

The Agoncillo Method

Laser Buyer's Guide & Tips

Everything a med spa owner, injector, or aesthetic clinician needs to know before writing a check — from wavelengths to warranties.

Think to Fix. Build to Profit.

Why Most Laser Purchases Go Wrong

Aesthetic lasers represent some of the largest capital investments a practice will ever make — anywhere from \$15,000 for an entry-level diode to over \$200,000 for a multi-platform fractional system. Yet the majority of buyers walk into that decision armed with nothing more than a sales rep's pitch and a competitor's Instagram reel.

The result? Underutilized devices collecting dust, treatments that underdeliver, patients who don't return, and ROI that never materializes.

This guide exists to change that. Using the Agoncillo Method — Think to Fix, Build to Profit — we walk you through every layer of the buying decision: the physics, the clinical logic, the business math, and the service realities that manufacturers don't advertise.

The Agoncillo Method Buying Framework

Step 1 — THINK: Understand the science before you evaluate the device

Step 2 — FIX: Identify the clinical gap in your current menu

Step 3 — BUILD: Choose a platform that turns that gap into profit

Section 1: Understanding Laser Types — The Science First

Before evaluating any specific device, you must understand what different laser platforms are biologically capable of. Wavelength determines depth. Pulse duration determines tissue

selectivity. Energy density determines damage threshold. These are not marketing variables — they are physics.

Platform	Wavelength	Primary Target	Clinical Uses	Key Strength
Diode	810–980 nm	Melanin / Hair	Laser hair removal, vascular	Speed & skin tone range
Nd:YAG	1064 nm	Deep chromophores	Hair, veins, pigment, toning	Deep penetration, safe on dark skin
Q-Switch Nd:YAG	532 / 1064 nm	Pigment / tattoo ink	Tattoo removal, melasma, toning	High peak power, short pulse
CO ₂	10,600 nm	Water in tissue	Skin resurfacing, ablation	Precision ablation depth control
Er:YAG	2,940 nm	Water (shallow)	Superficial resurfacing	Minimal thermal damage
IPL (not a laser)	500–1,200 nm	Multiple chromophores	Photofacial, redness, pigment	Broad treatment versatility
PDL	585–595 nm	Oxyhemoglobin	Redness, rosacea, PWS, scars	Gold standard for vascular

Clinical Note — Why Wavelength Matters More Than Brand

Two devices at the same wavelength from different manufacturers will produce more similar clinical results than two devices from the same manufacturer at different wavelengths. Wavelength is biology. Brand is engineering quality, reliability, and support — important, but secondary to the physics.

Section 2: The 7 Questions Every Buyer Must Answer

The Agoncillo Method demands that you interrogate the purchase from every angle before evaluating manufacturer literature. Here are the seven questions that determine whether a device will generate returns — or regret.

1. What clinical gap does this fill?

Map your current treatment menu. Identify the services you are referring out, declining, or turning away. The best device is the one that captures revenue you are currently losing — not the one with the most impressive booth at a trade show.

2. Who is your patient population?

Fitzpatrick skin types I–VI demand different parameters and platforms. A practice serving predominantly Fitzpatrick IV–VI cannot build a hair removal program around a short-pulse alexandrite without clinical risk. Match the platform to your demographic — not to your aspirations.

3. What is the realistic treatment volume?

A \$120,000 fractional CO₂ system needs to generate at least 3–5 treatments per week at market pricing to hit a 36-month ROI. Calculate your addressable patient volume honestly before projecting returns.

