



This letter is part of an Informative Email Newsletter series written on behalf of a marketing client specializing in medical and dental offices. The series ran twice during the year and consisted of 12 letters regarding how offices can boost their leads.

INTERNAL MARKETING MAXIMIZING YOUR PATIENT WAITING ROOM

Once you've created a phone system that ensures your office is presenting a positive first impression, the next step toward improving your internal marketing is to focus on converting your waiting room into a reception area.

Try this experiment:

Visit your practice as an outsider. As you step into the waiting area, what are your impressions? Do you feel comfortable? Do you feel welcomed? What do you hear and see? Consider the information you have available on your web site or that is sent out following a phone call. Would you already be well-informed about your practice and services by now? Is there anything in your reception area that could help improve understanding?

You may have already considered or be using posters or looping educational DVDs in your waiting room area to help educate patients. While these are a good start to maximizing your practice's internal marketing efforts, you can make a much bigger impact by thinking in terms of creating a positive experience for your patients beginning the moment they walk in the door.

Transition from Dreaded Doctor Visit to Enhanced Experience

Think of this in terms of a luxury hotel. In many of the finer hotels, people sitting behind massive desks are being replaced by 'hosts' who use handheld tablets to reduce the space and perceived obstacles between patrons and business representatives.

This approach transitions the experience from one of cold distance in a strictly business relationship to one of warm friendship in which a new acquaintance is ready and available to help visitors meet their needs. Providing simple things for free such as Internet access, simple snacks, coffee and tea options or bottled water can also enhance the experience by inviting your patients to relax.

Rather than hiring staff based on their experience in the industry, you should consider hiring staff with a greater emphasis on personality. A personable staff member will be much more likely to greet your patients with a genuine smile and involve themselves more in ensuring the patient and their family or loved ones are comfortable and cared for.

Tips you can adopt for your practice:

Know patients by sight and greet them by name

Have someone available simply to hold the patient's hand during surgery

Arrange for courtesy transportation so the patient need not impose on family and friends

Offer free Internet connection as well as coffee, tea, water, and snacks in your lobby

Treat everyone like family, patient or not

Constantly watch for additional ways in which you can further take care of your patients. Would a family meal be appropriate on the day of surgery so the patient can relax about household responsibilities?

While this might not seem to fall within the boundaries of marketing, it all functions to provide your patients, and their families and friends, with a strongly positive impression of your practice, encouraging them to recommend you to others - the best kind of marketing you can get.

Education should be the focus

Education of your staff is paramount since they will be the primary contact between you and your patient. Every member of your staff should be aware of what to say (and what not to say) about the various services you offer. This can be accomplished by providing the staff with a simple list of frequently asked questions along with their answers. After a suitable period of time for your staff to study and understand these questions and answers, hold a staff meeting to provide your staff with the opportunity to ask for further clarification or additional information.

To help educate your patients further on the various services you offer, you can also set up digital photo frames that provide information about various procedures, success stories, and previous patient testimonials.