



A GUIDE TO GROWING YOUR PRACTICE OR MEDICAL FACILITY

Quick tips to increasing your brand, referrals and ultimately your revenue.

Greetings from MedLaunch!

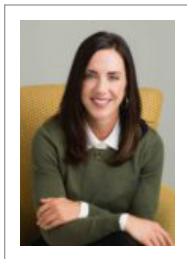
Thank you for taking the time to download this e-book. We have been sharing our medical practice and facility marketing insights from the field and our clients as blogs on our website. To make it easier on you, we put our tips and tricks in one place - this MedLaunch e-book.

To give you more background, MedLaunch is a unique healthcare relationship marketing firm that helps hospitals, practices and medical facilities grow and increase revenue. Our three-prong approach includes: enhancing the digital presence, face-to-face relationship building with our Physician Liaison program, and establishing proactive media relations.

It's a winning combination. Your practice can't wait. The results are a stronger market presence for the physician, practice or facility, increased referrals and revenue and more time for providers and administrators to focus on what's really important – the patients.

Do you want to grow your practice? Please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are happy to talk and give you some initial thoughts on how we can help you grow your practice, which in turn, helps you grow your revenue! Your reputation, relationships and results matter to us. Below are a few testimonials that shed more light on the MedLaunch advantage.

Thanks and I hope these spark ideas for you to activate your own relationship building and marketing plans. Remember, we are just a phone call or an email away!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ashley".

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"I remember when I started my practice. After years of school, expenses and moving my family across the country, having an organization like MedLaunch to jumpstart my practice would have been a great piece of mind for me. This is why I wanted to help create something for other doctors to help them succeed, both for those physicians just starting out, as well as those that may need to be "reinvigorated". MedLaunch can be the push to help you grow your practice."

- Dr. Rick Thompson; Cardiothoracic Surgeon, Founder & Medical Advisor

"Having worked with Ashley and the MedLaunch team for the past six months, I can say firsthand that their work ethic and drive is something to be proud of. I have watched as Ashley used her skills learned as a pharma rep to drive messaging of our providers into businesses that we wouldn't have even considered marketing to. She also had the ability to listen to the concerns and still push our new efforts and drive for success. I am extremely happy to have chosen to work with her and her team and would highly recommend them to anyone hiring new providers into a competitive market. She has helped us push 1-2 years of notoriety into a six-month process which has been appreciated by the providers involved along with the existing providers. Ashley has built a great relationship with the providers along with being someone I am proud to now call a friend."

- Tyler Toline MHA, FACHE, Chief Executive Officer, Saunders Medical Center

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Congrats, Med School Grads! Why You Need a Physician Liaison to Jumpstart Your Practice.

Congrats to all you new docs that will be graduating this month! What a long journey it's been for you – the time, the money, the blood, the sweat, the tears. You've made it! Many of you may already know where you are headed. Some may still be weighing your options. In either case, you're about to begin an adventure that has been years in the making. So much to be proud of and so much to look forward to!

Amidst the excitement and anticipation of a new practice, reality sets in. The patients most likely will not be lined up at your door when you arrive. To quote Kevin Costner in 1989's "Field of Dreams" – "If you build it, they will come" is not always true. Patients have to KNOW you are there in order to want to come to you. As a specialist, this most often starts with their PCP, and the competition for referrals is more intense than ever.

There are several marketing options that can help to build awareness amongst your fellow doctors, as you know. However, at the end of the day, the fastest way to build your practice is to EDUCATE OTHER MEDICAL PROVIDERS. If you are a specialist, it is absolutely crucial that other medical providers in your community that may refer to your specialty KNOW YOU ARE THERE. Will a letter do the trick? Maybe. But probably not very effectively. Enter the Physician Liaison.

Physician Liaisons were originally the domain of hospitals; however, they are starting to become commonplace among solo practices. Their role is to increase patient referrals, strengthen relationships with providers and staff, and provide customer service to your potential referral sources. They will become the voice of your practice in the community and build relationships needed to ensure a steady stream of future referrals. They will let them know about your qualifications and educate them on why – in saturated marketplace – that YOU are the best choice for their patients.

Relationship marketing for referrals is only one of the ways to promote yourself in a crowded marketplace. It can, however, most certainly produce the largest return. If implemented based on the right strategy by someone who knows how to execute, the investment associated with a Physician Liaison program can quickly be recovered by bringing increased referrals and profitability back into the practice.

In a 2013 survey from the Clinical Advisory Board Physician Survey, 66 percent of physicians said they were "very unlikely" to change their current referral pattern without a Physician Liaison actively communicating and building relationships with them. As a specialist, referrals are absolutely essential to getting your practice off the ground. Your competition may already be building relationships with your best referrers and their staff, so don't wait until it's too late! Hit the ground running by utilizing a Physician Liaison to build a solid network of referrals in your community.

3 Ways to Successfully Recruit Physicians

Are you among the many practices scrambling to recruit newly-graduated physicians? The physician recruitment environment is becoming more and more competitive due to the increasing physician shortage, which can make finding the right candidates for your practice a challenging process.

Recruiting physicians is like attracting new patients to your practice – you must promote the unique characteristics and positive aspects of your clinic in order to convince them to come! Here are three tips to speed up the recruitment process, stand out from the competition and attract talented physicians.

1. Clearly state details about the job that candidates care about and set your practice apart

Think beyond the job's location and a list of qualifications a candidate must meet in order to be considered. Think more about specific details that will make your job and your practice stand out and attract more candidates.

Detail information about your clinic, outdoor amenities in your area, the community, call schedule, exact amount of time off, salary range or long term earning potential, and other specifics like these. Candidates also want to know they will receive the support they need. This is the type of information that could very well be a deciding factor for a physician that is on the fence between a couple of offers.

2. Offer incentives as a part of the compensation package

Incentives are important in recruiting great physicians. Student loan repayments, signing bonuses and compensation for moving expenses are often common. A two-year compensation guarantee is a standard offering that is essential to attract new physicians who need income security as they ramp up their practice. Hiring a physician liaison to represent a new physician for the first 6 months can be a great recruiting tool, and very beneficial to both the physician AND the practice. 6 months of in-person marketing to potential referral sources can take the standard 2-year term that it takes for a physician to build a practice and become profitable down to 6-12 months. Offering a Physician Liaison to a new recruit can help your practice and your offer to stand out against competitors.

3. Consider work life balance and vacation time

Be accommodating! The importance of work-life balance should not be overlooked, particularly if the recruit will be moving to a new location. A flexible schedule is a major selling point among potential candidates, as more and more physicians are placing greater value on work-life balance. Play up your community's quality schools when recruiting surgeons with kids, or focus on entertainment, culture and community resources for other recruits. And never forget to recruit the spouse and family. Let the candidate know that you value his/her family and know how important it is that they are happy.

5 Ways to Maintain Referral Relationships

Referrals= New Business.

Building a strong referral network is a critical aspect of ensuring your medical practice is a success. For most medical practices, the primary source of new patients is other health care providers. Building lasting relationships with community physicians through referral-based marketing is essential and has shown lasting results that have helped many practices drastically increase their new patient numbers. Referral-based marketing takes time, but is something that most definitely should not be ignored.

So once these referral relationships are initiated, they must be cultivated. Building and nurturing those relationships is vital to the success of your practice. So while there isn't one "best" way to solidify your connections with referral sources, you can take a number of actions to build good will and credibility in these relationships. Here are 5 ways to ensure a steady stream of referrals:

1. Send a thank you card

A hand-written thank you card means more than you know. In this age of electronic communication, it leaves an impression that are truly appreciative of their referrals. Schedule in some time every week to write these thank yous.

2. Arrange a meeting

Meeting a referral source in person is an excellent opportunity to learn more about his or her practice and patients and to thank them and their staff for their trust in you.

3. Call a referral source

A personal phone call goes a long way. Touching base with those that keep your practice thriving is key—they will be glad to hear from you and keeping the referrer informed after seeing the patient shows the referring provider that you are thinking about the patient and that you care enough to keep them informed on a timely basis.

4. Return the favor

Offer your referral source a referral that might be useful. Perhaps a patient self-refers to you and doesn't have a PCP. This is a great opportunity to make a recommendation and can help to solidify an existing referral relationship.

5. Ask for Feedback

Getting direct feedback from those referrers you depend on is crucial. You could send a Physician Liaison to have periodic face-to-face conversations or you could make the connection yourself. Those personal phone calls mentioned above – you may be surprised at what you learn on those. They may present an opportunity to learn how they feel about your services and the benefits you offer their patients. Plus, by asking for feedback and making necessary modifications you demonstrate your commitment to providing them and their patients the best experience possible.

Use these 5 tips to maintain and strengthen your referral relationships and you will see a direct return on your marketing investment and build a network that will provide a steady stream of patients for your practice for years to come.

5 Tips to Get Your Story Out

What's new and exciting at your medical practice? Is it newsworthy? Should you be sharing it with your local media? It may sound intimidating, but it's really not hard and "earned media" is free marketing for your practice. It's also a great way to increase your brand exposure and enhance your reputation. The key to getting your story picked up is to be sure it is newsworthy. What's the hook? Content ideas include news about your providers learning a new cutting-edge procedure, your philanthropic involvement, bringing on new providers, a ribbon cutting at a new office location or health awareness months. Local media can aid in marketing your medical practice to potential referral sources and patients. Here are 5 tips to get your story out.

