

Marketing the Neuromuscular and EDX Practice

Whether you are just starting your medical career or new medical practice, are wanting to take your existing practice to that next stage of growth, or are looking to offset the impact of managed care, marketing your practice is a proactive step in planning for your future. Major changes have occurred in the medical profession in the last decade. Physicians cannot wait for patients but must actively promote their services. Years ago, physician would not advertise in newspapers or in the telephone book. Now, this is common.

Physicians operate in a competitive market. The internet has resulted in significant changes in patient expectations and knowledge base. Patients examine whether a physician provides timely service, customer satisfaction, and quality care when choosing their medical providers. Referring physicians and payors are also holding physicians to new standards. A well thought out and executed marketing plan is the first step in staying ahead of your competitors and meeting the needs of your patients and referral sources.

What is the difference between “marketing” and “advertising”?

You will often find that many people confuse marketing with advertising or vice versa. While both components are important they are very different.

- Marketing—Marketing involves the development and implementation of a strategic marketing plan. It will answer the questions shown in the box to the right. Your marketing plan will outline the specific actions you need to take to meet the goals you set.

- Advertising—Advertising is an impersonal means of reaching a large demographic audience. It can be purchased on the radio, television, billboards, newspapers, or in magazines. It can also be a piece you mail directly to a specific audience. Advertising is often a component of a marketing plan; however, it is not marketing.

How will I benefit from having a marketing plan?

Think of a marketing plan as a road map. It defines your current destination, where you want to go, and the route you will take to get there. It is a systematic plan that includes goals, objectives, and tactics. When you market without a plan, it’s like throwing strategies against the wall to see what sticks. A marketing plan will challenge you to look inside your practice and evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and look outside your practice at potential opportunities and threats (called a SWOT analysis). How you will benefit from having a marketing plan will depend on what you need. Each business’ marketing plan is unique. Based on your SWOT analysis you may set the goal of increasing the overall revenue for your practice by 20% by year-end. Your goal may be to establish a positive public image within the community. It may be to

A Marketing Plan answers the following questions:

- What are your practice opportunities and challenges?
- What are your practice goals?
- Who are your customers?
- Why should customers use your services over your competitors?
- How will you communicate your service to your customers?
- Who is responsible for each marketing initiative and what is the timeline for completion?
- How are you going to measure your progress and outcomes?

Reasons to market your practice:

- Gain market share and increase revenue.
- Increase patient volume.
- Increase the number of physicians in your practice.
- Expand your practice into new areas. (i.e., workers compensation)
- Offset the impact of managed care.
- Increase awareness of an additional new office location.
- Increase awareness of your medical practice.
- Expand your referral base.
- Develop business relationships with payor groups.

increase the number of physicians that refer patients to you. The important part is setting these goals and developing the strategies to achieve them. When you take the time to analyze your practice, both internally and externally, you can target your marketing efforts with a clear picture of what will impact your plan.

A good marketing plan should focus on tracking results (often called measurables). Results will be the key indicators in defining what is working for your practice and what should be changed. You will review the results and evaluate your strategies to assure that your time and money are being used most effectively. Results will not happen overnight, rather marketing is a long-term commitment.

Marketing Plan

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Examine Your Practice Like It's Your Patient - SWOT Analysis

As a physician, you wouldn't dream of performing a needle EMG on a patient without first conducting a history and physical examination. Every day in your practice you start by asking your patients questions, then performing the study, and then evaluating the EMG findings. It is through this process that you get a clear, informed, and documented assessment which leads you to a well thought out diagnosis and plan for treatment. Developing a marketing plan for your practice works the same way. Think of your practice as the patient and start the evaluation process by reviewing and documenting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that impact this very important patient called your practice.

This process is known in marketing terms as a SWOT analysis. This simple exercise doesn't need to be lengthy but it does require that you take a critical and objective review of your practice to make a clear assessment of your situation. Once the assessment is complete the "treatment plan" or marketing plan specifics can begin and you will reference back to your SWOT analysis often throughout the plan development stages.

