, sent personalized offers, and turned 36 of them into warm leads worth about $1 million in potential revenue. They've already collected $100,000.

WHY IT MATTERS

These patients already know, like and trust you. You've paid to acquire them once. Every patient you bring back costs a fraction of finding a new one.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Run your patients-of-record report for all time, the last two years and the last 12 months.
- [ ] Build two lists: lapsed patients and consults who never booked.
- [ ] Segment both by interest, then reach out with something helpful before you send an offer.

07 Rebooking is a provider behavior you can coach

WHAT WE HEARD

Jared Latham, a healthcare provider from South Jordan, Utah, told my favorite story of the conference. He assessed a practice where all three injectors swore they prebooked every patient. So he watched the front desk for half a day. Two providers walked patients up with hugs and warm goodbyes, and the coordinator asked, “Would you like to book your next appointment?” Nobody did. The third provider said, “We're making great progress on your static lines. In order for us not to take a step back, I need to see you back in three months.” Every one of her patients rebooked.

Audrey Neff, Chief Marketing Officer of Aviva Aesthetics, which has 22 locations, made the same point: the next appointment shouldn't be phrased as a question. Tell patients when the provider needs to see them, and send them home with a beautifully branded treatment plan. **Dr. Rachel Fidino, DNP, ARNP**, founder and CEO of New U Women's Clinic, called rebooking rate one of the most important KPIs to review with each provider every month.

The panel did have a friendly debate about incentives. Dr. Jason Bloom offers patients a discount if they rebook the same day. Christin Trujillo pushed back: your best patients may not need a discount, and there are ways to reward loyalty that protect your margin.

WHY IT MATTERS

Rebooking rate predicts retention. Coach the behavior today and you'll see the retention numbers follow months later.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Script the provider's walk-up to the front desk, including the reason the patient needs to come back.
- [ ] Track rebooking rate by provider every week.
- [ ] Decide how you'll reward loyal patients, whether that's a discount or something that protects your margin.

08 Hospitality turns satisfied patients into reviewers and referrers

WHAT WE HEARD

Brian Hayes of Orion Strategic Consulting told the story of a man whose puppy chewed up his favorite Maui Jim sunglasses. He contacted the company to buy a replacement. They mailed him a free pair, a thank-you note, and a dog bone. Brian's point, drawn from Wharton professor Jonah Berger's research, is that satisfied customers rarely take action. Intense positive emotion is what drives reviews and referrals. And it rarely takes a big budget: “resourcefulness over resources.”

Lisa Lickstein, MSW, MBA, co-owner and COO of Lickstein Plastic Surgery and a certified Unreasonable Hospitality coach, said it starts with your team, because staff can't give patients a level of care they've never experienced themselves. Her practice gives the friends who drive patients to 5 a.m. surgeries a card for free coffee and local discounts. **Dr. Anil Shah** sends flowers on day four after surgery, a surprise that costs his practice about $12.

Andrew Paul, Managing Director of America's Great Resorts, whose wife owns Sipperstein Dermatology Group, credited their practice's growth to “authentic interactions” and a team empowered to act on its values. **Cheryl Hoaglund** of Sanctuary Plastic Surgery added the practical side: text a review link at checkout, and have one person own every HIPAA-safe review response.

WHY IT MATTERS

A satisfied patient got what she paid for. A delighted patient tells everyone, and that's the referral engine every growing practice needs.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Map every touchpoint in your patient journey, and pick three low-cost moments to make memorable.
- [ ] Automate a review request at checkout.
- [ ] Give your team permission, and a small budget, to surprise patients.

AUTOMATE PILLAR 4 OF 5

Is follow-up happening without relying on memory?

09 Let technology handle the busywork so your team can handle the people

WHAT WE HEARD

AI was everywhere at GAC, and the speakers drew a clear line on where it belongs. Audrey Neff cited research showing 79 to 85% of consumers prefer to interact with a human over an AI chatbot. She told the story of calling roadside assistance with a flat tire, as a premium member, and reaching a robot that told her to use the app. Her test for any new tool: how will the patient feel? Dr. Anil Shah called an AI front desk “a really bad idea” after patients pushed back on one his practice tried. Dr. Pamela Brownlee switched off AI-written text replies after a few embarrassing exchanges.

What does work is simpler. Vahe Tirakyan sends every new inquiry an instant, pre-written text asking whether a call or text is easier, then a person takes over. Dr. Jeffrey Spiegel's website chat answers common questions and books paid consults after hours, and his team reviews the transcripts for accuracy.