1. Write a press release.

You may not have any training in this, but it can be as easy as submitting a Word document and adding your logo and your contact information at the top. At the bottom, include a short summary about your medical practice. This is called a boilerplate. You may already have some great content on your website that you can simply cut and paste. Come up with a title and have the key point in the first paragraph. The rest of the body of the release should include the who, what, where, when, why and how. You can include one or two quotes from the key person in the story, which may be the doctor or the practice manager. If the story includes a community partner, co-brand the release and include a quote from them.

2. Determine your media contacts.

Have someone in your office research the radio, TV and newspapers in your community and put their contact information in a database. Some news stories may be better for TV (especially if it's an event) and some will be better as newspaper articles.

3. Send your media release.

This is best done via email. Don't forget to post the release on your website, too. Even if no one picks up your story, your patients, referring doctors and potential patients can read about you and your medical practice through your releases as they research you. Be sure that you take some time to jot down a few key thoughts in case they call you to interview over the phone or in person. You want some short, quick statements that make your point and cast you as a smart and approachable expert.

4. Consider the power of social media.

If you get coverage, post the links to your story on your website and in your social media posts. Ask your staff to like and share these on their pages to broaden the reach. If it's a strong story, you may even want to put a little money behind the post and boost it for a few weeks so that even more patients and potential referral sources in your community can see it. This can be as little as \$10!

5. Thank the reporter and offer to be an expert!

It's always nice to reach back out to the reporter who covered you and thank them. Take the time to explain what your medical practice is all about and how you can be a resource or subject matter expert for them on stories that apply to wellness, health or your specialty. Who knows – maybe they will ask you to be in future stories they are working on!

Good luck on getting your story out there!

3 Tips to Maximize Your Medical Practice's Philanthropy

You and your medical practice staff care for your patients day in and day out, but you also care about giving back to your local community! Giving back to causes you care about shows your patients, referral sources and the public your generous spirit and increases your medical practice's brand exposure. Whether it's participating in a cancer walk, sponsoring a gala for a nonprofit that helps kids suffering with illness or hosting a family wellness festival, this great community work needs to be planned out so that you maximize the opportunity.

As a team, develop a community outreach strategy for the year. What organizations are you or your partners already passionate about? Do they align with your specialty? Does your office staff already do some volunteering together or participate in a run or walk for charity? Do you want to do something quarterly, or sponsor one big signature event? Mapping out a plan is a great way to budget and it makes it easier to decline all the asks that you may get that just don't fit with your plan.

Contact the charity that interests you and your medical practice. Executive Directors or Development Directors are your key contacts. See what events they have coming up and what aligns with your calendar and interests. They will have sponsorship packages that you can review at different price points. You may want to ask whether any of your competitors are already in this space so that you stand out. Remember, these packages are negotiable so you can ask for additional benefits that may help you stand out. Examples include having them tag you 5 times on social media leading up to the event and putting your practice logo on their website, tickets, banners at the event or an ad in the program. Make sure your practice name is included in any press releases or media outreach. If it's an event, make sure your medical practice is mentioned at the podium with an explanation about why this charity matters to you and your practice.

Get the word out. You will want to include your participation in any e-newsletters or newsletters you do to your patients, referral sources or potential referral sources. You also need to share your involvement on your own social media channels leading up to the event and post pictures afterwards of you and your team in attendance. The nonprofit will likely do a press release, but it's always good to ask them to do it. Smaller towns and cities are always looking to cover "feel good" events to help the charities even gain more exposure and money. Ask them if they would include a quote from you in it. You may also want to add a tab to your website called "Community Matters" and list out the charities that you sponsor or provide volunteers to. Ask the nonprofit if you can include their logo too. Pictures of you and your team on this page help patients and referral sources see you care and work to make a difference in your local community.

Charitable acts are performed without the expectation of direct financial gain, but they certainly are not without their own rewards. When medical practices give back to causes in the community, people involved in those causes tend to want to support the medical practice in return. Serving with purpose goes far in increasing your brand awareness. Building a reserve of goodwill in your community means cultivating relationships with potential referral sources and patients and helping to build a pipeline for your medical practice. It's also a great way to involve your team and increase employee engagement and fun for your team! Nothing fills the spirit like helping others and fostering positive teamwork!

Lessons Learned from the Traditions of Back to School

It's still feels like summer. The pools are still open. The more relaxed schedule that often accompanies summer is still intact. However, in just a few days or weeks it will all come to an end. The kids will be up early, the hectic mornings will start and the hustle and bustle of fall activities will be in full swing. The school routine is always challenging at first, but there is something magical about the new school year. It's back-to-school shopping, reconnecting with friends, new beginnings and an overall fresh start.

What does ANY of this have to do with medical marketing, recruiting new doctors or growing your referral base? More than you would think! Reflect back for a moment on the start of a new school year. There are life lessons to consider NOW no matter how old we are or what we do. Here are a few to ponder.

1. “Make new friends but keep the old.”

There’s a popular summer camp song with these wise words and this tip is one we were all reminded of as the first day of school approached. It’s great advice that I connect with today more than I did in my schoolage days. It applies to our clients, co-workers, customers, associates and peers. You must take care of your relationships. In the business of medical practices, you must take the time to reconnect and thank the doctors that send you business regularly. They are your bread and butter and have helped you become the doctor you are today. Also, keep the first part of the verse in mind. The year is half over and what have you actively done to reach out to doctors you don’t know or that currently do not send you business? How hard would it be to commit to reaching out to one or two potential referral sources by Halloween to try and initiate or cultivate a referral relationship? Perhaps it’s tough to find time in your schedule for this. MedLaunch can help make this goal a reality!

2. Do you need a new backpack?

Ok, maybe not a literal backpack, but when is the last time you freshened up your logo, your branding, your marketing materials or even your website? Are your social media pages stale? Your brand becomes peoples’ perception of you. Stay current and if you’re overwhelmed, prioritize it and gradually chip away at it. Maybe you simply start by saving a portion of your budget for a rebranding in 2018.

3. A new year brings new goals.

So many people think that goal setting has to start January 1 each year and while I do advocate for annual planning, now is just as good as any time to look at your medical practice and set some short-term goals for the remainder of 2017. Having goals on paper makes you more likely to achieve them. You still have almost 5 months left in this year, so why not make the most of them? Perhaps this fresh start can help you prepare for your 2018 planning session now so that you are ready to attack 2018 with big growth goals. The key here is to get started on something – anything – and get a plan on paper.

For the parents out there, best of luck with the upcoming school year! Enjoy this time, as it goes fast! Here is a great quote from one of everyone’s favorite authors from our school days. I hope it motivates you to get focused on growth!

“You’re off to great places. Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting so get on your way.” -Dr. Seuss

Leverage the Power of a “Thank You”

Say thank you. It sounds so simple, but demonstrating your appreciation for referrals from other medical providers goes a long way. It has been said that if you demonstrate your appreciation the right way on the first physician referral, the referring doctor is 5x more likely to refer to you again.

Thank you for the business.

Thank you for the feedback.

Thank you for the referral.

When a physician refers to you, they want to feel confident that the patient they referred is in good hands and that the referral was appreciated. NOT thanking the referring physician is the quickest way to cut off referrals.

The best way to say thank you is face-to-face. If that's not possible, consider utilizing a Physician Liaison to go to the referring physician's office and thank them on your behalf. Follow this up with a personal phone call and accompany the visit and the phone call with a handwritten note. An idea to make this process easier to implement – put a stamped envelope on a new patient's chart as a reminder.

Some ideas for handwritten notes, sent to the referring physician via snail mail:

- Thank you for the referral. We appreciate the confidence you place in our practice.
- We appreciate your referral. Thank you for your trust and confidence.
- Your referrals are our greatest compliment. Thank you for your trust!
- The sincerest compliment that our practice can be given is a referral from another healthcare provider. We appreciate your confidence and assure you that your patient will be treated with the same skill, care and judgment they receive in your office. Thank you.

In closing, let's break down the cost of saying “thank you” in order to increase patient pipeline cultivation and retention.

- A phone call to the referring physician to let them know about your meeting with their patient: a couple of cents
- A handwritten thank you note thanking them for their referral and for the trust and confidence they have placed in you and your medical practice: \$3
- An endless referral source: PRICELESS

Remember, one of the main pillars of a successful medical practice is to obtain and maintain physician referrals. It is crucial to let your referral sources know that they are appreciated.

Fill Your Schedule: 4 Things You Must Do Get More Referrals

Every physician wants a schedule full of patients they can help.

Many physicians do not understand the importance of marketing in today's new healthcare economy. Generating business MUST be on the minds of every physician, otherwise they may find themselves out of a job.

When you're a specialist, marketing to potential patients via Internet and social media is a small part of your marketing strategy. The big part? REFERRING PHYSICIANS. It's time to get your brand in front of medical providers that refer patients to your specialty. THIS is how smart physicians build successful practices.

To that end, here are 4 things you must do to build your referral network.

1. Be someone they know

Less than 10% of physicians routinely refer to physicians they don't know and about 40% say they know something specific about the specialists' outcomes or quality records. The more well-known you are in your community, the greater your opportunity for referrals from other medical providers (namely PCPs). No time for this? Hire a Physician Liaison to make connections on your behalf. This is a very effective model that has shown time and time again to help specialty practices build patient pipelines that ensure long term success.

2. Create a blog

Give referring medical providers a chance to get to know you, the scope of your practice, your expertise and your passions. The more they get to know you, the more they trust you. The more they trust you, the more comfortable they are sending their patients to you. Your blog is a platform that you can personally customize to help other physicians get to know more about you and your specialty. Short, newsy pieces with clinical information that PCPs can use are a great way to win points. Think carefully about what your referral sources need to know. Then give it to them in brief. Post to your website and social media sites and invite referring medical providers to follow it. Again, a Physician Liaison can help with this.

