



20.7% referral growth in year one for an inner city hospital owned practice!

We were contracted to market a small cardiology practice in late February of 2016. This team of interventional cardiologists were hand-picked by the administrator of this 200 bed catholic hospital back in 2014. A significant amount of political upheaval preceded this hire and the hospital was left with no cardiology service at all in late 2013. The CV service line now had three highly credentialed board certified cardiologists from different races and backgrounds who were eager to serve a needy community.

The previous political issues and poor service left most community referral sources no choice but to sway all of their referrals to a powerful health system across town. In 2014 this team was essentially starting from scratch to build the CV service line.

The hospital had recently invested in 2 new nuclear cameras, newly refurbished Cath labs, and an updated ICU-CCU. The practice had easy access with same day appointments and Saturday testing hours. The hospital had a full time marketing staff that developed the necessary collateral materials, billboards, and ad's to promote and support this new practice.

In February 2016 we were invited in based on our previous service for one of the providers at another practice. We agreed to market the service line with 50 calls per month with our rep and manager based in that geography. We conducted an abbreviated marketing audit and worked with them to create a referral tracking report that measured our success by month, by quarter, YTD for each physician who referred to us. We were measured entirely on new referral business!

January and February of 2016 showed another downward trend in referrals as we prepared to go into the field in Late February. Once we were out in the community we began to learn the true opinion of providers, both current and lost. As usual we first met with current referral sources to ensure what little we had in the way of business. From there we went to lost or diminished referral sources where we surveyed their reasons for leaving. Lastly we went to non-referral sources in the catchment area to see what we could do to earn some of their business. As always we encountered a wide array of misconceptions about our practice and the hospital in general. Most sources were unaware of our rapid access capability and nobody knew of our Saturday diagnostic testing hours. The biggest objection we encountered was our location in an inner city neighborhood. In short, we listened to the needs of the referral community while we followed up on questions and requests in general. (ACO alignment never factored into our discussions)

By the end of the first sixty days we had been to many of the potential referral sources and we were able to categorize them based on their potential to send given their response in our first meeting. From here we established a call frequency schedule that allowed us to focus our time on those most likely to

change their referral habits. This becomes an “evergreen document” that changes quarterly as progress is made.

The things that set this engagement apart from others were as follows:

- 1) This client made themselves available for “lunch and learn” meetings as we requested. We’re prudent with this approach but sometimes shaking hands and breaking bread is irreplaceable.
- 2) The client worked with us in getting their staff to identify the referral source for each client; in fact they developed four points in each patient visit where they asked the patient the name of their referral source! Once this data was collected we were given a data sheet both weekly and monthly identifying all referral sources for the practice. This was key because it allowed us to focus our efforts in the field while following up and thanking new referral sources.
- 3) This client took the time to meet with us for one hour every two months while we reviewed our progress to date and networked with them to tweak our efforts with different referral sources.

We walked into a client experiencing a downward trend in Q1 2016 over the previous quarter, and year in general. With our efforts we were able reverse this trend within 90 days while we demonstrated increasing growth each and every quarter in 2016! This client experienced a 20.7% growth in new referrals from all referral sources including **38 new referral sources**. This trend continues in 2017.