ROI Reality Check Formula

Monthly Revenue = (Treatments/Week × 4.3) × Average Treatment Price

Monthly Debt Service = Financed Amount ÷ Loan Term (months)

Net Monthly Contribution = Monthly Revenue – Consumables – Service – Debt Service

Target: Net Monthly Contribution ≥ × Debt Service (2×2 rule — at least 2x coverage)

4. What are the true cost-of-ownership numbers?

Purchase price is the least important number. The numbers that will determine your profitability over a 5-year ownership period include:

- Annual service contract cost (typically 8–12% of device value)
- Per-treatment consumable costs (tips, cartridges, gels, cooling materials)
- Training and re-certification fees
- Downtime cost per day when device is non-functional
- Software upgrade fees (increasingly common on newer platforms)

5. What is the service infrastructure behind the device?

This is where most buyers fail entirely. You are not buying a laser. You are entering a long-term service relationship. The critical questions are:

- Where is the nearest certified field service engineer? What is guaranteed response time?
- Are replacement parts stocked domestically or shipped from overseas?
- Is first-call resolution (FCR) a tracked metric for this manufacturer?
- What is the average mean time between failures (MTBF) for this model?
- Is there a loaner program if your device requires depot repair?

6. New vs. Pre-owned: What is the risk-adjusted value?

A certified pre-owned device from a reputable biomedical service company can represent exceptional value — if the service history is verifiable and the device has been refurbished to OEM spec. The risk is unknown maintenance history, worn optical components, and degraded laser output that won't show up in a demo. Never purchase pre-owned without a power output verification test and a complete PM (preventive maintenance) history.

7. What happens when the manufacturer exits the market?

The aesthetic device industry has a high company mortality rate. If a manufacturer is acquired, pivots product lines, or exits business, your service contract becomes worthless overnight. Ask specifically: who services this device if the manufacturer is unavailable? An independent biomedical service company with laser-specific expertise is your insurance policy.

Section 3: Platform Profiles — What Each Laser Is Best For

Diode Laser (810/940/980 nm)

The workhouse of hair removal. High repetition rates, large spot sizes, and contact cooling make diode ideal for high-volume LHR (laser hair removal) practices. Newer 755/810/1064 nm triple-wavelength diodes expand skin type coverage significantly.

Best For

- High-volume LHR programs targeting Fitzpatrick I–V
- Practices looking for fast treatment cycles and strong per-treatment economics
- Entry-level investment with clear treatment revenue math

Q-Switch Nd:YAG (532 / 1064 nm)

The precision instrument of pigment correction and tattoo removal. Ultra-short nanosecond pulses deliver massive peak power with minimal thermal spread. The 532 nm targets superficial red/orange pigments and epidermal brown spots; 1064 nm reaches deeper dermal pigment and all dark ink tones.

Best For

- Tattoo removal programs with multi-color ink capability
- Melasma management and pigment correction protocols
- Laser toning / carbon facial services popular in medical aesthetics
- Practices with Fitzpatrick IV–VI populations (1064 nm is safer at depth)

Fractional CO₂ (10,600 nm)

The gold standard for skin resurfacing. Ablative fractional CO₂ creates microscopic treatment zones that drive significant collagen remodeling, scar revision, and textural improvement. High downtime, high results, high price point — this device justifies premium treatment fees.

Best For

- Scar and acne scar revision programs
- Anti-aging resurfacing with proven collagen induction
- Practices with an established patient base comfortable with 5–10 day downtime
- Higher revenue-per-treatment models (\$800–\$2,500+ per session)

Long Pulse Nd:YAG (1064 nm)

The vascular workhorse. Long-pulse 1064 nm targets oxyhemoglobin at depth, making it the platform of choice for leg veins, deep facial telangiectasias, and port wine stains unresponsive to IPL. Also effective for hair removal on darker skin tones.

Best For

- Leg vein and vascular lesion programs
- Hair removal on Fitzpatrick V–VI where alexandrite creates burn risk
- Adding medical-grade vascular services to a dermatology or med spa menu

Section 4: Red Flags in the Sales Process

The aesthetic device sales environment is aggressive and incentive-driven. Understanding the tactics used to close deals is as important as understanding the technology.

Red Flag	The Reality Behind It
"Limited time offer — this price expires Friday"	Price floors are rarely hard. This creates urgency to bypass due diligence.
"Our training is included" (once, at install)	One install training does not create clinical competency. Ongoing education is your responsibility.
"Our service contract covers everything"	Read the fine print. Many contracts exclude optical components, which are the most expensive parts.
"ROI in 6 months guaranteed"	No reputable company guarantees patient volume. This is a marketing projection, not a guarantee.
Demo results performed by the trainer	Demo conditions are optimized. Your results with your staff on your patients will vary.
"We're the only platform that can do this"	Verify independently. Most claims of exclusivity apply to marketing positioning, not physics.