3. Make referring to you EASY

Help referring providers EASILY make a referral to your office. Get them the codes they need. Provide their office with a Referral Form that they MAY use if it makes their jobs easier. Instruct your staff to be kind, friendly and helpful with staff calling from referring physicians' offices. Make sure your people know who the VIPs are and treat them as such.

4. ALWAYS acknowledge the first referral from a new source.

A call, a thank you note (a hired Physician Liaison can help with this too), an email. SOMETHING. An example: "I am so pleased I am able to help you with Mrs. Smith. Thank you for your trust and the opportunity."

Referrals are earned one patient at a time and many times they result from lasting relationships with very satisfied referring physicians. Attracting more referrals starts with earning the trust of referring medical providers in your community. When they DO send a referral, deliver exceptional, reliable care and THANK THEM for their referral. Physicians who have a positive experience with you as a medical provider and receive good feedback from their patients, will likely refer to you again and again.

Details Matter: How Little Things Add Up and Can Be the Key to a Successful Medical Practice

As a physician leader or medical practice manager, you always need to have your eye on the big picture. It's up to you to be aware of potential opportunities and threats and to determine the direction that your specialty practice will take. However, this does not mean that you can afford to neglect the details. Sometimes it's the little things that make the difference between a practice that is thriving and one that is not. Here are some reasons why you must pay attention to the little things:

It gives your patients and referral sources confidence in you.

When you demonstrate that you are on top of the details, it gives your patients and referring physicians' confidence in your ability to practice good medicine and provide the best care for your patients. Often your patients' and other physicians' perceptions of your practice are actually a combination of several small details. For example, do you make it easy for other physicians to refer to your practice? Are you utilizing a Physician Liaison to go to their offices and let them know that helping their patients that need your care is important to you? Is it easy for a Referral Coordinator to call into your office and get an appointment for a patient scheduled quickly? Does your nurse thank them for their trust before getting off the phone call? Being on top of the details communicates excellence to those that may refer to you.

What's little to you may not be little to your patients or referring providers.

Sometimes your perception of what constitutes a small detail is completely different from your patients' or referral sources. What appears insignificant to you could be vitally important to them. For example, a thank you note to a physician that sends a patient can make all the difference and can mean many more patients coming your way in the future. While this extra touch may be (and very often is) easily forgotten by other physicians or practices, it goes a long way in letting others in the medical community know you are grateful and humble and easy to work with. Another example is the cleanliness and comfort of your office. Simple, but a tidy waiting room, clean patient rooms and spotless bathrooms are things well within your control that often times mean a lot to patients. Going the extra mile can mean big returns for you and your practice.

Sometimes small things add up to big things.

Big problems that can sink a practice often start out as small details. For example, if patients are not treated with kindness from the front desk staff or a referring provider gets put on hold by a rude phone operator from your office, they may decide that doing business with you or your practice is frustrating and move on to your competition. It won't take many patients or referring providers leaving to impact your practices' bottom line. Make sure that EVERYONE in your office is on the same page and committed to attention to detail.

If you don't have time to pay attention to the details, hire someone who is; it could make a big difference. In the end, that's what increases your future opportunities and referral sources and your bottom-line.

Here's my challenge to you as a medical practice leader:

Examine the details of your practice and ask yourself how they reflect the message you want to send to your patients and potential and existing referral sources. What changes can you make that could create a Wow Factor? What do you want your patients and other physicians in the community to experience? If your patients or referring providers are writing or talking about you, what do you want them to say?

I'd highly recommend, then, that you attend to those details immediately and see how your practice begins to change.

5 Things I Wish They Would Have Taught Me in Medical

This week's MedLaunch blog post, "**5 Things I Wish They Would Have Taught Me in Medical School**", comes from our Co-founder and Medical Advisor, Dr. Rick Thompson. Dr. Thompson is a practicing cardiothoracic surgeon in Lincoln, NE. He attended the University of Pennsylvania where he took courses at the Wharton School of Business, while majoring in the Biological Basis of Behavior. He went on to attend Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons for medical school, followed by a general surgery residency at Duke University and cardiothoracic surgery training at the University of Virginia. He has his MBA from Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Dr. Thompson is an expert in physician performance and growing specialty medical practices. While at Lancaster General Hospital, he doubled the size of the thoracic surgery practice and helped them become a nationally ranked leader in quality outcomes. As Medical Director of Thoracic Surgery and Mechanical Circulatory Support at Bryan Health, he transformed a practice lagging in quality and volume, into a regional leader, helping them be named a 3-Star STS (top 12% nationally) program for the first time in its history. He started a mechanical circulatory assist device program at Bryan that has saved lives and grows each year. Dr. Thompson now leads Bryan Health's new initiative to build an integrated cancer center.

His entrepreneurial spirit started at Duke when he and others, started MercuryMD, an early digital health startup delivering patient information from hospital systems to physician Palm Pilots. The company sold for \$48 million. In 2014, he and Dr. Ryan Whitney founded Together+Clinic, a digital health startup, with the vision to revolutionize continuum care in medicine. Dr. Thompson is a frequent speaker at national conferences and has his MBA from Nebraska Wesleyan University.

- 1. Relationships** - Developing a great medical practice is about cultivating relationships with other physicians and mid-level providers. Doctors send patients to other doctors that they know and trust, not physicians that they have "heard good things" about. This requires effort and needs to be an ongoing part of your practice. Just like you spend time dictating your office charts, similarly you need to block time to develop your relationships with other doctors. Even if you are a primary care provider, your communication with specialists shows them that you take good care of your patients leading to a better community reputation.
- 2. Money, Money, Money** – Unfortunately, we can no longer all be altruistic doctors who have practices that see patients and perform procedures for free. At some point, we need to generate income to take care of our families and pay back our student debt. This means that even though we didn't learn much about money, billing, salary negotiation, etc; we now need to become experts. Medical coding and billing is complicated, but learnable. You must communicate with your coder and biller and make sure you are providing them with the information they need to get you paid.
- 3. Keep Learning** – Education does not stop when you leave the confines of your residency program or medical school. Learning is a lifelong process. 95% of adult learning is self-directed. We all need to find our weaknesses and learn how to be better. The good news is that in today's world there are more resources than you could ever imagine to learn about any topic you could come up with. Not sure about RVU's --- look it up and read about it. Unclear about MIPS or MACRA – there are dozens of great articles about them.
- 4. Keep Your Eyes Open** – There are a ton of opportunities out there for you to market your practice and increase exposure without spending any money. Participating in community activities, leveraging spouse connections in the community, offering to give talks on subject matters that you are an expert, etc. Often times community groups like the Lions Club, Optimist Club, American Legion, and Chamber of Commerce are looking for speakers for meetings and they all love doctors willing to explain things in language they can easily understand.
- 5. Be Nice** – As tempting as it may be after a long day to be grouchy or short with the environmental services employee on the elevator, instead smile introduce yourself and let them know how much you appreciate what they do. Stop by the volunteer office at the hospital and introduce yourself. Every interaction is an opportunity to develop your reputation in town. If you think you are not in the sales business, think again!

The Importance of Online Reviews for Physicians

Your online reputation as a physician is crucial. These days, the Internet allows patients to easily access information on you and your practice and they are increasingly relying on the reviews they find to influence them in their decision-making process. A recent poll showed that 92% of potential patients read online reviews of their healthcare provider prior to their appointment and 67% state they were influenced by these reviews.

It is important that, as a physician, you are proactive in ensuring that there are positive reviews on the top physician review sites (RateMDs, Vitals and Healthgrades, to name a few) What can you do to make this happen?

Solicit positive feedback. Ask for reviews and make it easy. A few ideas on how to do that...

1. A take-away sheet with sites and directions on how to leave a review. Train your staff to be on the lookout for happy patients in the office. When they find one, give them one of the sheets on their way out.
2. An email with a link to the review site. Again, being aware of those patients that you know would be happy to help by taking 5 minutes to write a brief synopsis of their experience with you, your staff and/or your practice is key.
3. Set up a computer in your lobby for patients to leave reviews there. Put up signage with instructions. Happy patients will gladly use the time spent in your waiting room to leave a few positive words.

Online reviews of you and your practice will also increase online visibility and strengthen overall SEO (search engine optimization). They show Google that your practice is relevant and deserves to be shown in local search results. This is one of several aspects of improving your SEO, but working to organically improve your place in search results through increasing online visibility will only help to increase your new patient acquisitions, help to solidify your referral network and make your practice stand out. The more your brand appears online, the more potential patients and referral sources recognize your name and reputation.

Providing excellent care and service is the first step in getting positive online reviews. Remember, happy patients come back, tell their friends, family and/or their referring/primary care physician. Make sure your office staff's customer service is on point...frequently THEY are the ones that inspire positive reviews (or negative). And remember, the positive reviews that are posted online can also be used as testimonials on your website!

Lastly, be aware that negative reviews happen to even the best physicians and medical practices. You can't please everyone, but you CAN focus on the happy patients. If you are a patient-centric practice focused on customer service, the positive experiences will far outweigh the negative ones. Monitor your reviews on the top sites. Respond to negative ones with concern, honesty and genuine kindness. Avoid arguing or discrediting.

Begin encouraging your satisfied patients to post testimonials and reviews about your practice. If you have considered utilizing a Physician Liaison to help build your referral network locally, make sure you have polished up your online presence BEFORE sending the representative out into the community. Referral marketing through in-person visits will greatly increase the amount of people that are Googling your name and practice, so you want to make sure that your track record of satisfying patients is prevalent online!

