

Developing a One-Page Marketing Plan: Part 2

Here's how to receive leads and develop a follow-up system.

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Note: This is part 2 of a three-part article.

In pre-historic times (probably the Paleolithic age), the man (most likely a male member of the clan or tribe) woke up every morning, collected his primitive weapons, and headed out to hunt for food. On a successful day, he would come back with a deer or antelope, and the family was able to eat. However, I am sure there were days when he returned empty-handed and the family might go hungry. There was pressure every single day to hunt successfully, because the survival of the clan depended on it—it was a constant battle.

Contrast the daily hunter with the farmer, when the hunter-gathers

eventually became involved in agriculture. The farmer planted seeds, and the clan would wait weeks or months for the wheat, barley, or corn to become ready for harvesting. From planting to harvesting, the plot of

is that most physicians behave more like hunters than like farmers. They take their trifold brochure, electronically convert the content, and then hire a high school student to paste it into a website template and declare,

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land needed to be watered, weeds removed, and the crops tended to on a regular basis.

What does the hunter-to-farmer story, which is perhaps the most significant single development in human history, have to do with one-page medical marketing? Our observation, when it comes to practice marketing,

“Our practice has a website.” Or the practice hires a marketing firm that has little or no experience in medical marketing to create a logo and write a newsletter and add some meaningless slogan like “state of the art technology”; claims to be a leader or expert in the area; sends the ma-

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terials out for a few months; gets no follow-up from any potential patients who contact the practice for more information; and is disappointed and states, “Marketing doesn’t work.” Doing nothing more than “getting the word out” or “getting the practice name out there” is futile and a waste of time and money.

Most medical practices are clueless about the purpose behind practice promotion and effective marketing. These practices and doctors believe that marketing consists primarily of getting the word out, getting recognized, or creating a buzz about the doctors or the practice. If you ask doctors the goal of their marketing, they will state they are interested in acquiring more patients or performing more procedures.

Successful medical practices that truly understand practice promotion describe marketing as keeping existing patients and attracting new patients who are interested in your area of interest or expertise. This kind of marketing is the “long haul” or “farming” approach versus the “in-

Early humans made progress by moving from being hunter-gathers to farmers. However, farming did require regular care and attention to the crops. The same applies to your practice promotion and marketing efforts. ***You can’t create just one newsletter, one blog, or one social media submission and have the phone ring off the hook. Marketing requires***

tional 7% are very amenable to becoming a patient, and then there may be another 30% who are interested in your services but cannot pursue them now. Then there’s the 30% who are not currently interested, and, finally, the reality is that another 30% just come to the meeting for the coffee and the cookies and will never be interested in becoming patients even if

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constant and frequent offerings so that when the time comes for the potential patient to need your services, your practice and your name will be easily recalled, and you will have captured a new patient from your marketing efforts.

The next box to check off in your one-page marketing plan is to create a database system to enable organized follow-up with any potential patients. For example, if you make a

you didn’t charge them. If you measure your marketing by new patients who contact your practice right after the program, the 3%, you are missing out on the other 97%.

You have to be a farmer and continue to take care of your field, meaning those who may eventually need your services at a future date. You need a system that continues to reach out to those who you can possibly identify as potential patients. Now, by going from the 3% who are immediately interested to nearly 40%, you are multiplying the effectiveness of conducting a support group by 1233%. Now that’s what we call a real return on your investment.

Therefore, it is imperative to keep track of your potential patients with a customer relationship management system. You will want all of your leads regarding potential patients to be entered into that system. The sidebar presents a list of software programs for healthcare practices that offer customer relationship management.

Next: Nurturing your Leads.

Most medical practices have an attitude of “one and done.” They write a blog, add an article to their website, or send out a newsletter. Nothing happens after one or two attempts, and they decide the marketing does not work. The statistics on the success of nurturing your leads in all areas of marketing and practice promotion is that 50% of practices will give up after one contact with a

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stant” or “hunting” approach to practice promotion.

The successful practice identifies potential patients, enters them into a database, and then follows up with additional educational material on a regular basis or provides useful products that are a constant reminder of the practice so that when “the time is right” and the patient needs your services, your practice will be remembered, and they will call for an appointment and become members of your practice. Now your practice is building value that will serve as a magnet to attract new patients to your practice and will also keep your existing patients within your practice.

presentation to a lay audience, and you collect their names, address, and email addresses, then you have to have the information you need to connect with all of those people who were in your audience. The likelihood is that giving a single talk to a church group or a service club will result in a significant number of those in the audience becoming patients.

For example, you have a monthly support group for a medical condition that is in your repertoire or in your strike-zone of medical care.

At any given time, or on average, 3% of those attending the program might be highly motivated and ready to call for an appointment. An addi-

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potential patient; 65% will give up after two contacts; and 80% give up after three attempts.¹

With each interaction with the patient, you have an opportunity to create a negative impression, a neutral impression, or a knock-their-socks-off mind-blowing impression. Most practices accept the negative or neutral impression. The really successful practices create a “shock-and-awe” approach so that whenever the patient needs the services that the practice offers, they will be quickly remembered and the patient will make that call to become a patient in that practice.

A shock-and-awe approach works best when a physical package is mailed to the potential patient. This provides information or surprises that are so distinctive that the recipient cannot forget where they came from and who was the sender.