Section 5: The Negotiation Framework

Every element of a laser purchase is negotiable. Most buyers negotiate only on price. Experienced operators negotiate on total value:

- Extended warranty period (push for 2 years instead of 1)
- Free preventive maintenance service calls in year 1

- Additional handpieces or applicators included at no cost
- Extended training hours or on-site clinical support visits
- Flexible payment terms — deferred first payment, seasonal structure for slower months
- Trade-in value locked in writing before negotiating new device price
- Service contract rate capped for years 2–3 to prevent cost escalation

Negotiation Anchor Principle

Never negotiate from the list price. Request a competitor comparison quote first.

Use the gap between quotes as your opening anchor, not the sticker price.

The best deal includes maximum service coverage, not minimum purchase price.

Section 6: Evaluating Service — The Underrated Differentiator

The most expensive moment in laser ownership is not the purchase. It is the day your device goes down during peak season and you have no path to resolution. Service infrastructure should carry equal weight to clinical performance in your buying decision.

Key questions to ask any manufacturer or service provider before signing:

- What is your average field response time for service calls in my geographic region?
- Is your service team OEM-trained or third-party certified on this specific platform?
- Do you stock replacement laser rods, handpiece tips, and power supply components domestically?
- What is your first-call resolution rate — how often is a device fixed on the first visit?
- Do you provide a loaner or rental device during extended repairs?
- How do you handle firmware and software updates — is there a fee, and how are they deployed?

The VMS Biomedical Standard

Engineer-led service. OEM-trained technicians. First-call resolution as a performance metric.

Whether you purchased from VMS or not, use these benchmarks to evaluate any service provider

you are considering for your device investment. Service quality is not a luxury — it is revenue protection.

Section 7: Building a Profitable Treatment Menu Around Your Device

The device is infrastructure. The treatment menu is the revenue engine. These are not the same decision. Most practices build their menu reactively, based on what the device can do. High-performing practices build their menu proactively, based on what their market will pay for.

Treatment Category	Avg. Price/Session	Sessions/Series	Revenue Potential/Patient
Laser Hair Removal (full body)	\$250–\$400	6–8	\$1,500–\$3,200
Tattoo Removal (per session)	\$150–\$500	6–12	\$900–\$6,000
Fractional CO ₂ Resurfacing	\$800–\$2,500	1–3	\$800–\$7,500
Pigment Correction Series	\$250–\$500	3–5	\$750–\$2,500
Vascular / Redness Treatment	\$300–\$600	2–4	\$600–\$2,400
Carbon Laser Facial (Toning)	\$200–\$400	4–6	\$800–\$2,400

Layer these treatments into packages and memberships to improve patient retention, increase lifetime value, and smooth revenue predictability across slow seasons.

Final Checklist: Before You Sign Anything

Pre-Purchase Verification Checklist

- ✓ Clinical gap analysis complete — I know exactly what revenue this device captures
- ✓ ROI modeled at conservative (50%), base (70%), and optimistic (90%) volume
- ✓ Total cost of ownership calculated over 5 years including consumables and service
- ✓ Service response time verified in writing for my geographic region
- ✓ Service contract reviewed by legal or advisor — exclusions identified
- ✓ Competitor quotes obtained — I am negotiating from position not from proposal
- ✓ Reference checks completed with 2+ active users of this specific model
- ✓ Staff training plan in place beyond manufacturer install training
- ✓ Fitzpatrick distribution of my patient population mapped to device parameters
- ✓ Independent power output test requested for any pre-owned device

Closing: The Business Case for Getting This Right

An aesthetic laser purchased with precision — matched to your market, validated against your financials, backed by reliable service — is one of the most powerful revenue assets a practice can hold. A laser purchased on urgency, hype, or incomplete information is an expensive lesson.

The Agoncillo Method exists because the knowledge to make this decision correctly already exists — it just needs to be applied systematically. Think to Fix. Build to Profit.

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