5 Ways to Enhance Referral Patterns

Nothing has a greater marketing impact or is a better use of time or money than specialists taking the time and effort to make themselves known referring physicians. The referring physician is in fact your most important customer, next to your patients. This simple but effective approach to marketing yourself and your practice will be well worth the time and dollars spent. Enter the Physician Liaison...a representative that can help build these referral relationships on your behalf.

1. Make yourself known to potential referral sources.

This applies to both existing practices and physicians as well as new ones. The most productive marketing strategy for a medical provider is introductions to referring providers. Creating connections to other medical providers in the community is essential and produces significant dividends. You may utilize a Physician Liaison to cultivate relationships on your behalf and/or to facilitate face-to-face meetings via drop-ins, breakfasts or lunches in your potential referral sources' offices. It doesn't have to be fancy or a big deal, just drop-in to introduce yourself, chat briefly about what you do and thank them for their trust in you. A Physician Liaison can often schedule a few of these stops over a few hours. Part of a day blocked out for meetings like this every now and then can produce substantial dividends for your practice. Whether it is the Liaison making introductions or facilitating a face-to-face meeting, the strategy is extremely effective.

2. Make referrals easy for referring physician's staff.

Utilize a Physician Liaison to distribute cards and brochures for your practice to potential referral sources. Make it easy for them to contact you and to refer a patient. Provide them with a stack of cards for each nurse's station and make sure they always have enough. Give them pads of referral forms to use as an option if it makes referring to you easier for them. A Physician Liaison in their office offering to help them make referrals easier can go a long way.

3. Create special relationships with the referring physician's staff.

A Physician Liaison can serve in a customer service roll for you, making the jobs of the referring physician's staff easier by expediting and simplifying appointments for their patients and making them feel important. Accommodating their patients and providing easy access for their staff makes you look good.

4. Monitor your referral patterns.

Keep a log of who's referring and check it monthly. Monitor new referrals and declines in referrals. Send "thank you for the referral" notes. These notes keep your practice top-of-mind for referring physicians and are not "the norm" amongst specialists. A handwritten note acknowledging the referring physician's trust in you goes a very long way, and is typically something that your competitors are probably not doing. This process can also be initiated and executed by a Physician Liaison, leaving just a signature to you.

5. Recognize referred patients as ambassadors of your practice..

When they return to their primary care physician and are happy with the treatment and service they received, it helps to build positive relations with you and your practice. See referred patients in a timely manner, treat them well and communicate promptly back with the referring provider.

The Key to a Successful Medical Practice: Unlock Your Inner Business Genius

Whether you like it or not, now more than ever, practicing medicine is running a business. The days of stumbling into medical practice success are gone. A practice not only needs your clinical expertise, it also needs what you weren't taught in medical school — business leadership and management. You must think about your bottom line and set realistic but meaningful goals to increase revenue, all while continuing to provide the best care possible for your patients.

Practices that find innovative ways to market to their patients and referral sources are the ones that stay relevant and thrive. Here are a few things that can add value to your business and ensure a successful and thriving future:

1. View marketing as an investment in your practice

The old adage “you have to spend money to make money” is so true. When done right, marketing can produce returns that will ensure your practice thrives for years to come. Professional marketers can help you figure out the best way to achieve your goals and track your returns. Investing in marketing is investing in the long term success of your practice.

2. Stop doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results

A majority of physicians rely on traditional marketing: newspaper articles, billboards, ads in local physician and medical directories, etc. There can be a place for this type of advertising, but it's likely pricey and newspaper circulation nationwide is on the decline due to competition from Internet media. The key is finding cost-effective ways to market your practice...strategies that can get you the most “bang for your buck.”

Referral marketing can increase your referral patient base by utilizing a Physician Liaison to represent you in the offices of your potential referral sources, establishing relationships with referring physicians and their staff. Patients trust the recommendation of their physicians, who refer to physicians they know and trust. You've got build that trust and rapport and show your referral sources what makes your practice the best choice for their needs.

Don't be scared of spending money on marketing and be sure to think outside the box. Look at marketing as an investment, seeing as effective marketing will raise awareness of your practice and increase your patient base.

3. Be proactive about getting positive online reviews

It's important to pay attention to what patients are saying about you on review sites like Healthgrades, WebMD, RateMDs, ZocDoc and Vitals. Today's tech-savvy patients and medical providers are very likely to check out your reviews before becoming your patients or referring to your practice, so take some time to see what has been said about you on these sites.

Be proactive in making sure these sites are populated with positive reviews of you and your practice. Many doctors feel awkward asking patients to post a review online, but you'd be surprised at how many happy patients are willing to share. A nurse or physician might say, "What you experienced could be really helpful for others to hear about! Would you mind writing a few words about your experience?" To facilitate the process, many medical practices print cards to have their staff hand out to patients. We have a client that recently put a computer in their waiting room, with a review site pulled up and signage with instructions on how to write a review, so that patients can do it while they are waiting.

Don't worry if you don't get all perfect, positive reviews. In fact, perfection may raise questions, since prospective patients will realize there must have been occasions where a patient got annoyed by being kept waiting or other issues. Use these complaints as a way to reach out to that patient to try and make it right or try to improve your practice's performance in that particular area.

And remember, these reviews can also be used as testimonials on your website or in social media posts for your practice.

4. Establish or Enhance Your Presence on Social Media

There are many ways to use social platforms to market a practice to potential patients and referral sources. These days, if you're not doing it you are very likely a step behind your competition. Use social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to share information about your practice, your providers, events you are involved in and health tips related to your specialty. Encourage patients, family, friends and employees to "like" the page, as more likes will increase direct user traffic to your site. You may also want to consider starting a blog where you provide wellness tips, promote local health events, and discuss general, positive information about yourself and your practice. Promote the blog on Twitter and use it to engage with organizations in your community. As a bonus, all of these things can organically improve your SEO, which can help your practice's placement in Google searches for your specialty.

5. Increase your community engagement

Get involved in your community! Providing support to local causes will get you and your practice noticed and project a charitable, positive image of your practice to others. Include your staff in community service projects, fundraising events, philanthropic run/walks, local conferences, school fairs, etc. Prospective patients and referral sources will take note!

Leverage Strengths, Grow Your Practice

Finding more time in a day in today's busy world and retaining dynamic team members are two important issues facing medical practices today. Role clarity, technology and process improvement all can help make both issues less daunting. Consider the climate you are creating and the way you lead and empower others.

As a Nebraska-based company, MedLaunch Solutions is fortunate to have grown up with Gallup in our backyard. They have studied strengths for decades and the power of leveraging peoples' strengths. By following Gallup theory, not only are people happier and more productive but they are healthier, less stressed and able to manage their emotions better both at work and at home.

“Gallup's data show that simply learning their strengths makes employees 7.8% more productive, and teams that focus on strengths every day have 12.5% greater productivity. Investing in and focusing on employees' talents boosts employee and customer engagement, according to Gallup's research, leading to higher levels of performance, profitability, productivity, and greater earnings per share for businesses.” (Gallup Business Journal, 2/20/2014)

The more a manager focuses on leveraging their employees' natural strengths such as assigning tasks based on what they naturally enjoy doing, talking to them about what gives them energy and realizing what tasks they complete fast, the more a person excels and the more the employee feels valued.

The strengths based focus also applies to the manager. If they have good self-awareness and look at the critical functions of their role, they can see where it makes the most sense to spend their time. If there are things that don't align with his or her strengths, they too can apply this strengths model by delegating to a team member tasks for their development or that they may enjoy, thus freeing up the manager to do other important tasks, maximizing the time in a day.

So, what are you good at? What are your team members good at? It sounds easy but not many people like analyzing themselves or really know how to describe what they excel at professionally. People know what they “do” but ask your team what their talent is and you may be met with silence. Don't fret, there are several types of tools out there to help identify a team member's strengths including Gallup's Strengthsfinder Assessment.

Talking about the results of each other's assessments can be a great way for you to get to know your staff better, yourself better and improve office dynamics. It can also help you realize that you may have some gaps of skills and abilities that you need to keep in mind next time you make hiring decisions. Strong practices have a diverse set of talents and strengths. Lastly, it also gives you a common language to use with each other when having performance talks, meetings or when you are looking at who needs to be assigned particular tasks and projects.

Think about it, don't you want a happier, healthier more engaged staff to help you grow your practice? Don't you want to have your patients interact with staff that is positive and proud to be a part of your team?

Having a strong practice with engaged employees make it fun and easy for us to market. If you want to learn more, contact MedLaunch Solutions and for more resources, check out the Gallup website at: <https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/Home/en-US/CliftonStrengths-Resources-Learning>

6 Best Practices for Referral Marketing for Specialists

1. Welcome new providers to the area

Being aware of new physicians in your area and making an effort to reach out to them with a welcome letter or call is important. Share a little about yourself and your practice and provide your contact info. Make a personal connection by offering to help introduce them to other physicians in the community or to be a resource for questions about schools, daycares, family needs, etc. if appropriate.

2. Make face-to-face meetings with referrers a priority

I have seen firsthand what a face-to-face meeting with a potential referral source can mean for a specialist. It's so rare for a physician to take time out of their busy day to stop by to meet a potential referrer face-to-face...so when it DOES happen, physicians and office staff are shocked and appreciative. Use a Physician Liaison to plan a few hours to visit top referrers or potential referrers and have him/her facilitate these visits and attend with you to forge relationships that have potentially already been initiated with providers and staff. Hand deliver an afternoon snack or a Christmas basket. 2 or 3 hours blocked out of your schedule every now and then to make visits like this will pay off tremendously.

