

Four Essential, Inexpensive Ways to Build Your Practice

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Some of the most successful practices I have ever been privileged to work for or visit use these four simple tools to build their practices, and they do it without the use of any outside advertising:

1. **Birthday Cards:** You may not believe it, but sometimes your card is the only one a patient will receive. This shows you care and are thinking of them. Have all team members sign the card using glittery or colored pens. Write the patient's birth date in pencil where the postage stamp will go, and several days prior to the birthday, send out the card. Remember whom you are sending the card to, so if they come in to your office around their birthday, you can acknowledge it and celebrate their day.

2. **Thank-You Notes:** Always send a thank-you note to anyone who refers a patient to your office. It is a common courtesy, and when you acknowledge their referral, they will be more likely to refer patients to you in the future. Some offices send yellow "Thank-U-Grams" that look like telegrams; other offices will send the referring parties special gifts for multiple referrals. Note: You will need to check with your state board to see if this is legal. In California, where I am located, the only thing you can send is a note because other items may be considered kickbacks and therefore are not permitted.

3. **Welcome Notes:** A handwritten note to a new patient lets them know you really care and are ready to serve them. It is recommended that you enclose a business card along with emergency instructions and an emergency contact number they will have access to in the event of a chiropractic emergency.

Many offices send computer-generated letters. That's fine, but including a personal handwritten note shows the patient you sincerely care and do not consider them "just another patient." Any business can generate a computerized letter; show your patients that your office is special and goes the extra mile.

Remember, whenever you send out any mail to patients, include the words "Return Service Requested" under your return address so the post office can notify you in the event a patient has moved.

You can purchase many cards from your local chiropractic supply company. There are many choices that will reflect the personality of your office; you may choose Garfield surfing with the words "Long Time No See" or a simple and elegant Hallmark card that states your message. Or, you can simply go to your local dollar store and purchase cards for all occasions for a modest price. Don't forget to send all postcards in envelopes to ensure that you do not violate any HIPAA laws.

4. **First Adjustment Follow-Up Calls:** Do you remember the last time your doctor or dentist called you after your visit to see how you were doing? We are the exception to the rule. We will always call the patient after their first adjustment to make sure they are doing well. Sometimes (rarely), patients feel worse after their first adjustment, and if they express this when we call them, we can

get them back to the office for a recheck, give them instructions on home self-care or even make a house call. We don't want patients to go around telling the world that they tried chiropractic and it didn't work, just because they did not follow our recommendations for care or we didn't address their concerns appropriately.

Numerous times during visits to offices, I hear the doctor say, "I used to do that." I am never sure why they stopped, but I do know one thing: These four simple and inexpensive tactics work. Go out of your way for your patients. Go the extra mile and show that your office is special. Show you care about your patients and appreciate their faith, confidence and belief in you, your office and chiropractic.

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