

Marketing Basics

Advertising + Communications + Branding + Patient Experience + Community Relations + Professional Networking = MARKETING

Resist the temptation to focus exclusively or even primarily on advertising. Successful marketing is multi-faceted, requires specific skills and is a long-term commitment. When in doubt, consult your hospital's marketing director for advice and guidance even if you're self-employed. Structure each marketing effort with an avenue to support the ultimate goal – an appointment.

Time well spent.

Research shows the top driver of physician choice is recommendation by family and friends or referral from another physician. In addition, personal interaction, such as through speaking engagements or screenings, generally results in appointments. For these reasons, include community relations and professional networking as the foundations of your marketing plan. And they are easy on your marketing budget!

Here are some other tips:

- Attend physician events.
- Get to know referring physicians, and say thanks for referrals.
- Join the chamber of commerce or other community group(s).
- Ask to be part of the hospital's speakers bureau.
- Sponsor and/or participate in community events in an interactive way.
- Submit articles to local media to establish yourself as a go-to expert.

Got a "brand?"

Often confused with a logo icon, in general terms, "brand" is the ethereal difference that makes someone loyal to Ford vs. Chevy. For a physician, "brand" is how a patient feels about you, identifies you and interacts with you. To build your brand, ask yourself:

- What is my reputation? Am I known for something specific? What makes me and my practice unique?
- From parking lot to doorway to waiting room to exam room, how's the patient experience?
- Does my office staff understand and meet expectations for patient experience?

- Do I have a recognizable logo and do all my advertising and communications materials have a cohesive, consistent design?
- When I advertise, am I targeting the audience well?
- Do I remember to "market" to my current patients?



It all comes down to communication.

Whether it's networking, community relations, advertising, or patient experience, what you say and how you say it, determines your marketing success.

- Write/speak with your audience in mind. Be simple and clear.
- Remember, most people don't remember something that's said only once.
- It's not called a physician-patient RELATIONSHIP for nothing—listen, answer, explain, take time, find ways to show you care.

Communication avenues:

- Website development and maintenance of content and design – hire a professional, especially if you're offering HIPAA-regulated services through a patient portal
- Practice brochures/posters
- Letters/mailings to patients (education-based and action-oriented)
- Creation and promotion of timely speaking presentations and newspaper/newsletter articles
- Advertisements are more successful when you target the exact audience as much as possible. Direct mail targets well; billboards far less. Always include a call to action.
- Giveaways can build general awareness, but are "extras" in a tight marketing budget.

Find opportunities.

Contact the hospital directly or visit these sites:

Community Health Systems: www.chsmedcareers.com

Practice Link: www.practicelink.com

Practice Match: www.practicematch.com

Adventures in Medicine: www.adventuresinmedicine.net

Practice Alert: www.practicealert.com

CareerMD: www.careermd.com

 **CHS** Community Health Systems

www.chsmedcareers.com