3. Follow up with the referrer

Timely follow-up on patients sent is essential. Send emails or make calls yourself to inform referrers about your visit with their patient. Adding the personal touch shows referrers that you truly care about their patients. After you follow up, send a personal handwritten note. Using a Physician Liaison can help with the time commitment that this task takes – have them write the notes to referrers and then you sign them before they are sent.

Referrers want to partner with providers that make things easy for them and their staff, are committed to excellent patient care and appreciate the referrals. Scheduling time each week for these tasks will help in building a robust referral network.

4. Simplify the referral process

Making referrals to your practice EASY is essential. Use a Physician Liaison to let referrers' staff know that they are there to help them make the process simple. Consider posting a user-friendly patient referral form on your website for physicians and other referral sources to access, fill out and submit to your practice. Or create pads of referral forms to have a Physician Liaison hand-deliver to referral practices and explain to the person that makes the referral decisions that these forms are simply for their convenience and they may use them if it makes their life easier...but that they aren't required. A Physician Liaison can find out how each practice prefers to refer and get them whatever resources are beneficial for them. The key is convenience. Be the specialist that is dedicated to making things EASY on referrers and their staff.

5. Educate referrers on your specialty areas

Be clear and concise about who you are, what you do and how you can help their patients. Create a marketing piece that gives this information and make sure each nurses station, provider, etc. has plenty of these pieces along with a stack of your business cards. A Physician Liaison for your practice can educate providers and staff on what you are best at and they type of patients you can help with.

6. Make friends with the office staff

The office support staff, receptionist, Practice Manager, Referral Coordinator, nurse or medical assistant may actually do more of the referring than the provider. Finding out WHO makes the referral decisions is often half the battle. A Physician Liaison can be your investigator in finding out who the right person to cultivate relationship with is, and then build rapport and trust with that person.

Why Care About Your Practice Culture?

Every organization, from small businesses to large corporations, has a culture. The culture refers to the values and attitudes of employees in the business or organization. A healthy company culture values each employee regardless of his job duties, which results in employees working as a team to meet the company's and their own personal needs. A healthy culture improves the performance of a business in a number of areas is also responsible for attracting and attaining great talent, as well as creating a fun, happy and exciting work environment.

Your practice culture defines the way in which your team interacts with one another, with your patients and with your referrers. Your practice culture guides your team, as well as inspires and motivates employees. A great practice culture attracts patients and referrals, which, in turn, creates practice success. Patients and physician referrers will choose your practice over others because your employees believe in your mission and love their jobs. Understanding this principal will quickly allow you to see the importance of practice culture.

Practices thrive by working together, recognizing each staff member's needs and issues, and dealing creatively with daily challenges in a positive, effective manner. Each practice has its own unique culture, but productivity, practice morale, patient care and referrals from other medical practices can be improved for all practices by making company culture development a priority. Here are some ideas:

1. Create an attitude where everyone in the practice participates in improving your culture. Encourage staff members to bring good ideas out in the open. This can create the ultimate outcome of improved care for each patient served in your office!
2. Openly talk about how things are done. Find out which staff member has knowledge in areas that need to be fixed — let him take the lead in changing “how we've always done it.”

3. Do a daily or weekly huddle, again using open communication, but use this time to review what happened yesterday and what may be the bottlenecks for the day ahead.
4. Share positive stories and successful patient outcomes with staff members.
5. Recognize each other with a friendly greeting in the morning, thank each other for a job well done, and find ways to reinforce the behavior that you want and expect.
6. Consider professional development opportunities for your employees. There are many interesting professional development initiatives you can explore to allow employees to learn and develop on the job.
7. Think about philanthropic opportunities for your practice. It doesn't need to be drastic. There are plenty of smaller things you can do as a practice to give back to and get involved in your community. Volunteer together a few times a year or allocate a designated amount of time (maybe just an hour a month) for off-site volunteer activities.

In closing, ask yourself -- What's your practice culture like? How can you make it better? How can you make your practice a 'best' place to work? How can your employees make the referral process more pleasant for other medical practices?

Your practice culture should be designed for and built by you and your employees. These priorities give you a place to start, but the strongest practice cultures develop from input and feedback from employees.

Don't forget, change starts at the top. Physician owners and leaders, as well as practice managers, must see the need for and be open to creative change; recognizing that every staff member can have a lot to offer. Getting everyone involved is a great first step. Communicate your support for creating a new attitude and don't give up! Ultimately it will improve the care your practice provides to each and every patient and increase referrals from other physicians in your community!

5 Common Referral Marketing Mistakes

Physician referrals. They are essential if you want to grow your practice. Most specialty healthcare providers, surgery centers and hospitals would agree that referral marketing is the most important marketing strategy. With strong referral networks, providers can rely on a continuous stream of new patients for their practice.

The reality is, most physicians don't want to think about marketing. They want to focus on their patients and being the best clinician they can be, despite the fact that expertise will only get them so far when it comes to physician referrals. No matter what your opinion on the effectiveness and value of marketing, it is a fact that businesses do not grow without it. In order to grow your medical practice, you have to market to some degree to get patients to walk through your door.

Cultivating and maintaining strong referral relationships requires planning, resources and effort. Whether you have an internal person doing your referral marketing or you've hired a Physician Liaison to help build positive referral relationships for you, here are 5 common mistakes to avoid:

1. Forgetting to cultivate existing referral relationships

Those physicians that have been sending you patients for years – they'd never think of sending patients to another specialist of your type, right? Wrong. They have options on where to refer and there are new specialists coming to your town all the time. Take the time to develop and nurture these existing referral relationships.

2. Ignoring physicians that don't refer

Things change. Doctors retire. Relationships waver. Referring physicians may not even know you're there. Put these physicians on your radar screen. Make stops into their office a few times to remind them of you, your practice and the patients that you can help with.

3. Failing to communicate with referring providers and their staff

Report back to the referring physician about their patient quickly. Basically, never let the referred patient get back to the referring physician before you do. Also, when possible, refer back to the referring physician. Remember, it is in giving that you receive.

4. Ignoring relationships with office staff of referring physicians

Relationships with staff – specifically the individuals that often times are left to make the final decision about where the patients are referred to – are important. In fact, asking to speak to a nurse, a practice manager or a Referral Coordinator is a request that is granted far more often than a request to speak to the doctor. Building rapport with the gatekeeper – ie. the receptionist – can also be very beneficial. They see you, know your commitment and your consistency, and are more likely to pass on your message to the doctor, which in turn can positively affect referrals to your office.

5. Make referring to your office easy

Everyone in your practice – well beyond the marketing department or marketing contractor – affects your marketing. Those people that talk to staff from referring providers' offices have an effect on the referral relationship between the two physicians. The referral process must be easy and the individual in your office must be personable, patient and prompt. This process influences your reputation and referrals.

Building a strong referral network takes some effort and maintaining it should be an integrated, ongoing part of running your medical practice, not something you do only when your patient volume starts to dwindle. Avoiding these pitfalls will help you keep your referrers and expand your referral base.

How Building Staff-to-Staff Relationships in Physician Offices Adds New Patients to Your Practice

I spent a lot of years in physicians' offices developing relationships with the physicians and staff in a pharmaceutical company sales role. I have spent the years since in sales and marketing roles in the human resources technology and consulting and medical practice marketing industries. No matter what I was marketing, be it a product, service or a company, there was always one common thread. Relationships are hands down the most important thing to consider when building a business or practice.

Relationship marketing differs from other forms of marketing in that it recognizes the long-term value of customer relationships and what they mean to the long term success of a business (or a practice in your case). When strong ties are created between physicians and those physicians and their staff that are referral sources, referral networks are built, patient pipelines are filled and medical practices grow.

Internal marketing is crucial to building your referral network and growing your practice. Realizing that your staff – everyone from the receptionist to the nurse to the midlevel providers – affects how your brand is built and how your reputation is cultivated. Anyone that has contact with other doctors, referring nurses, patients, potential patients – they ALL influence your reputation and referrals. So before taking your marketing efforts for referrals external, make sure you are buttoned up internally.

Building relationships with referring physicians is essential. However, very frequently, it's the nurse or Referral Specialist that is actually making the referral. Marketing to them is essential, and your staff building relationships with them is essential. Your receptionist, your nurse, your medical assistant – they should be trained to treat staff from referring offices with the same care and concern that they treat your patients. Your staff must make it as easy and pleasant as possible for a referral to be made to you. Referring practices want to know that you can see their patient quickly, that your office is going to take care of their patient and that your office will provide good and prompt follow-up communication. Fulfilling the expectations of the referring physicians' office before, during and after a referral is extremely important.

The "Total Office Call/Strategy" - that is, building relationships with not only referring physicians but also their staff - can influence the development of long term relationships in offices that refer to your practice. Whether you're just starting practice or you've been practicing for 30 years, the key to getting patient referrals from other physicians is to gain the trust of referring physicians and their staff. Focusing all your attention on the physician can result in missed opportunities to meet others in referring offices who influence the referral process and may be responsible for sending future patients your way. Make it a goal – through the implementation of a Liaison or practice representative – to develop a strong partnership with the entire practice!

Tis the Season for Giving: Why Philanthropy Should Be Important to Medical Practices

“One person can make a difference, and every person should try.” ~ John F. Kennedy

‘Tis better to give than receive, as the old adage goes. And at no time of year do we feel this more keenly than the holidays! The spirit of giving is everywhere. As a medical practice or facility, it is essential to remember how giving back benefits your doctors, patients, staff and your community.