Strengths

Think about the strengths within your practice that add value to your service or your marketing efforts. Strengths describe your positive tangible and intangible attributes. You may want to evaluate your strengths by area such as service delivery and community relations, to assist in focusing on the broad strengths of the practice and employees. This is your opportunity to remind yourself of the value existing within your practice and to fully utilize the strength that exists from within.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses are factors that detract from your practice's ability to deliver benefits to your market. Weaknesses might include lack of expertise, limited resources, lack of access to technology, inferior service

attributes, or poor location. These are factors that are under your control, but for a variety of reasons, are in need of improvement to effectively accomplish your marketing objectives. Weaknesses capture the negative aspects internal to your practice that detract from the value you offer or place you at a competitive disadvantage. These are areas you need to enhance in order to compete with your best competitor.

Opportunities

What opportunities exist in your market from which you hope to benefit? Opportunities are external to your practice. If you have identified "opportunities" that are internal to the organization and within your control, you will want to classify them as strengths. Opportunities reflect the potential you can realize through implementing your marketing strategies. Opportunities may be the result of market growth, positive market perceptions about your practice, or the ability to offer greater value that will create a demand for your services. Some opportunities will be ongoing while some will have a narrow window of opportunity. Timing can be everything so you may want to prioritize or categorize your opportunities accordingly.

Threats

What factors are potential threats to your practice? Threats include factors beyond your control that could place your marketing strategy, or the practice itself, at risk. A threat is a challenge created by an unfavorable trend or development that may lead to deteriorating revenues or profits. Competition, existing or potential, is always a threat. Other threats may include managed care or government regulation, decreased insurance reimbursement rates, or insurance contracts. What situations might threaten your marketing efforts? Get your worst fears on the table. You may want to classify your threats according

The SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS—What are your practice strengths that add value to your service?

WEAKNESSES—What factors detract from your practice’s ability to deliver benefits?

OPPORTUNITIES—What opportunities exist in your market from which you hope to benefit?

THREATS—What factors beyond your control are potential threats to your practice?

to their potential seriousness and “probability of occurrence.” The better you are at identifying potential threats, the more likely you can position yourself to proactively plan for and respond to them.

It is not unusual to have strengths that may also be weaknesses or for certain opportunities to be potential threats. The evaluation process is often thought provoking and when you involve all departments or team members in your office, you may find interesting dialogue and perspectives will arise. Once this documented “patient” evaluation is complete, you will have a well-rounded assessment of your practice and have the groundwork set to proceed onto the development of your marketing “treatment” plan.

Your Practice SWOT Analysis

(Sample Worksheet)

Strengths

List internal strengths related to your practice and services:

Weaknesses

List internal weaknesses that place your practice at a competitive disadvantage:

Opportunities

List external opportunities that exist in your marketplace:

Threats

List external threats beyond your control that may negatively impact your practice:

Keep Your Eye on the Target When Marketing Your Practice

You have probably heard the saying, “You can’t hit a target if you don’t know where to aim.” After all, the objective isn’t to just fire shots randomly, especially when those shots are your marketing dollars and human resources. It takes careful aim and analysis before firing to hit the bullseye with as few arrows as possible. To effectively market your medical practice it is also important to take careful aim by defining your target markets before taking a shot at setting your marketing strategy. Defining your target markets isn’t just a listing of the specialties that refer you patients. That is simply scratching the surface of the important characteristics that define your target. The information below will help you better define your target markets. It will give you a better understanding of who your marketing efforts are aimed at, what their needs are, and where to find them.

Who is your customer?

That’s right, your customer! You probably think in terms of patient, referring physician, or insurance company, but the fact is that each of these groups in general is your customer. The first phase of defining your target market is to start at the general level of understanding by documenting the demographic profile of your current “customers.” What region do your patients and referrals come from? This will define the target area for your marketing. What services are typically requested or performed? This may help identify referral characteristics and service utilization. A lot of

the profile information you can obtain by analyzing your patient and referral data, while other details are common knowledge obtained over time. Whichever the case, document this profile information as a helpful reference moving forward and as a benchmark for future comparison.

What are your customer’s needs?

Conducting a needs assessment of your target market groups is an essential step that you will refer back to on an ongoing basis as you later develop your marketing strategies. Your services and marketing messages will ultimately need to address and meet the needs of your customers in order to be effective. Each target group will have common as well as differing needs. The referral source has the need to know that their patient will receive quality medical care but they also need a smooth referral process and timely reporting following the appointment. Insurance companies may need cost-effective providers who file timely reports. Patients need good quality medical care, but they also may need something as basic as easy directions to your office and information on what to expect in advance of their appointment.

