

End New-Patient Problems Forever: Learn to Think Like a Marketer

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Common chiropractic wisdom says that the solution to problems faced in most practices is acquiring more new patients. So, how can you create a steady stream of new patients in your office? Well, it's not by thinking like a doctor. Why? Because "doctor" is a particular hat within a health care organization and has little - if anything - to do with marketing.

I believe that it is essential for a chiropractor to not only know how to perform various marketing actions (regardless of whether they perform them personally or oversee these activities in the practice), but also to understand the subject of marketing well enough that they can think like a marketer. In other words, it's not good enough to do some marketing or hire someone to do it for you. If you want to get rid of your new-patient problems forever, then you need to be able to think like a marketer and be effective in your application of what you understand about the subject.

So, here is the guarantee: If you learn to think like a marketer and are effective in your application of the subject, you'll never have new-patient problems again. All you need to do is really develop your understanding of marketing, and then be effective with your application. If you do this, you'll find that it's not hard to drive massive numbers of people into your practice.

But before you make a decision as to whether or not these ideas are valid, consider that there is a very important distinction to make. Once you've recognized the fact that there are multiple hats within an organization, such as reception, billing, therapy assistant, etc., and that sometimes those "other" hats are worn by someone whose main duty is something else, such as office manager, owner or even doctor, you can start to sort this out successfully.

The key is to wear the hat you need to wear when you are doing the activity requiring that hat. Don't confuse it with other hats you may need (or want) to wear at other times.

For example, you are the doctor in the office, and you need to cover the reception post. Be the receptionist when you do it. While up at the front desk, don't give a consultation instead of rescheduling the appointment; reschedule the appointment! When you go home at night to the family, wear your hat as mom, dad or spouse, not doctor or owner of the clinic. To the point of this article, when you are marketing, wear your marketing hat and put that doctor hat down!

With that in mind, there is a clear-cut difference between understanding the subject of marketing and knowing how to do a few marketing actions. For example, you may know how to give a lecture or do a spinal screening (both marketing actions), but you may not know what makes those actions a success or a failure. To not know the basics underlying any successful marketing action is a tremendous liability and creates a situation whereby the business owner is at the mercy of their environment and unable to alter their approach to changing times.

First Steps

So, what is the first step to thinking like a marketer? Well, giving up any sort of "holier than thou"

attitude most of us get when we become an expert in a field of study - such as chiropractic - is your best course of action. In other words, be genuinely interested in others despite the fact that they may not know or care about you or chiropractic. This opens the door to understanding people and their motivations. Only then can you get busy establishing lines of communication to many, many people.

Next, figure out how to get yourself educated on the subject of marketing and its application in the field of chiropractic. There are many books, videos and training programs inside and outside our profession to help you achieve this objective. Even if you were to spend one hour a day for about three months studying the subject of marketing, you'd find yourself in a whole new realm of understanding - literally an expert compared to other doctors without your marketing education. In just 90 hours of study, you would probably give yourself more tools than you'd ever need to run a busy chiropractic office.

After you've educated yourself, applying what you've learned is the next step. To get really good at marketing your skills and your practice may take a few more months, but you may actually come to find that results start taking shape from the outset because you just start to think differently. And that's what it's all about: thinking like a marketer to grow your practice.