Managing a busy practice is all-encompassing. With everything medical providers and their staff have on their plates, giving back to their communities may be the last thing on their minds. Who has the extra time or money to volunteer or donate to numerous charities? Yet evidence shows that the rewards for doctors’ philanthropic efforts are far-reaching. Not only do patients and the community benefit, but it turns out doctors and their practices do, as well.

Here are 3 ways how giving back can help your practice:

- 1. Giving back to their communities can actually help doctors attract new patients.** Participating in volunteer efforts that are relevant to your target patients gets your name out there and shows your potential patients and referral sources that you care about your community. For instance, if you’re an orthopedic surgeon, conduct safe exercise seminars at your local health club. If you’re an oncologist, sponsor and attend the local cancer walk.
- 2. Sponsor a local charity event or fundraiser.** This puts your practice in a positive light and shows your community what you value.
- 3. Charitable efforts can help combat negative doctor stereotypes.** Sometimes physicians are assumed to be not very generous givers or not supportive of the community. Giving back to causes you care about shows your patients, referral sources and the public your generous spirit and increases your medical practice’s brand exposure.

Where to start? Contact the charity that interests you and your medical practice. Executive Directors or Development Directors are your key contacts. See what events they have coming up and what aligns with your calendar and interests. Next, get the word out! You will want to include your participation in any newsletters you do to your patients, referral sources or potential referral sources. You also need to share your involvement on your own social media channels leading up to the event and post pictures afterwards of you and your team in attendance. You may also want to add a tab to your website called “Community Matters” and list out the charities that you sponsor or provide volunteers too. Pictures of you and your team on this page help patients and referral sources see you care and work to make a difference in your local community.

Charitable acts are performed without the expectation of direct financial gain, but they certainly are not without their own rewards. When medical practices give back to causes in the community, people involved in those causes tend to want to support the medical practice in return. Serving with purpose goes far in increasing your brand awareness. Building a reserve of goodwill in your community means cultivating relationships with potential referral sources and patients and helping to build a pipeline for your medical practice. It’s also a great way to involve your team and increase employee engagement and fun for your team! Tis the season for giving!

The ROI of Relationship Marketing in the Medical Industry

Competition in the medical practice and facility industries is more intense and challenging than ever before and is evolving on a daily basis. Leveraging current referral relationships and cultivating new ones through the utilization of a Physician Liaison could make the difference in whether your practice or facility succeeds or fails.

THE BIG QUESTION – How do you determine the return on investment for relationship marketing for referrals/ Physician Liaison efforts? The answer is, it's often rather hard to determine. These types of efforts have the goal of increasing referrals by building relationships and establishing practice brand awareness that will continue to produce results years down the road. Building the trust of referring medical providers takes time...time for them to evaluate their patients' results and satisfaction, as well as time for them to evaluate the referral process, the communication back from physicians they've referred their patients to and interactions with their staff.

Having said that, there are certain things you must do in order to evaluate the success of your referral marketing campaign.

1. Identify and prioritize your target list.

Who are the physicians and practices that you would like to see an increase in referrals from? And what is the potential opportunity for referrals? Rank them in order of importance.

2. Determine your baseline referral numbers.

This is harder for some than others. All organizations utilize different practice and patient management platforms. Most EMR/EHR platforms have a field to capture the referring provider's name. If this is not possible for you, create a spreadsheet. It is imperative to know where you are to determine where you want to be.

3. Determine how you will track new referrals (both for individual providers and the practice as a whole, if that applies).

Once you've done this, the best way to determine if your marketing plan is paying off, is whether you have a reasonable patient acquisition cost. For example, if you spent \$3,000 on marketing in a month and acquire 50 new patients, then your patient acquisition cost is \$60 per patient. If a new patient is worth \$100 in profit, then the referral marketing campaign in this example is highly profitable. Keep in mind that worth of new patient can be determined by either calculating the average profit on the first visit OR the lifetime worth of the patient (more relevant in my opinion). Also keep in mind that there's nothing worse than spending marketing dollars to acquire a new patient only to lose the patient to poor service, long wait times or a rude staff member. Make sure your practice is ready to take on the new patients that you are spending marketing dollars to recruit.

A Physician Liaison is the face of your clinic and your providers to the referral audience. Their success is your success and comes from building strong relationships with the referral decision makers in the practices that refer to you. Beyond the doctors themselves, oftentimes it's their nurses, front office staff, midlevel providers, medical assistants and sometimes even business owners, managers and employees. Their goal is to investigate, educate and engage your referral audience. The result? Brand awareness for you and your practice is built and a robust referral network is cultivated and/or maintained. More referrals over time = more patients = return on your marketing investment in the long term.

Practices and facilities that are not leveraging strategic referral relationships will find themselves lagging behind those that have already embraced this very important aspect of ensuring a robust referral network and a packed patient pipeline. Revisit your game plan and develop a business model integrating relationship-building programs for referrals to keep your practice or facility thriving. The model should include baseline referral numbers and a way to track new referrals and of course...a fantastic and passionate Physician Liaison!

And remember - growing your practice takes time! Consider the importance of long-term marketing strategies and remember that without them, short-term success will be short-lived. Positive relationships with your referring providers are critical to your long term success!

A New Year: A Fresh Start for Your Marketing Strategy

Welcome 2018! A brand new year, ripe with possibilities and promise, has finally begun. The arrival of 2018 brings with it a fresh start and a new opportunity to focus on goals for your practice. Have you taken the time to take a fresh look at your practice and the way you market it? The new year is a great time to launch fresh strategies that can transform your practice's brand into one that is more valuable in the eyes of referrers and patients.

Like most great resolutions that come with the New Year, "put more time, thought and effort into marketing my practice" always has the greatest of intentions. However, somehow, another year goes by bogged down with those pesky patients demanding your care. That great marketing plan never made it out of your desk drawer, did it? Here are 3 ways to jumpstart your marketing strategy for a highly profitable 2018:

- 1. Decide how much time you can dedicate to marketing and/or if you should consider hiring someone internally or contracting with a company that can help on a more part-time basis.** There is no right or wrong answer – it all depends on you, your practice and your goals.
- 2. Pick a realistic goal for the New Year.** It might be to build your local referral network. It may be to get more involved with local organizations. You might decide to write an article - for an industry publication, for your practice's newsletter or for a local publication. Whatever one or two things you pick for 2018, drive toward accomplishing them. Do not bite off more than you can chew and get help if you need it.

- 3. Create a marketing plan for you and/or your practice – short and long-term.** Include things that will enhance your reputation and patient pipeline. Think in advance about where your money can be best spent. Focus on initiatives that will help you build a thriving practice for years to come, as well as get you noticed in the short term. Think, plan, and spend those funds wisely.

Here's to your success and prosperity in 2018!

7 Reasons Why Referral Relationships Are Essential

No medical practice or facility can succeed without cultivating a network of healthy referral relationships. Medical expertise, a great building/office space, state of the art equipment and technology and a good location are all great, but the secret to a thriving practice is good relationships with potential referral sources. Practices with great doctors have failed because they couldn't establish positive referral relationships with other medical providers in their community. In today's day of overworked doctors that deal with the ongoing saga of managed care, time is of the essence. Relationship building and networking often get thrown to the wayside. It is important to remember how crucial this is to the success of your practice and utilize resources to make sure these relationships are initiated, cultivated and nurtured.

Here are 7 reasons why referral relationships matter for your medical practice.

- 1. They create loyalty**

By developing strong relationships with your referral sources and potential referral sources, you set your practice apart from all other similar practices around you. Yours becomes a practice they know and trust. They will be much more likely to send their patients to the practice they have developed a relationship with.

- 2. They create an image for your practice or medical facility**

By building relationships with referring physicians, you or a Liaison that builds relationships on your behalf, bring a human face to your practice – one that nurses, Referral Coordinators and other medical providers can relate to.

- 3. They help to build a pipeline of patients**

It is important that you forge a relationship with every potential referral source for your practice. Creating strategic partnerships and alliances with referring practices will ensure that you have a consistent stream of valuable referrals coming from those practices for a long time.

4. They help build brand awareness for your practice

The long term success of your practice depends largely on its reputation. If you are kind, courteous, helpful, informative and attentive to your referring providers, you will establish a good reputation for your practice. People will deem you and your practice as trustworthy, reliable and experienced. When this happens, your practice grows.

5. They provide valuable opportunities for feedback

You can't get everything right all the time. There will be times when referring providers or their staff members will be disappointed or misunderstand a situation. In such instances, it is essential that you address and resolve whatever problem has been encountered. Most nurses, practice managers, Referral Coordinators or medical providers can easily move past issues and get back on good terms with you if you treat them with respect and listen to them.

A physician-to-physician relationship marketing model can be helpful to learn first-hand what your referring providers really want and need. Active listening and listening between the lines are two amazing benefits of utilizing a Physician Liaison.

6. Referral relationships that are nurtured with frequent and meaningful follow-up can leave a lasting impact of your practice

To cultivate a positive referral relationship, it is important to commit to regular, frequent and prompt follow-up to referring providers. Some of this follow-up can be done by a Physician Liaison, but it is important that some of it be done by you, the physician. Answering questions, providing patient follow-up information and responding to concerns instead of reacting to them are all crucial to the ongoing success of your practice.

7. They can give your practice a competitive edge

There is more competition than ever in the medical community. You have to stand out.

Medical practice marketing has changed since social media arrived on the scene. Practices have to change their focus and concentrate on building relationships with the RIGHT people in order to ensure a productive patient pipeline. By utilizing relationship marketing, you are able to learn about your referring provider's needs, develop trust with them, and set yourself apart from your competition.

