

Building Referrals from Physicians

by Marc Aronson

10 tips for medical specialists, surgeons & allied health pros

The truth is all medical practices perform at least some marketing tasks. Being warm and friendly with your patients, keeping your waiting room neat and attractive, and requiring your staff to dress professionally are all marketing actions. So is sending patient reminder cards, validating parking and maintaining friendly relations with your referral sources. Therefore, the actual questions are whether you should expand your marketing efforts beyond what you do now and how aggressive you need to be.

First, ask yourself whether you are satisfied with your patient volume and payor mix. It is true that if your internal marketing is superb and the quality of care you provide is extraordinary, your practice will grow. The questions are whether your practice will expand fast enough and if the revenue your practice generates meets your desires.

Next, consider whether your practice deserves to grow. How does the quality of services you provide compare to your competitors within your community? Our belief is that only if what you provide is superior, is it ethical to employ an aggressive marketing strategy—on that steers patients and referral sources to you and away from your competition.

The final question then becomes, if you do provide an exceptional service to your patients and wish to grow, should you market assertively? Yes, so long as your marketing is tasteful, as well as effective.

Tasteful and effective marketing

Marketing that will be well received depends, in part, on which public you are marketing to. Contingent on your specialty, you may develop marketing that targets referral sources, patients,

insurance companies, the general public, IPAs, a specific demographic, employers, schools, community groups, etc. Each public has different needs, values and considerations concerning what they deem as tasteful. These sensitivities are essential for you to grasp before you develop your campaign.

Don't Sell. Educate

Regardless whom you are communicating to, the cornerstone of your marketing should be EDUCATION. For example, if you are a pediatrician and you are targeting parents with young children, your marketing should educate parents concerning how to recognize and treat minor health problems and when it is imperative for parents to seek medical attention for their children. If you really want to attract new patients, however, teach parents how to choose a pediatrician. Assuming you do offer superior care, you next present your case for your practice. State why you are the best choice for their children based on the criteria you expressed. Obviously, you cannot do this honestly unless you do offer outstanding care. These are the methods Business Builders employs and why we do not take on a medical or dental practice as a client unless they can demonstrate they do indeed provide superior services.

Most medical and dental ads say about the same thing and make it difficult for individuals to make an educated decision. If, however, your ads teach how to make a choice and present a case that truly separates your practice from your competition, your ads will prove to be an overwhelming success. The key to making this work is to follow our seven-step Marketing Formula presented on our website. The Marketing Formula is one of two innovations we offer that separates Business Builders from our competitors.

