How Can I Jump Start My Bariatric Surgery Volume: Old Fashioned Advertisement, Social Media, Or Referral Network?

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- Covidien: consulting agreement
- Gore: grant support
Socrates said, “To gain a good reputation, endeavor to be what you desire to appear.”
Many reasons why you should market your practice

- Gain market share
- Reach & treat more patients with obesity using comprehensive approach to patient care
- Increase net revenue
- Build volume to make the case to add providers to your panel
- Capture “downstream” business for your hospital/medical center from your patient population
Why Marketing?

**How many bariatric surgeries are taking place?**
The fast growth in weight-loss surgeries has ended. Though numbers are not available beyond 2009, most in the field believe the number of procedures is going down.

Source: American Society for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery

Published April 23, 2012, in American Medical News. www.amednews.com
Developing Marketing Strategies

Steps to follow when implementing or changing medical marketing strategies:

- Evaluate what is being done now to increase patient flow.
- Decide what objectives are important and how meeting these objectives will be measured.
- Develop a plan with various means of marketing the practice and a specific methodology for implementing each phase.
Knowing the Target Market

Consider the following:

- What specific outcomes do we hope to accomplish?
- What are the needs and desires of our target market?
- What are the characteristics of a typical member of the target market?
- How can the target market be reached in the most cost-effective ways?
Marketing Plan

- Set your goals
  1. financial targets
  2. patient goals
  3. patient satisfaction
  4. personal goals
- Determine best marketing tools
- Establish a budget
Implementing

- Consultant
- Marketing agency
- Doctor’s duties
- Empower staff
Evaluation

- Analyze practice data
- Obtain staff input
- Patient satisfaction surveys
“The best kind of marketing for a bariatric surgery is one-on-one marketing with patients in your practice.

A successful and happy bariatric surgery patient creates a strong circle of influence:
Internal Tools

- Office design
- Surgeons and staff training
- Newsletters
- Promotions/ co-op
- Birthday cards
- Thank you cards
- Office literature
Office Image

- Equipment reflects image
- Services offered
  - In house nutritional support
  - Insurance and Financial Specialists
  - Support groups
- Doctor and staff appearance
- Location
Education and Training

- Doctor should promote latest techniques and procedures
- Staff should receive onsite and offsite training
- Office meetings
- Office communications
Printed Communication

- Newsletters
  - regular
  - professional
- Office brochures
- Stationary and business cards reflect image
- In office promotions
Office Events

- Support Groups
- Patient’s Day
- Cooking Classes
- Multidisciplinary Seminars (plastic surgery, psychology, endocrinology/diabetes)
Patient Referral Programs

- “Satisfied patients don’t refer friends, enthusiastic ones do.”
- It is okay to ask for referral
- Promote that you accept new patients
- Ask about family members
- Implement a patient referral incentive program if regulation allows it
Professional Referral Network

- Identify and target referral opportunities by looking at your colleague practice areas
  - Primary care
  - Cardiologists
  - Endocrinologists
  - Ob/Gyn
  - Orthopedics
  - Pulmonologists
  - Sleep Specialists
Marketing Materials to Promote Referrals to your Practice

- Prepare materials that are easy to read
  - Brochure that describes your practice
    - Brief Physician and Staff biographies
    - Brief description of services offered
    - Hours of operation
    - Directions to practice
    - Phone and fax numbers
  - Rolodex card that referring physicians can easily reference with contact information
- Practice Newsletter
Marketing Materials to Promote Referrals to your Practice

- List of any sponsored CME or CEU courses that your physicians or C.D.E. might offer
- Referral Pads
- Posters
- Patient room placards
- Employee Newsletters

Meet with Marketing and Public Relations staff at your affiliated hospital or medical center to increase practice profile
Marketing Materials to Promote Referrals to your Practice

- Outreach to medical staff community at your hospital to present at Grand Rounds to educate potential referring providers about diabetes and its manifestations
- Last but not least –
  - COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE CONSTANTLY with potential referring providers to build your practice
Implement a Continuous Care Program

- Post cards
- Letters
- Telephone
- Email
- Preappointment system
Post Cards

- Least expensive
- Least effective
- Easiest to maintain
Telephone

- Very effective if you can contact patient
- Very labor intensive
- After normal work hours required
Preappointment System

- Moderate complexity/ computers reduce difficulty
- Very effective
- Requires effort from doctor and staff
Why Preappoint?

