



Promoting a New Physician's Medical Practice

Let's assume your new office is furnished, your computer has been delivered (and it is working) and your staff is in place ready to assist you with your patient load. What patient load? If you haven't taking some time to plan your marketing and referral development activities, a slow clinic day can easily be the result. Let PSG walk you through a few ideas to get you started and on your way to busy day!

1. Develop your contact lists. You will need to let everyone know you are here and ready to see patients, so sit down and make a list. PSG recommends that you begin with three columns; Patients, Community, and Physician Referral Sources. As you fill your list, you will need to do a little leg work in getting contact information such as phone or fax numbers, email addresses and physical address to work out your plan.

- For patients- Zip codes lists and mailing labels are easily available from your local direct mail ad agency for a small fee.
- For Physician Referral Sources-A similar list can usually be purchased from your local Medical Society, of course also for a fee, which you can have on hand for any future marketing efforts down the road.
- For the community, you want to get contact information for your local newspapers including their web content specialists, Medical Society, local hospital marketing, local branch of key National organizations that make sense to your specialty (e.g. if a Neurologist, the MS Society; a Cardiologist or Pulmonologist, the American Heart Association)



2. Work out your key messages for each audience. Take a few minutes and jot down the top three to five reasons that make you interesting to each audience. There is a good chance the reason can be the same to each group, but HOW you communicate that information may have more impact if it is well thought out.

Example 1: You are Board Certified in Orthopedics with added qualifications in hand surgery. For your Physician Referral Sources, this statement would be clearly understood. However, for your other audiences, it may require an additional statement explaining What it means and Why it is important.

Example 2: You are Bilingual. This information is useful to all groups

3. Have a professional photograph taken. One really good head shot is all you need. A dark suit and white shirt will be the classic attire needed to make having a professional photograph stands up through the next 5-7. The 'photo' must be a high quality JPEG file

4. Create or Update your Website. Whether you are joining an existing practice or flying solo, you must get your information out to the web. Your photo and key messages should be ready to upload. If you are flying solo and can't afford a website, try creating a Facebook page of your practice.

5. Develop a physician profile flyer. Develop a one-page information sheet including a photo, bio, office address, phone number and practice Web site. Place the profile in the office reception area and encourage patients to take one. Give the profile to referring physicians to provide to their patients upon referral. And use the flyer as a handout at your Open House and speaking engagements.

6. Send an announcement letter to your Physician Referral Sources. Now that you have made your list, found the right contact information and developed you key messages, a simple and sincere announcement letter describing your training, background and practice philosophy should be sent to your key Physician Referral Sources. Ideally you will coordinate the timing of this letter with your other activities to maximize its impact.

7. Meet and greet. Referral sources are more apt to refer to physicians they know personally. You should make a goal to meet as many potential referral sources as possible during the first few weeks of practice. Make appointments to visit those physicians with potential to refer. Start with closest physical proximity and work your way out. If the Meet & Greet is uncomfortable for you, take someone else along that knows your skills and is savvy enough to help you tag team. Don't forget to ask for patients AND ask for their recommendations of other physicians they believe would be good for you to meet. Keep in mind that at the end of the day, this activity will be your first line of volume defense as you grow, so chalk it up as good practice for your practice!

8. Advertise the new physician's availability to the community. In addition to introductions to referral sources, a community introduction is also recommended. Create an introductory advertisement including your photo and bio. Then plan to run the ad at least two times in each local newspaper. You



can augment the ad exposure by sending a press release and photo to the same newspapers and their web counterparts.

9. Participate in the local hospital's activities for new physicians. Many hospitals announce new physician appointments to the medical staff and community through receptions, newsletters and Web sites. Some hospitals even run introductory advertisements for new physicians. Find out what your local hospital offers by calling the marketing or medical staff office. Consider meeting with the hospital administrator and ask for his or her assistance in meeting other physicians on the hospital's medical staff.

10. Hold an Open House. An open house encourages referral sources and the public to drop by your office and meet you. An Open House must be VERY well-publicized and offer a draw of some sort to attract an adequate attendance. The incentive to attend; a well-known speaker, health screenings or a great giveaway – must be communicated in the invitation or advertisements.

11. Sign up for the hospital's Speaker's Bureau. Call the local hospital's marketing department and offer to be on the Speaker's Bureau. Offer to be a resource for media calls concerning issues in your specialty area or a source for quotations in hospital magazines or other publications. Express a willingness to work with the marketing staff and a commitment to return their phone calls promptly (as marketing/PR efforts are frequently on tight deadlines).

12. Build your timeline. Take each item and work out a master schedule. Building a practice takes time and coordination of your efforts will allow you enough time to work on each suggestion one at a time and build your momentum.

13. Be patient and persistent. Stay visible and use your downtime wisely to continue your marketing efforts. Visibility, along with outstanding service to patients and referral sources, will result in increased patient volume.