

Inside Out Approach by Tracy Drumm, IF Marketing

I recently received a phone call from an ad sales rep for a new magazine coming to the Chicago market. The rep explained to me that for the bargain price of "only \$20,000" we could start an advertising campaign for the doctor. Too often, marketing is equated with spending money.

It is safe to assume that many practices across the country are pinching pennies and looking for ways to cut back on spending. Rather than discarding your marketing efforts, change your marketing mind-set. At our Chicago-based office, we developed and operate off of what we call the "inside-out approach." This approach, developed through trial and error, is based on a simple concept that can drastically reduce marketing expenses and increase the revenue generated per patient.

The simple premise is to market your practice from the inside out. Begin reaching out, promoting and educating your internal market (the patients already walking through your door) with internal efforts. Internal efforts include making before and after books available, hanging signs on the back of doors, creating flyers that discuss new treatments or distributing brochures throughout the office. These tactics are low cost and create a high impact. Patients who are already familiar with the physician will be more inclined to try a new treatment he/she is offering. It is often taught in marketing that it is six-seven times more expensive to gain a new customer than to retain an existing one. Use that knowledge as the driving force to educate your patients on every service you offer. Walk through your practice as a patient would. Look for any missed opportunities to showcase a procedure or treatment. Hang a poster in an elegant picture frame on the back of a clinic room door, purchase a decorative photo album and fill it with before and after photos or patient testimonials, create a "patient education library" and write short articles about the different treatments you offer or purchase inexpensive sign holders to promote specials. Focus on educating the patient while they are at your office; give them "take-away" items such as brochures to let them tell others about the physician and keep them excited to come back.

After you have systems in place to maximize reaching out to patients internally, proceed to reaching out to your internal market through external methods. External marketing efforts include anything you do outside of your office to gain awareness for the practice or to stay in touch your patients. This includes mailing postcards, newsletters, thank you notes, reminder letters, or birthday and holiday cards. This is basically a way for you to gently remind your patients that you are there. It is not a patient's job to remember that you are available for their needs; it is your job to reach out to them and make sure they don't forget you. The bottom line is in today's competitive marketplace, if you are not



speaking to your patients someone else is. The greatest expense in these external efforts is typically postage, printing and the man power to implement and facilitate these efforts.

The outer most layer or component to this model, is one that is typically the most expensive and yields the lowest return. These are external efforts to an external market (those who have no relationship with you). These efforts typically include newspaper/magazine ads, radio/TV commercials, billboards or direct mail to purchased data. These efforts are often thought of as "quick fixes" because they seem to reach so many people, but often fail because they are not reaching the right people or anyone at all. For some practices in the right marketplace, advertising can be very effective. However, for many it can be a quick way to deplete your marketing funds. When placing an advertisement, you can increase your ads effectiveness by narrowing your market as much as possible. For example, instead of placing an ad in the local Sunday paper, place an ad in the local "Women's Health & Fitness Guide" or a similar publication that is targeted to a narrow group of people who are likely to want your services.

Marketing doesn't necessarily mean you have to spend a lot of money, it simply means you have to take advantage of the opportunities you have to tell patients and potential patients about yourself. Set a plan and follow through with it. Taking the "inside-out approach" of maximizing your reach through low cost efforts is a great way to work with an economy that isn't necessarily working with you.

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What's Inside?

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- A Breakdown of the Fall Meeting
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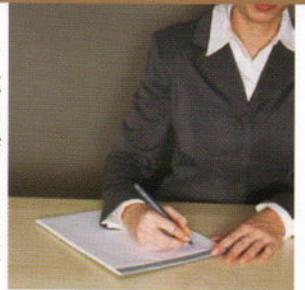
A Letter from the President...

Where does time go? I ask myself that question way too much. However, there are two things that are evident...time goes way too fast and there will always be change. Those two things you can depend on.

I am saddened to talk about one change to the OFPSA this summer. Carmen Beste, Vice-President and a godsend to me, has resigned due to changing jobs to work closer to home (we all understand that choice). She will be missed and we wish her luck in her new job! And as with any dark cloud, there is always a ray of sunshine to follow. It only took a phone call for our dedicated officers and past officers to step up to the plate! Thank you to Deb Scheib, former educational committee member and current OFPSA treasurer who is serving as interim vice-

president. Rosemarie Hess, current OFPSA secretary will fill the position of president this fall. A special thanks to Dawn Swartz, past president and my other godsend, for staying involved and helping us through this crisis.

The officers of this organization are so very important to us. Please consider a position with the OFPSA! We are looking for a Vice-President and Secretary this fall! For more information, please contact ReGina at 314-743-8057 or regina@anaturalyou.com.



Fall for Chicago!

Chicago is such a great town and it is always a great place to have a meeting! Every year of planning the fall meeting, we stress out during our February planning session... we wonder how we are going to top last year or ensure that we are giving our members information that they can apply in their offices and make them more successful. Our members never disappoint! When they are attending various meetings they do not hesitate to let us know about a great speaker they heard or a hot new product. As much stress that goes into the planning, with a lot of people's help, somehow at the end of the day it all comes together. This year is no different.

We are very excited about this year's meeting. On Wednesday, we start off with a welcome reception at Dr. Dayan's office on Michigan Avenue sponsored by Medicis. There will be shuttles available every half hour from the Palmer House to Dr. Dayan's office beginning at 5:30 - 8:30.

You may also take a cab with other members and share the \$10 cab fare!

On Thursday, we have break-out sessions designed specifically for the various areas of Practice Management, Nursing, Medical Esthetics and Patient Education/Coordination. These sessions will be facilitated by our OFPSA senior members and discussions will be documented and dispersed following the meeting. You are welcome to join more than one discussion. These round table discussions are invaluable and are a life-line to key issues that we all face in the day-to-day challenges within our offices.

In the afternoon, we welcome **Karen Zupko**, President of Karen Zupko and Associates. Karen is very familiar with our academy and facial plastic surgeons. She has presented at numerous meetings throughout the years.