If your referring providers are happy, your positive reputation will stand out from the rest, encouraging ongoing referrals and loyalty.

In closing, it is also important to remember that trust plays a massive role in building business relationships. Trust takes time to earn, but can be thrown away in minutes. Referral relationships can quickly come to a screeching halt if not cultivated. Zig Ziglar once said "If they like you, they will listen to you. If they trust you, they will do business with you." Your referral relationships need to be nurtured. The result will be the growth of a long-term referral relationship and steady stream of new patients to your practice.

How Taking Time to Teach Can Earn You a Gold Medal (and lots of new patients!)

Olympic champions don't do it alone. Behind every top athlete is a coach. Primary care physicians are trained in basic diagnosis and treatment of common illnesses and medical conditions. More complex and time-intensive diagnostic procedures are usually referred to specialists. As a specialist, you can provide substantial value to PCPs by educating them and keeping them current with developments in your field. Be the coach by providing PCPs with valuable information for their patients, and ultimately building a relationship that will result in referrals to your specialty practice for years to come. Remember – clinical excellence isn't the gold standard for winning referrals. It's the starting point. Referrals arrive when relationships are strong.

There are number of ways to provide education to your potential referral sources and cement a referral relationship with them. In all cases, remember the goal is to officer them something of value. Be clear and concise about who you are, what you do, and how you can help their patients. Here are 4 tips:

- 1. Hire a Physician Liaison.** Physicians often complain, "I didn't become a doctor to become a sales or marketing person." Hiring a personable, professional Physician Liaison to represent your practice and provide education about your specialty to referring providers enables you to build critical physician relationships without having to become the "marketer". But remember, sending an underutilized staff member out to pass out donuts and marketing materials won't have much impact. Hire a skilled sales person who can provide education and build relationships with the referring physicians and their staff.
- 2. Lunch-and-learns or in-service trainings for referring practices' staff on topics relevant to their patients can be very effective.** Speak at a lunch or a staff meeting on something that is valuable to them. Use this time to educate them about how you can help their patients. These types of events are excellent opportunities for you to position yourself as the expert and answer questions from other providers and staff. When you take time out of your day to educate them on your specialty, you become the "go to" for questions in your field.
- 3. Use social media as a platform to share your knowledge.** Social media is a powerful tool for educating potential patients and referral sources. You can use Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to help establish credibility and build awareness of your expertise. Start a blog where you provide wellness tips and discuss your specialty and your practice. Post it on your website and promote it on social media. As a bonus, all of these things can organically improve your SEO, which can help your practice's placement in Google searches for your specialty. The bottom line is that, often, social media can serve as a starting point for developing a professional or patient relationship.
- 4. Consider the power of good PR.** What is your expertise and is it newsworthy? "Earned media" is free marketing for your practice. It's also a great way to increase your brand exposure and enhance your reputation. The key to getting your story picked up by local media is to be sure it is newsworthy. Content ideas include news about your providers learning a new cutting-edge procedure, your philanthropic involvement, bringing on new providers, a ribbon cutting at a new office location or health awareness months. Local media can aide in educating your future patients and referral sources and building awareness of your practice.

And don't forget to educate the office personnel! The reality is, it's not always the physician that makes the final decision about where the patients are referred to. Frequently it's a nurse, a Practice Manager or a Referral Coordinator that is left to make the decision. Educating these individuals on what you can do to help their patients is a great way to build rapport with a referring practice.

Lastly, consider education as a MUCH BETTER alternative to gift giving. Think about the impact that bag of popcorn, a box of cookies or a dozen donuts really has. I'm not suggesting that whatever you sent your referring providers for the holidays last year was inappropriate, but remember that it's what you do as a specialist every day to help their patients that cements the relationship. EDUCATE! EDUCATE! EDUCATE! Medical providers want to give their patients the best care possible. By helping them to improve their own patient care, you become a trusted provider. (plus the cookies hardly support health and usually get eaten long before the provider sees them anyway!)

Position yourself as an expert in your specialty by continually raising the bar and educating the PCPs in your community. In turn, you will establish credibility for you and your practice and referral sources will look to you for help with their patients. The result? A gold medal in relationship marketing and a robust patient pipeline that ensures long-term success for your practice!

GO FOR THE GOLD!

7 Valentine's Day Marketing Tips for Your Medical Practice

Valentine's Day is the perfect time to remind your patients, employees and referral sources how important they are to you! Take advantage of the holiday with these simple tips can help your employees, patients and referrers alike fall in love with your practice!

1. Show your employees some love.

Not everyone has someone to celebrate Valentine's Day with, so be sure to show some love to your employees. Maybe bring in lunch or breakfast or a mid-afternoon snack. Anything special that spreads the love!

2. Spread the love to your referring offices.

A strong referral network ensures a continuous stream of patients. Relationships with other physicians and their staff are essential. Use Valentine's Day as an opportunity to take holiday treats to your top referrers to thank them for their trust in you. And don't just "stop and drop". Make sure you or your Physician Liaison connects with a provider or a nurse or a Referral Specialist so that a heartfelt "thank you" can be delivered with the treats.

3. Give your social media some TLC.

Valentine's Day is a great time to promote your practice on your social media sites. Take pictures of your Valentine's office decor, host contests or suggest healthy gift ideas or recipes. These are great ways to boost engagement. Also, since Valentine's Day falls during February (American Heart Month) there's a great opportunity to share valuable heart health content such as tips, statistics and ways to prevent heart disease.

4. Do something good for others.

Think about ways for your practice to give back to your community as a gesture of love and goodwill on Valentine's Day. Ideas include having you and your employees volunteer at a local soup kitchen, animal shelter, or favorite nonprofit. Also, think about next year. You could reach out to soldiers overseas and send them Valentines gifts from your practice.

5. Random Acts of Kindness Week 2018 (RAK)

RAK 2018 takes place February 11-17. Check the Random Acts of Kindness website (www.randomactsofkindness.org) for ideas on how to celebrate RAK week in your practice. Random acts could include surprising employees or patients with treats or hosting a food drive.

6. Go green!

Show your love for the environment by offering tips for your patients and employees to live green. Use your social media pages to suggest ways to make their homes and offices more environmentally conscious. Make a push in your office to use "green" products and recycle and make it known to your patients and referring providers that this is important to your practice!

7. Incorporate Valentine's Day concepts into your marketing.

Good health comes from taking care of yourself. As a medical practice, it is your job to not only care for your patients, but provide to them with resources so that they can take control of their own health. Through social media, traditional advertising or maybe even just flyers in your waiting area or patient rooms, encourage your patients to love themselves by exercising, eating healthy, getting annual checkups, remembering when it's time to get a colonoscopy or mammogram, etc. To LOVE yourself is to take care of yourself!

A Roadmap to a Robust Referral Network for a Healthcare Organization

Relationship building is indispensable in today's competitive healthcare industry and a vital key to the success of medical practices and facilitates. While relationship marketing via a Physician Liaison has been a practice of hospitals for eons, referral building for medical practices and smaller healthcare organizations is not as headline-grabbing as other marketing imperatives, yet it is a critical part of growth. Relationship marketing is a proven way to add value to a practice, build brand equity, and position against competition and healthy and strong referral relationships ensure a continuous stream of new patients. Here are some relationship marketing strategies that will help you create trust-based relationships with your referral sources/potential referral sources

1. Know your referral sources well and give them what they want.

Good health comes from taking care of yourself. As a medical practice, it is your job to not only care for your patients, but provide to them with resources so that they can take control of their own health. Through social media, traditional advertising or maybe even just flyers in your waiting area or patient rooms, encourage your patients to love themselves by exercising, eating healthy, getting annual checkups, remembering when it's time to get a colonoscopy or mammogram, etc. To LOVE yourself is to take care of yourself!

2. Build trust and strengthen relationships.

Good health comes from taking care of yourself. As a medical practice, it is your job to not only care for your patients, but provide to them with resources so that they can take control of their own health. Through social media, traditional advertising or maybe even just flyers in your waiting area or patient rooms, encourage your patients to love themselves by exercising, eating healthy, getting annual checkups, remembering when it's time to get a colonoscopy or mammogram, etc. To LOVE yourself is to take care of yourself!

3. Listen.

What is important to your potential referral sources? Use a Physician Liaison to get to know referrers and their staff and ask about their challenges and how you can meet their needs. After you've listened to their answers, tell them about your practice and how you can deliver the patient care and customer service they value. Reaching out to identify the needs and concerns of your referral sources gives you a competitive advantage, especially if you are willing and able to offer sincere solutions. Over time, this will result in stronger relationships with referrers.

4. Communicate frequently.

Practices must make referrers want to send patients to them. Again, this means being more than just competent. It means not only delivering high quality care, but also communicating frequently and knowing what they think and feel about your practice. By encouraging open communication, you can build a positive

relationship with your referral sources, which in turn will help you understand how they feel about your practice or facility. The winning combination for standing out against your competition and remaining top of mind with referring providers is face to face, social media, physician-review websites and of course the good ole telephone, when appropriate.

Identify potential referral sources and cultivate those relationships with frequent communication. Inform them about updates at your practice, such as extended office hours, new providers or new diagnostic equipment. Also identify your existing referral sources. Tell them how much you appreciate them and send written thank-you notes. Deliver thank-you or holiday gifts to new referrers and top referrers.