- Best medical practice
- Control patient flow
- Demonstrates proper care and concern, must not assume patient knows when the appropriate time interval should be between appointments
External Marketing Tools

- Average for established practice is 5% of revenue generated from marketing generated new patients--must add to existing patient base to grow
- Newer practices will rely more heavily on external marketing tools
Terminology

- Reach -- number of persons viewing or hearing a message
- Frequency -- number of times each person heard or saw message
- CPM -- costs per thousand messages
- Penetration -- percent of target audience that heard or saw message
Example

- $10,000 spent on a radio announcement
- Reach was a target of 50,000 potential patients
- Each person averaged hearing message three times
- CPM - $10,000/150,000 \times 1000 = 66.66$/thousand
Tools of External Marketing

- Print media
- Visual media
- Radio
- Outdoor
- Technology/internet
- Outside professional presentations
Types of print media

- Newspaper
- Direct mail
- Magazines
- Yellow pages
Newspaper

- Good geographic distribution
- Costs reasonable
- Trackable
- Negative is that your target audience has been decreasing in reach over the years
Direct Mail

- Easily targeted
- Expensive per reach
- Low response rate
- Best in new areas and new practices
Magazines

- CPM is low but hard to get good geographic distribution
- Good to get to target audience
- Low response rate
- Requires more advance planning
Television

- Usually prohibitive for individual offices
- Great for multiple locations in certain markets
- Very high production costs
- Expensive due to need for high frequency to get gross impressions
Radio

- CPM is very low
- Easy to target audience
- Easy to produce
- Geographic issues make it difficult in some markets
- Great for awareness campaigns
Outside Involvement

- Talks Courses
- Health fairs
- Civic involvement (Walk for Obesity)
New Technology

- Website
- Web reputation of your practice
- Email marketing
- Social Networking Sites, like Facebook, and Twitter
Old Fashion Chat Room
Factors that Have Changed the Game

- The rise of the internet.
  - The move towards digital age.
- The consumer movement in health care.
- The need to protect your image.
- Deceptive Medical Advertising.
- Change in advertising dollars spent on paper vs. digital media.
- Number of patients online.
### Patients Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE FACTS</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61%</td>
<td>of American adults look online for health information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>of e-patients have read someone else's commentary or experience about health or medical issues on an online news group, website, or blog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>say the information found online affected a decision about how to treat an illness or condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>of all adults say they or someone they know has been helped by following medical advice or health information found on the internet.</td>
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Practice Website

- Define the objectives of the website.
- Design the pages.
- Prepare downloadable content for patients including patient’s application.
Building a Web Site

- The Web site should be simple easy to navigate for your target audience
  - Consistent with your Brand.
  - Content optimized for Search Engines.
- Keep eye candy to a minimum unless you do cosmetic procedures. This helps keep expenses to a minimum.
- The more content, the more memory, the more cost.
- Clear! Readable! Understandable!
Building a Web Site

- You are going to build it to optimize its detection by search engines. This is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Consider a Blog with your web site.
- Track traffic - called ‘hits’ or ‘eyeballs’
  - i.e. Web Site Analytics
Web Marketing

- An overall strategy to use all elements of the Web to increase the ability to be found on the Web.

- Use the idiosyncrasies of Search Engine algorithms.
Web Marketing Strategies

- Search Engine Optimization
- Pay Per Click
- Local Search Visibility
- Email
- Facebook
- Twitter
Search Engine Optimization

- Enhancing your website rankings in search engines is important because most people do not go beyond page 2.
- SEO tries to get your website ranked high in a natural or "organic" way.
- Search Engine rankings are earned and not paid.
- Natural search ranking is a sign of credibility to consumers.
There are many elements that search engines look for when visiting a site.

How you would search for yourself?

Test key words in your search for practices like yours and see what happens.

SEO is constantly changing.

It is an art as well as a science.

