



YOUR PRACTICE / BUSINESS

The Power of the Patient Persona

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What are your current patients' *personas*? Do these personas match with the potential patients you are seeking? Maybe; maybe not. If you want to transform your practice, you need to know what types of patients you truly want to attract.

The concept of "buyer personas" has been around for a number of years. The basic concept is to describe each *type* of buyer of a service or product. In the case of a chiropractor, that translates to your potential patients.

Do the Research and Ask the Right Questions

Remember when you first opened your practice (or bought it from someone else)? Hopefully you researched the demographics of the area, traffic patterns, cost to operate your clinic and more. Research is the key to your personas, too. Start with your current population of patients. Go back three years and answer these questions for each of the three years:

- What is the breakdown of your current patients by age?
- What is the breakdown of current patients by gender?
- What is the breakdown of current patients by complaint or cause for seeking your services?
- What are the sources of referrals to your office?
- What is the profile of "catch and release" (solve the problem and never see again) patients?
- What is the profile of your "regular" patients who receive "maintenance" adjustments and other services?
- What is the breakdown of services and products other than adjustments being utilized by patients?

I've Completed the Assignment - Now What?

Now analyze the data for trends in your patients and mix of referral sources and services / products your patients are engaging with in your office. Is [laser](#), nutrition, [weight loss](#) and/or pillows moving the needle for your practice? Focus on what's working and decide what to do with what's *not* working. You may find some of the techniques, philosophies, products and services you

are making available to your current patients do not match well with their personas. (More on this a little later.)

What Kind of Patients Do You Really Want?



Creating your desired practice means attracting the patient personas that will make your dream a reality. For example, if you handle a significant amount of personal-injury and worker's comp, it is tough to simply say you are now a sports chiropractor. Go back to the research; see what your referral sources are and why patients are attracted to your office.

Look for the dichotomy that exists between patient personas - current and future. Create multiple personas to best describe the patients you would like to attract. Give each persona a name to quickly and easily refer to each one. A handful of personas is enough to begin the process.

A Few Examples

Each persona should be different from the others to help you target potential patients. Here are two examples using the sports chiropractor example above:

Male age 30-40 who considers himself as a "weekend warrior." He is in good physical shape, but feels those aches and pains after the weekend. His performance has started to decline over the years, and he needs to better understand his physical abilities and how to combine nutrition, stretching, cardio work, lifting and chiropractic.

Female age 40-50 who is looking to re-engage in more physical activities. She is in reasonably good shape, but really should be evaluated before beginning and then maintaining an exercise routine. Key to her is the gradual engagement in more strenuous exercise and sports while limiting the risk of injury. Stretching and nutrition, along with chiropractic, is the combination that will keep her actively engaged.

Does Your Office Align With These New Personas?

Start at the beginning. Walk outside of your office building. Close your eyes and then open them. Are there visual clues that your practice operates in the building? If yes, does the signage describe what your target personas are looking for to solve their needs?

If you are in a larger building, then consider the same questions in the lobby and hallways of the building. Your front door is valuable real estate. Are you simply listing the name of the practice or are you offering solutions your buyer personas are seeking?

Once someone enters the doorway, what are the visual cues they see - posters on the wall, a specific office layout, equipment, etc.? Is that message consistent with the image you want to project and the personas you want to attract?

Tips to Attract New Personas to Your Practice

Marketing and social media should be your friends. Your message about the personas you are trying to attract needs to be shared with potential patients and influencers of the desired patients.

Non-online tools and techniques can include referrals from patients, referrals from doctors, speaking at various local organizations, holding seminars, writing for print publications, advertising, in-office marketing and networking.

Online tools and techniques can include an updated website, SEO keywords in your content marketing, starting a blog, writing e-books, posting on Facebook and Facebook advertising, creating YouTube videos, building [SlideShare](#) presentations and visiting review sites to see what patients are saying about your practice.

Go online and search using keywords to see the other providers who are being found with your targeted keywords and keyword phrases. Are *you* being found with the same keywords and phrases? Next, search using your practice name and your name. Are the results the ones you want to see associated with your target personas?

You Can't Manage What You Can't Measure

Track your progress each week to see how your patient population is evolving. Determine over time which of the non-online and online tools and techniques are best aligning with your goals. Accelerate usage of the tools and techniques that are producing results.

Refine your personas as you learn more about how your new-patient population matches against your target personas model. Don't be afraid to eliminate, modify or add personas as you gain experience.