

I Give a Lay Lecture to 15,000 People Every Week

Jason Schwartz, DC

Each Tuesday (for the past seven years) at 10:00 a.m., I adjust the position of my microphone and prepare to give a lay lecture to an audience of about 15,000 people in my community. You can do it too.

At 10:06 a.m., after CBS news, my theme music begins. Thirty seconds later, the engineer in the radio studio gives me the cue, and I'm on the air.

The public is eagerly looking for alternative health therapies. According to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, in 1998 about half of American adults used alternative health care. There were 630 million visits to alternative practitioners in the United States. That is twice the number of visits to all family medical practitioners, general practitioners, general internists, and pediatricians combined. Americans are also talking with their pocketbooks. The health care-consuming public spent more out-of-pocket money on alternative health services than on conventional medical care. Whether you just survive or thrive with these dynamic changes may depend on your ability to communicate what you do, why you do it, and how you are different from what folks are already getting.

Even fresh out of chiropractic school, I enjoyed talking to patients and the public about chiropractic, nutrition and alternatives to orthodox medicine. The limitations of the drugs and surgery of traditional medicine is a message people were ready for.

I'm on the air. My microphone is "live."

"Good morning folks, I'm Dr. Jason Schwartz, and welcome to the show that tells you what you need to know-but your doctor won't tell you. Thomas Edison said, 'The doctor of the future will give no medicine but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame and diet and in the cause and prevention of disease.' Mr. Edison captured the essence of alternative medicine. The future is here.

"Folks, let's face it, the medical profession will only get off its pedestal when the public gets off its knees! My goal is to empower you with information so you can get off your knees, look your health care providers in the eyes, and make informed decisions regarding you and your family's health situations."

For the next 53 minutes I discuss a variety of health items. My show is a combination of health news, written questions from e-mails, "snail mail" and faxes that come into the studio and my office, and live call-in questions. About 10 percent of my shows involve celebrity guests I interview via phone. I've done over 50 interviews with world-famous health experts and authors.

The show is carried on WPSL 1590 AM, the "Talk of the Treasure Coast" and WPSL.com. Florida's "Treasure Coast" is on the East coast. The coverage extends to the north to Vero Beach and south to Jupiter. With 5,000 watts, my broadcast travels

about 70 miles in all directions and even reaches listeners in the Bahamas. An added bonus is that through WPSL.com, my show is carried worldwide live on the Internet.

We know what we do works but how do we let folks know about it? Communication is what builds a fulfilling and exciting practice by attracting people wanting to be treated by you. Patients who believe in your skills and approaches make the best patients and refer their family and friends. On the other hand, patients who come to you just because you are on their insurance company's provider list may not be as good a referral source nor build the type of practice you truly desire. By hosting your own radio show you can touch tens of thousands with your message.

What type of people do you reach with talk radio? According to *Talkers Magazine*, March 1999, of all adults listening to the radio Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., 25 percent are listening to news and talk shows. About 28 percent of college graduates are news or talk radio listeners. It's a great way to get your message heard.

For simplicity, let us discuss four categories of the public you may desire to reach.

- the 10 percent of the population that already uses chiropractic. We want these listeners to get to know us as caring, informed chiropractors.
- the 50 percent of the population that uses some aspects of alternative health care, but not yet chiropractic. We want these listeners to make chiropractic a part of their health care program. This segment represents very aware people. They are already stepping out of the orthodox medical model, so they are eager to work with chiropractic once educated about its benefits.
- those who have not yet tried alternative medicine. Oddly enough, they often turn out to be our best patients. When the facts are articulately communicated, the limitations of mainstream medicine become obvious, and they will gladly add alternative therapies to their health care options.
- the members of traditional medicine: medical and osteopathic physicians, dentists, nurses, podiatrists and physical therapists. Listening to you on the radio in their homes, cars, and businesses is a nonthreatening way to hear the other side of the issues. You won't believe how many medical doctors listen to my radio show and even admit to me later that they called in with a question using a false name. Think about this: even liberals listen to the conservative radio show host, Rush Limbaugh.

It's easier than you think to get started in radio. If you can effectively communicate with patients in your office, with some preparation you can host a local radio show. You don't have to be an expert in all aspects of health care, but you have to be informative. Talk radio stations will sell you time for a program in standard blocks of 30 or 60 minutes. I would suggest you chose a once-a-week schedule for the show. Daily shows require a huge commitment of time. In most markets the cost is from under \$160 per show. You can pay for it yourself and justify it as advertising. Have you recently priced what a large Yellow Pages ad costs? To help cover costs, I try to find advertisers who pay to have their commercials air on my show. It's not difficult to find these, folks.

What to talk about on your show is an individual decision. Nutrition, sports medicine, exercise, stress management, workplace and home ergonomics, health cooking tips, managing health care costs, and current health topics in the news are all good choices. You can make notes on topics of interest to you, take live calls, or answer questions that come in from e-mail, snail mail and faxes.

A lay lecture to 15,000 people every week: I do it, and you can do it, too. Old-time chiropractors

knew the power of the lay lecture. What a great way to establish yourself in the community and build a joyful, exciting and successful practice. My experience with hosting a live health radio talk show can be summed up in these words: "If they hear you, they will come."

Jason Schwartz,DC
Stuart, Florida
drjason000@cs.com

SEPTEMBER 2000