

Selling *You*: Your Most Important Product

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As a doctor, it's very easy to dislike selling or even the idea of having to sell. When you decided to become a chiropractor, the last thing on your mind was the notion of having to sell it to others. Well, I hate to burst your bubble, but all of life is about selling. People are inundated with thousands of advertising and marketing campaigns selling products and services. Your business is nothing different. You must attract customers if you are to survive. The sooner you realize that fact, the more successful you will become.

But with so much competition in the marketplace, how can you distinguish your practice? It's really quite simple. What is the one thing unique to your office? The answer is - *you*! The first product you need to sell is yourself. Below are seven ways to help get you started.

What People Value

Here's a golden rule to etch into your memory: People value - and pay more for - the way you make them feel. So often that is the difference in terms of where we decide to spend our money. It's not about superior competence or how many initials are after your name. It's not about more years of experience. What matters is something so tiny but so important: the feelings you give people. We make decisions based on emotion and justify these decisions with logic. Appeal to the heart and spirit of a potential patient. Show genuine interest in them by devoting all of your attention (PTC - present-time consciousness) during consultations and examinations. At every moment of their visit, they are the only person you should be thinking about.

Focus Your Service

You can't be all things to all people. Don't try to be a Jack of All Trades. People know that this type of person is really just a Master of None. Try to appeal to thousands, and you will appeal strongly to no one. Find a niche. Even if you range widely, find out what your patients need and focus your message on those needs only. We know chiropractic can help everyone become healthy and live a more robust life, but that is a big market to cover. Pick a condition and design your next marketing campaign and practice strategy around it. For example, become the carpal tunnel guru in your area.

Visual Over Verbal

Time and again in sales and marketing, it seems the visual overwhelms the verbal. After all, people think with their eyes and hear what they see. Watch your visuals carefully. What are you conveying with your office presentation? Are your therapy tables clean and free of rips and tears? How is your wardrobe? How is the staff dressed? You can spend all day trying to convince someone to buy your services with fancy scripts from a consultant group, but one dirty reception area can end it all. Watch the details. Trust me, your potential patients will!

Simplify and Clarify

You are trying to sell yourself to people who often feel overwhelmed. There are so many choices

out there for people that they can have a hard time choosing which way to go. For example, when was the last time you purchased toothpaste? Go to the supermarket and see the rows upon rows of toothpaste options: tartar control, plaque reduction, whitening, etc. It's overwhelming. So many options; which one to choose?

In terms of chiropractic, why should patients choose you? We have a tendency to oversell ourselves and talk too much. Whatever you want to communicate, you must do it simply. For example, in your next report of findings, keep it simple by answering four basic questions for the patient: What's wrong with them? Can you fix it? How much will it cost? How long will it take? Done.

Tell Them Your Story

Stories are how we come to understand our world at every age. Our lives are stories. The evening news, television shows, movies, books and plays all are stories. Even the music we love tells stories through lyrics or evokes stories with its words. Stories give us context, and context helps everyone at every age understand. Stories hold special power because they can be translated into something visual. When we hear a story, we see it, too, and the visual image becomes something that sticks in our memories.

With that in mind, stop trying to sell yourself by listing your achievements. When people come to you for help, they are often afraid, confused and overwhelmed. They want to know, "How can you help me? Have you helped someone like me already?" Tell them your story and watch what happens.

Rule of the Second

When you listen to someone, pause a full second before replying. It signals that you have listened. If you start speaking immediately, you create a perception that you have been waiting for the person to stop so you could get to the important part: *your* words and *your* thoughts. Before you speak, take a second and remember that listening makes you captivating. Remember the old saying, "You have two ears and one mouth." So talk less and listen more. Always good advice.

What People Crave

Some of the primary needs in life are food, shelter and clothing. Most people already have fulfilled these needs and are looking for something more in terms of needs/desires, the greatest of which perhaps is simply to feel appreciated. Following appreciation, they desire (and demand) *respect*. Simply stated, people want to feel important. Make them feel important by showing manners. Address them as Mr. or Ms./Mrs. until you get their permission to do otherwise. Return their phone calls promptly. Respect their time and don't keep them waiting long for an appointment. Say thank you. It's the small things that matter most.

Life is a sale and the path to success in both living and selling is the same. Serve your patients with the passion you have for chiropractic, but always remember you are a business first. To help people, you must first attract them to your services. Take the time and continue learning how to become a better you. I guarantee it will bring you more rewards in practice and in life.

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