



How To Build A Cross-Referral Network

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Dermal therapist Sarah Hudson was analysing sun damage on a first-time client's face when she saw it. Looking through the skin imaging device, she saw what she believed was a potentially dangerous sun spot.

Rather than proceed with the cosmetic IPL treatment the client had booked for to treat pigmentation, Sarah sent him to a GP with a letter outlining what she'd picked up and why she felt he needed to be referred to a dermatologist.

In the note, she offered the name of a dermatologist she knew personally, with an excellent reputation in treating this type of sun spot.

While Sarah has the skills to charge a mint a minute, she didn't charge for her time. And neither was she left out of pocket – far from it, in fact.

Six months later, the client returned to her clinic, [Skin By Sarah Hudson](#), in Sydney's Beecroft, grateful for her professionalism. She was ready to safely proceed with the pigmentation reduction treatment she'd initially booked

in for.

“A good therapist will know his/her limitations – be an expert at finding the best professional to treat your clients’ unique condition that you can’t,” Sarah says. “A good therapist will connect those specialists and tell them why their clients should see them

“If you believe a client will yield better results by seeing another professional that’s not you, it’s best to refer them on, not make a quick buck.”

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But building a referral network isn’t just a lesson in building client loyalty. Sarah says that having access to a referral network of like-minded but diverse contacts is essential in managing client expectations.

She also says her “little black book” has helped her stay relevant in the multi-faceted wellness industry.

“People are understanding the value of an holistic approach when it comes to skin more so than ever,” she says.

“Therapists can take advantage of the variety of aesthetic options at our fingertips (that range from non-surgical enhancement and correction to cosmetic surgery) as well as those who focus on inner health,” she explains.

“I often work with a contractor who specialises in nutritional medicine, as some skin conditions such as acne and rosacea are caused by internal health issues and demand an appropriate, holistic course of action.”

Here are Sarah’s tricks of the trade for building a formidable cross-referral network and offering holistic solutions:



Sarah Hudson has been working in the aesthetics industry for 20 years, but two years ago, she decided to side-step away from traditional beauty treatments and specialise in technology-focused non-surgical skin rejuvenation. [Skin By Sarah Hudson](#) is a bustling

Invest In High Quality, Reputable Equipment



Making the leap from beauty salon to medi-clinic, Sarah chose to invest in Cutera devices and arm herself with a belt of formal and informal qualifications.

“Besides having the nationally-recognised certificates to perform treatments, you also need to be trained and educated extensively by the providers of your equipment,” she says.

“I’ve made met so many important connections by attending Cutera events, lectures and seminars. Investing in high quality education takes time, but for my business it’s been invaluable.

“At a recent event, I met a dermatologist who has two Cutera devices like mine. If I’m concerned about something on my clients’ skin, I send them to him for a check.

“I know that his laser is great for certain lesions and he is grateful for my referrals, so he sends his patients to me when he knows my machine and skill set suits their issue better.”

Go Straight To The Top At Seminars And Events



After meeting Sarah, it's easy to believe she's a networking guru. She's articulate and immaculate yet personable and friendly.

She says she never "switches off" and is always open to connecting with like minds. She has made many high profile connections at educational lectures with key speakers.

"Generally the speakers are at the top of their field and are the best at what they do, so after their talk I approach them and start by saying: 'Thank you, I loved your presentation. I learnt a lot and really valued it'.

"Then I introduce myself and my clinic and tell them I'd like to refer clients to them. Their response has always been warm and positive then the conversation flows from there."

Understand The Specific Needs Of Your Clients

Sarah says grasping the motivations of her clients and truly knowing their expectations can lead to the most useful connections.

"We see a lot of women between the ages of 55-65 who work full time and they want to remain competitive in their industry. They often feel the pressure of looking youthful and they can't afford to take time off work.

"This is why we've invested in non-surgical skin tightening technology – it's highly effective. But unlike surgical procedures, there's no downtime.

"Since many of our clients are primarily concerned with looking great for their age, we always assess their expectations and refer them to other professionals if we need to.

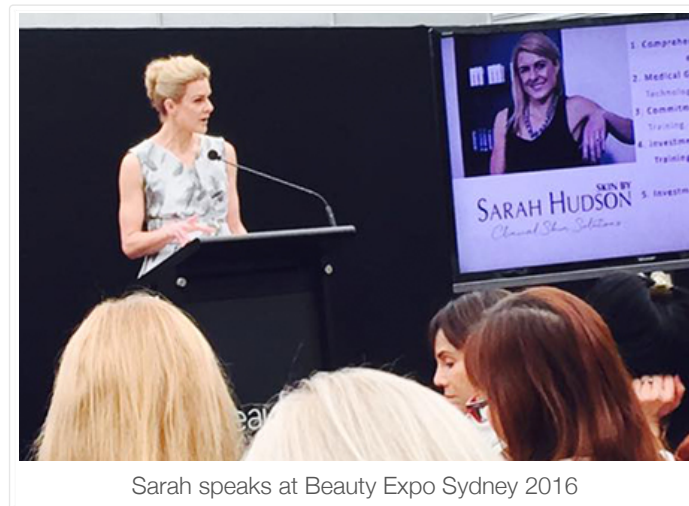
"For example, having 'hooded' eyes makes a lot of women feel like they have aged beyond their years and non-surgical skin tightening treatments may not be the most appropriate procedure.

"In some cases we refer them to a highly reputable plastic surgeon who may suggest a surgical blepharoplasty (upper and/or lower eye lift).

"The referral is excellent for our business, as we provide post-surgery scar recovery, which ensures our clients will then achieve the most effective results.

“From an aesthetics treatment point of view, the clients’ eye area can look better after the surgery by treating the skin and eyes as a whole.”

Nurture Your Networking Relationships



“Keep communication channels with your connections open all the time and make sure they fully understand what you do as much as you understand what they do.

“It will therefore make a lot more sense as to why you’re referring them and then they can refer people back to you too.

“Make sure you show your gratitude and always reach out with a ‘thank you’ if another professional refers someone to you.

“Respect the medical industry. Respect the knowledge held by doctors and other practitioners – BUT be mindful of name dropping, never disclose sensitive information and always ask clients’ permission if you’re not sure about something they’re concerned about that you need to investigate further.

“If you refer your client to another practitioner, always follow up with both parties. Your client will appreciate your effort and it will ensure you’re top of mind when they’re seeking their next aesthetics procedure.

“Opening your clients’ lives up to a team of trusted experts shows confidence. It allows them to see exactly what you do and the level of professionalism in which you do it.”

- Sarah Hudson is a renowned aesthetic practitioner, skin educator and member of the Australian Society of Dermal Clinicians. Known for her 20-plus years expertise in providing aesthetic skin services, Sarah is highly respected in the field of Medical Grade Skin Peels, LED Light Therapies, Medical Grade Laser, IPL and skin firming techniques.

Watch [her talks at Beauty Expo Melbourne](#) which explore the latest non-surgical skin tightening procedures in detail and best practice tips.

By Jessica Turner