

GASTROENTEROLOGY PRACTICE CASE STUDY

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EFFORTS RESULT IN \$1.2 MILLION INCREASE IN REVENUE

A gastroenterology practice, with an adjoining endoscopy lab, first signed on with Practice-Reps in April of 2008. The practice, based in the Southeastern Pennsylvania suburbs, was founded more than 35 years ago and now staffs more than 11 board certified physicians who are recognized as the community leaders in their specialty.

Professional marketing of the practice was a new concept to many of the staff members and was met with significant skepticism in light of their leading market share position. Eventually the staff agreed to a one-year trial of part-time marketing for six days per month by the Practice-Reps team.

During our two-day marketing audit, we discovered that the practice had engaged in some limited marketing in years past in an effort to promote their strategy of “Open Endoscopy.” In addition, staff physicians had taken time to visit local referrers and host open house receptions. However, the practice could only devote limited resources in terms of time, follow up, and promotional funding to these campaigns.

While researching their current and past referrals via the Practice-Rep Survey System (email, postal, and personal meetings), we discovered that many referrers were sending patients to local surgeons for routine colonoscopy screening due to a perceived delay in scheduling with our client. Most referrers were unaware of the practice’s “Open Endoscopy” policy, which allows for routine colonoscopy screening without a formal consult. The practice had developed this effective way for to increase access and make scheduling easier, but few referrers were aware of it!

With **external marketing tools** such as branded fax referral forms and insurance acceptance guides, the Practice-Reps team went to work in the community, meeting with current and past targeted referral sources in an effort to survey perceptions and reinforce the message of easy access to board certified specialists. Initially, our PCP reception was mixed and we were challenged to identify the true decision maker in each office. After weeks and sometimes months of repeat visits and consistent follow up, most practices began to realize that we were there to service them and the lines of communication began to open up. Referrals soon followed.

We quickly followed up our external personal representation efforts with the introduction of proprietary marketing materials developed in a low-cost fashion by the Practice-Reps team of marketers.

Internally, we worked with the practice’s staff to develop a “patient navigation system,” which gave the patient the perception of a “guiding hand” throughout the entire endoscopy procedure, from scheduling to discharge instructions. This new campaign was promoted to PCP offices with great success and resulted in hundreds of patient-scheduled screening procedures.

We also developed new patient, employee, and referrer newsletters and surveys for electronic distribution via a low-cost, secure online provider. This allowed the practice to communicate with these three important groups on an on-going basis in an interesting, visually-appealing format, complete with news, education, and announcements pertinent to each group, coupled with appropriate pictures, graphs, and logos.

No billboards, color brochures, or traditional print ads of any kind were used in this campaign!

After nine months of effort, the practice administrator tallied the results and discovered that our efforts had resulted in more than 715 new procedures over the previous year’s 9,720 procedures. The results of month ten show this procedure rate to be climbing at an even higher rate!

Practice-Reps calculated the average procedure value to be \$1,300 per patient in gross revenue. With 953 new procedures (annualized rate), we estimate a **growth of \$1,240,000** in gross revenue for this practice!