The bigger opportunity is the system behind your team. **Ryan Miller**, President and CEO of Etna Interactive, said practices that use their CRM well are outperforming typical practices by about two to one. Most CRMs were set up once and never revisited. He recommends an annual review: confirm every inquiry source flows in automatically, refresh old workflows and messages, and add one new capability a year with a clear owner. **Lisa Marie Wark, MBA, PhD**, uses a patient journey board where every open patient has a stage, an owner and a next contact date.

Robin Ntoh, VP of Aesthetics at Nextech, asked the question that made owners shift in their seats: if your star coordinator or top injector were unreachable for two weeks, what would stop? Her “two-week test” exposes the knowledge that lives in only one person's head.

WHY IT MATTERS

Growth depends on follow-up that happens every time, regardless of who's working that day, including the owner.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Sort every patient touchpoint into three buckets: human, pre-written automation, or AI.
- [ ] List every place inquiries arrive (forms, calls, DMs, chat) and confirm each one lands in your CRM.
- [ ] Run the two-week test on your patient coordinator role, then cross-train on whatever would stop.

MEASURE & SCALE PILLAR 5 OF 5

Can you see what's producing growth?

10 Know your numbers, and coach to the ones that predict growth

WHAT WE HEARD

Christin Trujillo showed two practices with similar revenue and very different profits, and reminded us that “revenue is vanity, profit is sanity.” She reviews the P&L as percentages and tracks two numbers for every provider: utilization and revenue per hour. Her example: a full-time provider at 45% utilization and $575 an hour produces about $31,000 a month. Raise that to 80% utilization and $1,400 an hour, and the same 120 hours produce about $134,000. Her rule of thumb: if utilization is low, fill the schedule. If it's high but revenue per hour is low, hire a medical assistant. Only when both are high is it time for another provider.

Jared Latham explained why the best practices coach to leading indicators. Retention takes months to show up. Rebooking shows up today. One practice he worked with tracked a single new habit, handing out a cosmetic interest questionnaire, and traced about $130,000 in additional revenue to it.

Jamie Butterworth offered a benchmark: 100 good leads should become 25 to 35 consultations, and booking fewer than 10 procedures from them signals a problem. Vahe Tirakyan shared the power of focus: one client dropped insurance work, put every marketing dollar behind two signature procedures, and nearly tripled revenue within a year. Dr. Rachel Fidino warned that a practice earning most of its revenue from one service line is vulnerable in a downturn. Her advice: layer in memberships, retail and new service lines, and never drop your price floor.

Finally, Audrey Neff explained how practices are valued: adjusted EBITDA times a multiple. Buyers pay for consistent, lower-risk cash flow, so a practice that depends on its owner every day is worth less, whether or not you ever plan to sell.

WHY IT MATTERS

You can't scale what you can't see. The right handful of numbers tells you exactly where to focus next.

DO THIS NEXT

- [ ] Build a one-page weekly scorecard: response time, lead-to-consult rate, consult-to-treatment rate, rebooking rate, utilization and revenue per hour.
- [ ] Review your P&L monthly as percentages, not just dollars.
- [ ] Calculate what share of revenue comes from each service line and each provider.

THE BIG PICTURE

What I’m bringing home

Here's what struck me most as I sorted my notes on the flight home. Eight of these ten takeaways happen after a patient finds you. The speakers were winning with sharp phone skills, fast follow-up, thoughtful hospitality, coached rebooking and clear numbers.

That's exactly why we diagnose before we prescribe at Salt. When growth feels inconsistent, the instinct is to spend more on marketing. More often, the opportunity is hiding in a leak somewhere between the first click and the fifth visit. Fix the leaks first, and every marketing dollar you spend afterward works harder.

A huge thank-you to every speaker on the Aesthetic Practice Solutions track for sharing so generously. If one of these takeaways hit close to home, I'd love to hear which one.

PLAN YOUR 2027 CALENDAR

Med Spa Conferences 2027: Top 10 Aesthetic Events for Practice Owners

Our roundup of the conferences worth your time and travel budget next year.

saltmarketing.co/top-health-wellness-conferences

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR

Global Aesthetics Conference

Watch for dates, speakers and registration for next year’s conference, including the Aesthetic Practice Solutions track.

globalaestheticsconference.com

Want to know where your practice is leaking revenue?

Take the free Med Spa Growth Score. In a few minutes, you'll see how your practice measures across all five systems in the Salted Edge Framework, and which one to fix first.

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About Salt Marketing. Salt Marketing helps established med spas and wellness practices build the integrated marketing systems they need for more predictable growth, without the owner having to hold it all together. We diagnose before we prescribe.

About the author. Jennifer Orechwa is the founder of Salt Marketing, author of *Get Found Get Booked*, and host of the *Worth Your Salt* podcast for med spa and wellness business owners. saltmarketing.co

Statistics and examples are as presented by each speaker at the Global Aesthetics Conference, November 2026.