

Sowing Seeds to Grow Your Practice, Part 2

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In [Part 1](#) of this article [Sept. 23 issue], we began exploring ways we can educate and build relationships with our patients, thus growing a thriving practice without the need for outside advertising. In this article, let's discuss some additional fun and educational ways to grow your practice from the inside out. I would like to remind you that in several previous articles, I have addressed several of these systems and procedures in detail; therefore, I will not go into as much depth in this article.

Cautionary reminder: [Remember HIPAA](#) when implementing any systems that may involve exposure of protected patient information. If a patient does give their consent to use their personal information, be sure that they sign a waiver to that effect.

Social Networking Web Sites

Invite all your patients and friends to become your friend on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., and have them share their positive experiences on Yelp and Google, too. At a recent chiropractic convention, chiropractor Dr. Timothy Gay mentioned a great way to present patient testimonials using Facebook and YouTube. He suggested purchasing a small hand-held video recorder to record patient testimonials, which you can then post to these sites and on your practice Web site. The investment is under \$200. You also can use the video camcorder to record invites for events taking place in the office.

Go the Extra Mile

The doctor should be calling each and every patient after their first treatment or flare-up. When was the last time you received a call from *your* doctor after you had a procedure done? Not only does this create a ["wow" experience](#) for the patient, but it also is an opportunity to address any questions that the patient might have for you. If they are not feeling better, go the extra mile and make a house call or provide them instructions for additional self-care that they can administer at home until they are able to return to the office for a recheck. (If you would like a copy of the "First Adjustment Call Slip," please e-mail your request to lisa_bilodeau@hotmail.com with "FA" in the subject box.)

When making your first-adjustment care call, ask the patient about their first-visit experience. Were they greeted promptly and by name? Did the CA come out to the reception area and shake their hand? Was the office clean? Did they feel that the doctor understood their condition and needs?

Recall phone calls should be made to all patients who have not returned for care, against their advice of the doctor. It is always most effective for the doctor to make the calls when possible. Be sure the doctor has the patient's treatment notes in front of them when they make the call to remind them what the patient was being treated for, and so they can ask specifically about those issues. Remember that if you leave two messages and they don't return your call, they are sending *you* a message.

Patient-Appreciation Days

This is exactly what it says: a day to show your appreciation to your current and past patients. It is a celebration and must be carefully orchestrated. It is also a great way to collect donations for a local cause, such as collecting food for a local food bank, teddy bears for a local children's hospital, care packages for soldiers on active duty, backpacks filled with school supplies, etc.

- Decide on the organization you would like to support. Contact the organization and speak with them about the event, and find out if there are any limits or restrictions about which you need to be aware. Establish the date and time of the celebration. Invite your patients by e-vites (e-mail invitations), postcards, phone calls, personalized letters, invites via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., and/or list the event in your local paper in the current events section.
- If you will be doing re-exams and X-rays at the event, you may need to arrange for another doctor to assist you.
- Decorate the office to go with the theme and have food, drawings and entertainment if possible.
- Invite the local paper to cover the event and take a picture of the doctor and team members. You can talk about the charity you are supporting and what you were able to donate to the organization. This is great PR.
- Celebrate your success with your team.

Kid Area

Having children in a practice is rewarding, but it comes with some unique challenges. Having a special area or room for children to play in is essential, and their safety should be considered first and foremost in your design process. Make sure the area isn't near a doorway where children could be hurt by the opening or closing door, or tripped over by another patient. Be sure that the toys in the room are safe and can be sanitized on a regular basis. If you are going to provide chiropractic coloring books, be sure that the markers or crayons can be easily washed off surfaces such as walls and tables. Having a chiropractic video for children to watch is educational and fun, too.

One chiropractic office I worked in had a mural of a wizard painted on a wall in the hallway outside of the exam room. The wizard is holding a wand and there are stars being cast on the wall. When a child receives their first adjustment, a digital picture of their face is taken and placed inside a star. It brings a lot of fun to the office and adult new patients learn that chiropractic is for kids, too.

Be sure to hire team members who enjoy working with kids. Keep in mind that in most offices, they will have to entertain or hold smaller children while their parents are being adjusted.

More CA Power Tools

- **All your CAs** should have personalized business cards that they can give to patients and potential patients. Not only is this empowering, but it also reinforces that they are a professional chiropractic assistant, not a receptionist or therapist.
- Invite some smiles and great conversations with strangers by getting your team members professional, clean tops with the clinic name and logo on them. They can wear the tops when they're not at work to help "spread the word" about chiropractic and your practice.

In closing, I would like to quote the late motivational speaker Jim Rohn, who said, "Education must

precede motivation." If we don't educate, how can we expect our patients to be motivated to the wellness lifestyle and philosophy that we promote in our practices? Remember that it is not the satisfied patient who refers; it is the enthusiastic, educated patient who refers. You will reap the rewards of having educated patients. And don't forget to have fun and celebrate your wins every day

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