

CARDIOLOGY PRACTICE CASE STUDY 0016

PRACTICE MARKETING RESULTS IN CONTINUED GROWTH YEAR AFTER YEAR

In this case study, the terms “physician liaison” and “practice rep” are interchangeable. In our view, a physician liaison is responsible primarily for representation whereas a practice rep is responsible for both representation and marketing for a practice.

A large, 20-year-old cardiology practice based in southern New Jersey staffs more than 40 board certified physicians in an extremely competitive marketplace. The practice has cared for an over-served market in a dense geography of educated, well-insured patients.

By 2001, this group had invested in the development of 5 off-site diagnostic facilities through southern New Jersey (ultrasound and nuclear). Growth in these sites had met industry standards in the past but had recently begun to slow with the introduction of new competitive sites in surrounding communities.

In 2001, the group instituted a part-time practice rep-based program of personal marketing aimed at past, current, and future referral sources. Marketing materials such as ads, brochures, flyers, and symptom-specific mailers were developed to augment and support the efforts of the physician liaison. “Lunch and Learns,” Open House nights, and personal meetings were scheduled and, most importantly, followed up on by the liaison while the group responded to feedback from the field to adjust their staff and service levels. Over a four-year period, the rep went on to develop a new, enhanced website which collected patient email addresses and allowed for an ongoing dialogue with past patients, leading to increased patient referrals. New patient welcome materials were also developed and multimedia patient education venues were improved for all sites.

Most importantly, the rep developed relationships at every level within the PCP community, from the front office staff to schedulers, nurses, and physicians. As a result, communication and trust were enhanced and deficiencies were uncovered and rectified on an on-going basis. The rep also helped develop the staff’s skills, enhancing telephone presence and scheduling procedures, and offered pre-cert assistance when needed.

No billboards or media ads of any kind were used during this campaign period.

Results (growth compared to the previous 12 months):

- In Year One: The practice realized a 72.3% growth in outside referrals for all diagnostic centers combined.
- In Year Two: The practice realized a negative growth in outside DX referrals compared to the previous year.
- In Year Three: The practice realized a 5.4% growth in outside referrals for all diagnostic centers combined
- In Year Four: The practice realized an 11.2% growth in outside referrals for all diagnostic centers combined.