

Preparing to Market Your Employed Physician: Five Important Steps

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With the pressures of practicing medicine today, building and maintaining a successful practice can be a challenge. Having the ability to assist your employed physicians with practice marketing strategy and tools can show support and interest in their success and may be just what you need to jumpstart, or strengthen, the hospital-clinic relationship.

If you're in a position to take on such an initiative, the first step should begin with due diligence to understand the factors impacting their business today. Doing this work shows you recognize that each practice has a unique personality and that a successful plan will be one customized to the practice and culture.

Here are five key steps to assessing the practice:



1. Understand the current brand position.

Look for answers to questions like: What is the clinic's current reputation in the community? With referring physicians? Does it meet the criteria that make an effective brand? How does this match the overall organization's brand and how much should it?

2. Do some homework.

Learn how the practice communicates the brand. Request samples of in-office materials such as stationery, script pads, business cards and then materials used externally such as collateral, ad samples, patient education materials and premium items. Spend some time in the clinic wearing a patient's hat, watch and note your observations and experiences.

3. Ask about access and service – for both patients and referring physicians.

Are the physicians willing and able to accept new business? What is the wait time for an appointment? How well does the staff interact with patients and referring physicians? Is there a referral communication

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protocol in place? This is a good time to review their satisfaction scores.

4. Analyze the opportunity.

Understand the market dynamics that may be contributing to the clinic's position and to the position of your competitors. What is the profile of a typical patient? Explore opportunities to attract the clinic's most desirable business – clinically, demographically, psychographically and geographically.

5. Talk to the doctors.

Much of the work described above can be gathered from the clinic manager and other staff, but it will also be important to get the perspective of the physicians you'll be marketing. This will help with buy-in later. Ask them to define their brand in their terms and gather clinical expertise positioning points. Then assess what role they should play. For example, would they be good in front of a camera or better writing an article for the newspaper?

The information you gather in this exercise should reveal a clear direction for positioning the clinic with its key audiences. With this insight, are you ready to roll up your sleeves and delve into your strategy and approach for physician marketing? Just send me a note at amaloley@barlowmccarthy.com and we can spend a complimentary hour talking about your needs along with some tips and suggestions.