5. Enhance your relationship marketing strategy by maintaining an engaging social media presence.

Being active on various social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, blogs and Twitter helps physicians, practices and medical facilities to connect with both patients as well as referral sources and their staff. You may provide thought leadership and share knowledge and expertise with patients and referrers, as well as provide valuable information about your practice and your providers. If you are sending a representative into the community to connect with your referral sources, you want to make sure your online presence is polished BEFORE the relationship marketing campaign begins. As the representative is speaking to providers and their staff about you and your practice, there will most certainly be an uptick in traffic to your social media sites as people seek to learn more about you.

6. Get some help.

Physicians are trained to take care of patients, not business, and it can be challenging to find time to build relationships with referring providers. Utilizing a Physician Liaison as a representative of your practice allows you to continue to care for your patients and administrators to manage the practice. It is, however, important to consider who you have representing you in referring providers' offices. A well-spoken, sales-oriented individual that understands relationship building and is able to speak to both physicians and staff is essential.

Ultimately, referrals can play a valuable role in fortifying and growing a healthcare organization. Those that have invested in strong, strategic relationships and growing rapport with referring physicians will see profound payoffs for years to come.

4 Marketing Lessons For Your Medical Practice or Facility That Can Be Learned From the Super Bowl

This Sunday, millions of people will be watching the Super Bowl, the biggest sporting spectacle in the United States and one of the largest in the world. Many are only watching for the commercials and there is no doubt about the potential impact that a Super Bowl ad can have. Lasting only an average of 30 to 60 seconds, they can have an impact that remains for years. There are marketing lessons that medical practices and facilities can learn from this event, especially in terms of branding focus and long term strategies for cultivating referral relationships and ensuring a robust pipeline of patients.

1. Utilize the strength of different communication channels

Super Bowl advertisers have evolved in their marketing strategies through the years. They don't just rely on commercials to engage with the audience. They have a strong backup system using other channels that ensure that the ad stays in one's memory for a long time.

Your practice should focus on a combination of communication channels to help build awareness amongst potential referral sources and patients. A majority of physicians rely on traditional marketing: newspaper articles, billboards, ads in local physician and medical directories, etc. There can be a place for this type of advertising, but it's often pricey and not always terribly effective. The key is finding cost-effective ways to market your practice...strategies that can get you the most "bang for your buck." Many forget to consider the importance of a long term marketing strategy by implementing a relationship marketing campaign to develop referral networks and increase brand awareness. It is easy to get caught up in short-term results and focus solely on immediate ROI (appointments booked, calls, etc.) However, an awareness based campaign focused on referral relationships will build trust between you and your potential referral sources, thereby strengthening your practices brand story and filling your patient pipeline for years to come.

2. Focus on your target audience

One aspect of Super Bowl ads is how the target audience sits up and takes notice of products highlighted. This is because beneath all the creativity is an ad with a message that reaches the target audience. As a medical practice or facility, you must KNOW who your potential referral sources are and target them directly. Get to know them, their staff and their practices. Know their needs and provide them and their patients with stellar service and prompt follow-up.

You may utilize a Physician Liaison to cultivate relationships on your behalf and/or to facilitate face-to-face meetings via drop-ins, breakfasts or lunches in your potential referral sources' offices. Physician Liaisons are a very effective tool to help cultivate referral relationships by visiting referring practices, asking for feedback and thanking them for their referrals, thereby making them comfortable sending their patients to you.

3. Exceed expectations to ensure that they remember you

Successful Super Bowl ads are never forgotten. Your marketing goal should be to create awareness of you or your practice that will last for a very long time.

There are lots of practices, physicians and medical facilities out there that do the same thing you do. Referrers have choices. You have to go the extra mile. Referrals are earned one patient at a time and many times they result from lasting relationships with very satisfied referring physicians. Attracting more referrals starts with earning the trust of referring medical providers in your community. When they DO send a referral, deliver exceptional, reliable care and THANK THEM for their referral. Physicians who have a positive experience with you as a medical provider and receive good feedback from their patients, will likely refer to you again and again.

4. View marketing as an investment in your practice

Even at \$5 million for 30 seconds of televised advertisement space, Super Bowl ad campaigns can be very impactful if they include a plan for execution beyond the actual commercial. The old adage “you have to spend money to make money” is so true. When done right, marketing campaigns can produce returns that will ensure your practice thrives for years to come. Investing in marketing is investing in the long term success of your practice.

We hope you found these marketing lessons useful. Look closely and you will realize that they are simple and easy to follow. Good luck and enjoy the game (and the commercials)!

8 Tips to Keeping Referring Medical Providers Happy

- 1. Get in front of them:** It is essential that referring providers know that you value their referrals. They have many options as to where to send their patients when a specialist is needed. Make the effort to have a Liaison from your practice visit their office occasionally. Speak with the provider, their nurse or their front office staff and make sure the referral process is easy for them. They'll appreciate that you took the time to touch base with them. These occasional visits help to cultivate and maintain the referral relationship that will keep your patient pipeline full.
- 2. Say Thank You:** It sounds so simple, but demonstrating your appreciation for referrals from other medical providers goes a long way. It has been said that if you demonstrate your appreciation the right way on the first physician referral, the referring doctor is 5x more likely to refer to you again. A hand-written “Thank you for the referral” note goes a long way.
- 3. Get their patients seen quickly when needed:** Make sure your Liaison emphasizes to your referring

physicians that they will always try and get their patients in quickly in urgent situations. Encourage your Liaison to call from the referring physician's office – while they are there – to help accommodate one of their patients if needed. Of course, it may not always be possible, but demonstrating your commitment to treating their patients with the same care and compassion that they do means a lot.

- 4. Treat their patient with care and compassion:** This goes without saying, but good to remember that the referred patient will always go back to the doctor that referred them and let them know about the care they received. If their patients get appointments easily and are happy with the care they received, their referring physician will continue to trust that you a reputable specialist to refer to.
- 5. Participate in as many insurances as possible:** Again, this goes without saying. Accepting most major insurances, along with providing quality care, will quickly move you to the top of the preferred list.
- 6. Make sure your online presence is polished and your online reviews are good:** Your online reputation as a physician is crucial. Both patients AND referring physicians and their staff may go to the Internet to learn more about you and your practice. It is important that you are proactive in ensuring that there are positive reviews on the top physician review sites (RateMDs, Vitals and Healthgrades, to name a few) by soliciting positive feedback from satisfied patients.
- 7. Return the favor:** Offer your referral source a referral that might be useful. Perhaps a patient self-refers to you and doesn't have a PCP. This is a great opportunity to make a recommendation and can help to solidify an existing referral relationship.
- 8. Ask for Feedback:** Getting direct feedback from those referrers you depend on is crucial. A Physician Liaison can be very helpful here. They may uncover an opportunity to learn how referring provider feels about your services and the benefits you offer their patients. Plus, by asking for feedback and making necessary modifications, you demonstrate your commitment to providing them and their patients the best experience possible.

Use these 8 tips to maintain and strengthen your referral relationships and you will see a direct return on your marketing investment and build a network that will provide a steady stream of patients for your practice for years to come.

5 Social Media Marketing Tips for Medical Practices and Facilities

As a physician or medical facility, we know that an established and robust referral network is essential to growth, especially if you are a specialist or specialty facility. However, we also know that digital marketing is also essential and can greatly enhance a referral marketing campaign.

According to a recent study highlighted by the American Academy of Family Physicians' (AAFP), more than

70% of primary care physicians and oncologists use social media at least once a month to explore or contribute health information. In addition, nearly 70% of adults use social media to connect with others, engage with news and content and share information. What does this mean for physicians and medical practices? It is essential that you use social media to engage and connect with your current and potential referral sources and patients.

The most common social media mistakes that practices make is lazy posting. It is simply not enough to just have a social media account. If you are not using your accounts effectively, you are losing out on a valuable, low-cost marketing opportunity and potentially damaging your brand. Whether you are trying to build brand awareness, bring in new patients or referral sources or boost reviews, good social media marketing means going beyond posting a holiday greeting on your Facebook page every now and then. Strategy and consistency are key and when done right, social media can reiterate and enhance a Referral Marketing campaign. It is a powerful and inexpensive marketing tool, but only if done right. Here are 5 social media marketing tips for your medical practice or facility:

1. Post consistently.

Your social media outlets are there to educate, interact and build new and existing patient and referral source relationships. If you want your audience to keep visiting your social media profiles, make sure to post on a consistent basis. By providing your online users with new content regularly, they will be much more likely to like, engage with and share your content and to become a patient or referrer.

2. Become a thought leader by sharing smart, useful content.

Social media can be a key vehicle for establishing yourself or your practice as a thought leader and trusted expert in your field. Posting health tips or sharing articles from relevant medical websites will keep people coming back for more information and/or decide to follow you. Your goal is to build a community of followers and education is a great way to do that. It builds trust and keeps you top of mind.

3. Use visuals.

Visuals resonate more with people than just text. Use images with your social media updates whenever you can. Images, infographics, GIFs and videos are great ways to capture the attention of your audience.

4. Follow other doctors and practices.

This is key, and a step many medical practices seem to miss. In order to build a community of followers, you must begin by reaching out to your existing network. Follow referring medical practices' Facebook and Twitter pages and interact with them on a regular basis. This builds credibility and trust by showing them that you are interested in their practices.

5. Don't be too "pushy".

Be careful not to "over-promote". You want to build brand awareness, however remember the goal is to engage and inform, as opposed to constantly selling your brand. Regular posting is essential, but it must be

engaging. Engaging content can help to spread your brand, authority and expertise to patients and referral sources in your community!

Use these tips to effectively market your medical practice or facility. Social media can help to grow your practice if used effectively and in conjunction with other marketing strategies. Using social media to promote your medical practice or facility give you a low-cost opportunity to connect with your referral sources and patients! Don't miss out!



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