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*Stories
of Success...*

With Rob and Carol Trow

DermaConcepts and Rocasuba



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Stories of Success...

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DermaConcepts and Rocasuba

by Katie Anderson

In *The Road Not Taken*, Robert Frost writes, “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.” We are lucky that we work in a country and an industry with unlimited choices, and that we get to make those choices—we get to choose our path. Throughout your career, you will encounter paths and with them have to make choices (either big or small) that will ultimately affect your trajectory. Many people might tell you not

to work with family, but Carol and Rob Trow chose to enter the skin care path together as business partners and husband/wife when they started DermaConcepts and Rocasuba. The industry has changed, but their decision to start a “family first” company has made all the difference.

Skin Inc. sat down exclusively with the Trows to learn what led them to skin care and how they have kept their business strong throughout the years.

Photos courtesy of Rob and Carol Trow

Skin Inc. (SI): How did your career begin in skin care?

Carol Trow (CT): I was a registered nurse with an unbridled interest in skin care and makeup since I was a teenager. After some life changing situations, I became director of marketing at a Fortune 1,000 company and eventually formed my own consulting firm geared toward practice development for physicians, accountants and lawyers. This work lead me to a South African plastic surgeon that was a colleague of Des Fernandes, M.D., the founder of Environ Skin Care. The company wanted to start a presence in the United States, and I became a distributor for two states. Rob

joined me at this point after selling his company. I believed that with his educational, entrepreneurial and business background, we would make a great team. Plus, I did not have to pay him in the beginning! Together, we became successful and were awarded another 23 states and eventually the exclusive rights to the entire United States, Bermuda and the Caribbean. Quickly, we found we enjoyed working together, each with separate responsibilities, but a common set of values, ethics and philosophy. To this day, we still love working together.

Rob Trow (RT): Rocasuba came about in a totally different manner. After extensive evaluation, we

jumped at the chance to accept the exclusive USA and Canadian rights to bring to market RapidLash and its expanding line of related items. The company has a separate implementation team than Environ, though we oversee and manage both.

SI: How did you initially market the brand?

RT: Environ was brought to market as an exclusive line for plastic surgeons, dermatologists, other physicians and medspas plus wellness centers that have a legitimate medical director. We have no legal online sales and provide substantial training and business support. We market and sell through education and



Carol Trow



Rob Trow

practice development, building on Carol's marketing background and my educational skills and business acumen. To date, we have written well over 100 articles for professional publications to help create awareness of skin science and be an objective source of information.

SI: What advice would you give new spa owners looking to market their brand?

RT: You must be passionate and have twice as much capital as you think you need. Your best source of revenue and growth is your current client base. Retention of one client is worth more than you can imagine. Treat your staff as extended family members and be generous to staff and clients. All

things being equal, clients choose to spend their time and money where they are appreciated and treated well. All things not being equal, they will still go to the people they like. It's a business built on relationships as much as skill.

SI: How has the company evolved over time?

CT: Our staff and clients have increased exponentially, but we still remain true to our core values of the importance of education, customer service and integrity. We are committed to treating clients and staff as part of our company's family.

SI: How have you seen the spa industry evolve over time?

CT: There is more emphasis on consolidation, larger chains and

unfortunately, many brands continue to make claims offering results that are unrealistic, creating end user mistrust. To be successful, professionals will need to continue their professional education, seek out advanced studies and invest in their own personal and professional growth. Clients are demanding results that they can see. Creating long-term treatment protocols involving multiple modalities is the future of skin care.

SI: What has been one of your biggest challenges over the years?

RT: We always have a hard time trying to explain that there is no magic in a jar or miracle ingredient. Separating fact from fiction for clients, while not speaking ill of others can be

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difficult. Making changes to skin takes time, mostly no less than three skin cycles. Lastly, a major challenge is trying to get our brands noticed over the power and magnitude of large competitors. Getting in front of decision makers to make our case and demonstrate strategic advantages is always challenging.

SI: What are some of the biggest challenges that spa owners/estheticians face today?

CT: One of their biggest challenges is to offer something unique in services, products and customer service. They should not carry products that are available everywhere or online at material discounts. They need to make sure their staff becomes expert listeners, addressing the individual needs and realistic expectations of each client. It is a mistake to tell clients what they need. Be generous to all—demonstrate every day how much you value and cherish your staff and clients. Never forget retention is the best business development.

SI: If you could go back in time and give yourself advice early in your career, what would it be?

RT: Be patient; it takes much longer to establish a business than you think. Prepare to go

two years without earning any salary for yourself. Do not be undercapitalized. Network every day with all sorts of groups, individuals and organizations and demand help from vendors, but with caution. It's a partnership. Make friends.

SI: With competition being so high, how can spa owners make themselves stand out?

RT: Do not try to be all things to all people. Pick unique brands and services, and create incentives for loyalty. If you carry lines that everyone has or can be bought everywhere, you may spend time and effort educating a client only for them to buy online. Create a serious partnership with up front expectations and commitments to and from vendors. Become experts in social media for your area to target potential clients. Use open houses and offer free skin analysis sessions partnering with a skin care company for free products (full size). Speak at community service organizations on skin health and sun safety. Lastly, become active in local charitable causes and partner with key community opinion leaders.

SI: What do you see on the horizon of the skin care industry?

CT: We see a growing trend by states and licensing boards to

establish legislation to limit what skin care professionals may or may not do on their own, a new generation of at-home devices and ingredients and a more educated consumer. A danger still lurks with social media being more prevalent with both accurate and misleading information. Clients tend to believe what they see or hear without being interested in checking out the accuracy of online statements. There is a need for professionals to educate themselves on what is being said and communicate to their clients what they think is the best and most truthful information.

SI: What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

CT: We have four grown children, seven grandchildren and are blessed that they come to visit often. Rob and I share many interests including golf, reading and long walks in the early morning. I paint weekly in oils and acrylics. We are also committed to the study and practice of mindfulness. Yet, work is also pure passion so we do spend time every day working, which is not a hardship, but a joy. It gives us immeasurable pride to see our team do so well and be very successful personally and financially. We live by the credo—Family First—just ask them. ✂