There are no guarantees.
SEO Key Factors

- How long your domain has been in existence.
- With respect to renewal terms of the domain name, the longer the better.
- Number of external Links.
- Word Density
- Key words
- Meta Tags
- Key Word Volume
Keywords

- Keywords are the words or phrases in the content of your website that someone is most likely to use when searching for your online business or website.
  - For Example: Web site name, company name, or other related terms. (Keywords should be separated by a comma.)
  - You should limit keywords to 10-15 terms.
Keyword Test
Pay Per Click

- Getting your website to appear in the paid ad spots is accomplished by developing a Pay Per Click advertising campaign
- It can be very expensive
Local Search Visibility

- Is a quick and easy way to get your business listed in local directories such as Google® Maps and Yahoo!® Local.
- You submit your web to local directories like: CitySearch.com
- Have a physical address and phone number within an `<address>` tag at least on your contact page and one other page; the best option would be the homepage. By far the best option is to have your address on all pages of your site.
Social Media

- Very Powerful
  - As evidenced by the Arabic Spring movement
- Blogging
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
Caveats

- Communication with individual patients about their healthcare is different than marketing to large groups on the internet.

- Social media is not secure and should never be used to speak to individual patients about their health care.
A blog is a blend of the word ‘web’ and ‘log’.

Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary. A dynamic Blog helps SEO ranking.

You can correct or give out good medical information.

Interactive

Can be part of the web site or on its own.
Facebook

- 50% of active users log on to Facebook in any given day.
- The average user has 130 friends.
- People spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook.
- Average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events.
- CBS new reported that 51% of all Americans are on Facebook.
Facebook

- “Facebook helps you connect and share with the people in your life.”
- Dynamic.
- A “Back and Forth” conversation.
- Add stuff you like for your patients.
- Add photos.
- Do not allow people to write on your wall.
Twitter

- Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called Tweets.
- It's a way to discover the latest news ("what's happening") related to subjects you care about.
Twitter
Twitter

- Instantaneous
- Very dynamic
- Limited to 140 characters per message - an average sentence.
- Good to get quick notices out.
  - CHANGES IN OFFICE HOURS
  - Changes in Seminar schedule
Twitter

Twitter’s best-known ad format, called Promoted Tweets, looks like a regular tweet.

- The ads appear in some users’ individual accounts, tailored to what Twitter knows about their personal interests, and when users type specific keywords into the heavily-used search box on Twitter.com.

- Twitter advertisers pay a fee every time a user selects an ad, including clicking on a link or “retweeting” the message to the followers of his or her own Twitter account.

- http://twitter.com/johnmaese
YouTube

• Founded in February 2005

• YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch and share originally-created videos.

• Bariatric surgery practices can upload videos about procedures especially about new technology
Web Reputation: Sites that Compare Physicians

- Commercial sites.
  - Data and Patient reviews.
- Government sites.
  - Data.
- Insurance Company sites.
  - Data and Cost.
Commercial Sites

- http://www.healthgrades.com
- http://www.vitals.com
- http://www.ucomparehealthcare.com
- http://www.lifescript.com
- http://www.qualityhealth.com
- http://www.angieslist.com
- http://www.healthline.com
The “Physician Compare” Web site, fashioned after CMS’s existing “Hospital Compare” site that enables consumers to shop for hospitals against several price and quality factors.

Initially, information about physicians enrolled in the Medicare program and those participating in the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS), through which CMS pays incentives for providers who meet various quality marks.

CMS will add in January 2013 physician performance information based on 2012 quality reporting it receives.
CMS Site

Physician Compare

What type of provider are you looking for?

Required Search Criteria

Type
- Physician  Select a Specialty  Specialty Definitions
- Other Healthcare Professional  Select a Professional

Location - ZIP Code or City, State
eg. 10009 or New York, NY
Find and Compare Physicians on their rates of Cesarean Delivery, Episiotomy and other Information

Enter your zipcode or the first few letters of Physician's last name. Click "Search" for all Virginia physicians in the guide.

Just want general information on an OB/GYN or cardiology physicians?

VHI has separate listings of Cardiologists and OB/GYN physicians across Virginia. You'll find their address, education and related information if you Click here.
FDA Tells Weight-Loss Surgery Centers To Pull Misleading Ads

by SCOTT HENSLEY

December 13, 2011  5:06 PM

Michelle Vicari  a year ago
As someone who has had weight loss surgery I dislike billboards and other advertisements because it perpetuates the misinformed idea that weight loss surgery is a quick and easy solution. There is nothing quick or easy about it. I had gastric bypass surgery in 2006. My before & current picture:

Susan Amerson  a year ago
I had a lap-band 7 months ago. It was not from one of the doctors that sponsor those ads, but the ads influenced me. I am happy with the lap band. I reduces appetite, but does not prevent a pers from eating small amounts of things that are not on any weight loss diet, so one still has to have self control. But the band helps. I have lost 45 pounds, and am still trying to lose (but 45 pounds is significant).