Examples of a shock-and-awe package might include a book on a medical topic. This is even more meaningful if you have written a book.

tured in articles that have appeared in the local or national news media, send copies to prospective patients, because this enhances your credibility. It is also effective to send papers or articles that you have written that appeared in professional journals, because they add to your perceived expertise.

The least effective items are scratch pads, pens, magnetic refrigerator calendars, or mouse pads with the name of the practice, contact information, and logo. These are given out by other practices, usually at the point of service, and your trinkets will not stand out amongst the “tchotchkes” from other practices.

The best shock-and-awe packages contain a handwritten note from the doctor expressing interest in the potential patient and offering

Healthcare Customer Relationship Management Programs

The following programs offer customer relationship management capability:

- Zendesk (Zendesk.com)
- Salesforce (Salesforce.com)
- Monday.com (Monday.com)
- Scoro (Scoro.com)
- Hubspot (Hubspot.com)
- NetSuite (NetSuite.com)
- Nutshell (Nutshell.com)
- Quickbase (Quickbase.com)
- Freshworks (Freshworks.com) **PM**

Conversion

Finally, the second part of the one-page marketing plan requires conversion—not a religious change of faith, but moving those in the public sector to becoming paying patients. This requires winning the trust of the potential patient so that person calls and makes an appointment.

It is common for those not skilled at marketing to put their toe in the water before becoming fully immersed in the river. They often send out one or two newsletters from the practice, and when they fail to receive new patients from their efforts, they then cease all marketing endeavors. Our take-home message is that an attitude of “if you build it, they will come” may apply to baseball fields but not to marketing and practice promotion. A newsletter like all the others is screaming “me too,” and you may be left competing on price, which is a losing marketing plan.

Let us illustrate our position with a true story about the virtuoso violinist Joshua Bell that emphasizes the importance of context. Joshua Bell is one of the best concert violin players in the world. As an experiment sponsored by *The Washington Post*, Mr. Bell wore a baseball cap and sunglasses and played for 45 minutes, on a 300-year-old Stradivarius violin worth

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Of course, I could save on postage if I gave out copies to those in the audience right after an evening program on the topic. It is far better, however, to send a copy of the book a few days later. I usually distribute a sign-in sheet and tell the audience that if they sign the sheet with their name, home address, and email address, I will send them a copy of the book. Almost every member of the audience provides this information to receive a copy of the book.

Another present that is effective in the shock-and-awe package is a DVD or CD that introduces the doctors in the practice, gives a tour of the office, and provides testimonials from a few patients.

If you have written or been fea-

to be available and to answer any questions.

In summary, a shock-and-awe package should:

- Give potential patients an amazing and unexpected surprise that is valued by the recipient;
- Demonstrate your expertise in a particular medical area and that you are a trusted authority in your field; and
- Move the potential patient closer to picking up the phone and making a call to your office if they are in need of your services.

Our message is that a shock-and-awe package provides you with a huge competitive advantage. It's ethical, it's easy, and it's effective.

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\$3.5 million, at a Washington, DC subway station during rush hour on January 12, 2007. More than 1,000 people passed by Bell; however, only seven people stopped to listen to him play, and only one person recognized him.

Just a few nights earlier, he had played at the Kennedy Center and the cost of each ticket was \$100. When he played in the subway, he had a hat placed conspicuously to collect tips, where he received a grand total of \$32. Here was a virtuoso who would receive \$1000 per minute to play in front of a sold-out audience! (You can watch this amazing story of Joshua Bell in the Washington, DC, subway station on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZeSZFYCNrw.)

This is no surprise; the social context in which a behavior occurs affects how it is interpreted. Take the very same talented musician, playing the exact same music on the same violin—in one instance he earns \$32 an hour, and in another context, he earns \$60,000 per hour. What made the dramatic difference? I believe it was positioning.

If you think of yourself as a subway performer, your audience/patients will pay you accordingly. On the other hand, if you position yourself as a professional concert performer, you attract a totally different customer/client/patient and get paid accordingly. Our take-home message is that the public will accept you at your own appraisal of yourself.

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If you believe you provide superior service, you have the possibility of positioning yourself at a much higher level. You can offer your service at a much higher price and also attract a higher quality of patient. I don't suggest that you try to compete on price, because there will always be someone who will charge less than you do, and then you will have to reduce your price even more and ultimately the quality of your service will deteriorate.

We want you to think in terms of providing value

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to your patients. We would like you to think in terms of providing useful material that educates potential patients and enhances the trust that potential patients will have in you and your practice. It is necessary to think of the pain points that patients are experiencing and how you can provide a solution to that problem. If you are a primary care physician whose focus is obesity, and you can help patients lose weight, and, more importantly, help them keep the weight off, then offer that information on a regular basis to potential patients. If you are an orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine, provide information on injuries incurred by weekend warriors and focus on the prevention of soft tissue injuries.

We believe the road to conversion is paved with expertise and education. You must see yourself as a virtuoso violin player playing on one of the world's finest violins. In this context, you are a creator of great value, a resource of good health that will positively change the lives of patients who become part of your practice.

Bottom Line

The one-page marketing plan is not a sprint but a marathon. Outcomes and gratification are deferred, but it all begins with a plan of action. **PM**

Reference

¹ Dib A. The 1-Page Marketing Plan. Successwise. 2016:114.



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