Who refers you patients?

Now it’s time to get specific. What are the specific target market segments? In general, you probably know the medical specialties and groups that most often refer to your practice. Start with the general segments and then expand the list to more specific targeted groups.

For instance, orthopedic referrals may be one of the segments. Start with orthopedics and then list the current and potential orthopedic targets under that category. Workers’ Compensation insurers may also be a referral source. Start building a list of the current and potential specific insurers that you want to target.

Through this defining process, you are building a complete profile of your marketing targets. Your marketing message to each of these groups can then be developed based on your assessment of each group’s needs. This thoughtful, upfront planning will help you focus your efforts and valuable marketing dollars as you move forward.

Defining Your Target Markets

- Develop a demographic profile that describes who is in your general target market groups.
- Define the common and unique needs of each target market group.
- Outline your referral sources into market segments.
- Common Medical Specialty Target Markets:
 - Orthopedics
 - Rheumatology
 - Family Practice
 - Internal Medicine
 - Pain Management

Define Your Target Markets

(Sample Worksheet)

Who is Your Customer?

Define the demographic target market region for your practice:

Referral Sources: _____

Patients: _____

List the medical specialty referral sources for your practice within the above region:

List specific referral groups within each of the above specialty sources:

Needs Assessment

List the specific needs and expectations for each of the above target groups:

Referral Sources: _____

Patients: _____

Establishing Marketing Goals, Strategies, and Tactics

We've been methodically progressing through the steps of developing your practice's marketing plan. You should now have a better understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of your business. Your target markets have been identified, and you are ready to take specific action. Not so fast! There is one more important step. Have you stopped to think about the goals you have for your practice? Your practice goals are the basis of your marketing objectives and the strategic direction of your marketing plan.

SMART Goals

Defining your goals puts focus on what you ultimately want to accomplish to make your practice more successful. Many businesses fail because they never establish SMART goals. SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and tangible business objectives. You undoubtedly know what goals you have for your practice, but now is the time in your planning process that you write down those goals and get specific. Do you want to increase your patient volume? By how much? Do you want to open another office? Set these goals and begin the plans to achieve them.

Strategies

Strategies are the ideas and approaches that are developed to achieve your defined goals. Under each goal, you begin building a framework of strategies that say "what" you need to do in general terms to accomplish your defined goals.

Tactics

Tactics are the specific actions, details, and activities that must occur in order for the strategy to succeed. Tactics define "how" you will execute the strategy. It may be easy to jump straight to tactics without defining goals and planning strategies. Defining tactics without strategies will provide a long to-do list without a clear direction of where you are going (strategy) and you won't know when you have arrived at your destination (goal).

Looking Backwards While Marching Forward

During this next phase of planning, reference back to the practice analysis that you developed in the beginning. The data that you documented in the beginning will serve as guidance as you build your goals, strategies, and tactics. Some of your goals may be designed to overcome weaknesses that were initially defined in your SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. Maximize and build on your strengths, take full advantage of opportunities, and develop goals and strategies to overcome potential threats. Reference your list of target markets when developing strategies and tactics, and keep in mind the guiding principles of SMART goals as you proceed.

In an optimally executed marketing plan, all strategies and tactics are implemented. There may be a long list of ideas and actions you may consider to accomplish your practice goals, but there is probably not an endless amount of money and human resources available for the execution. This can be a terrific opportunity for brainstorming, but then revisit the list of goals, strategies, and tactics and test each against the SMART test elements. Is the goal specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and tangible? Prioritize the strategies by level of importance and keep the list of tactics to a manageable level for your staff and budget, keeping only the tactics that will provide the most bang for your buck or return on your investment.

Let's Talk Money

You've heard the saying "it takes money to make money." This saying probably came from a marketing department. Practice owners and administrators put most of their focus budgeting for expenses that are required to service and operate the business. By establishing a specific marketing budget, you are providing "fuel" to stimulate and generate desired revenue. If you have not set aside money in the past for marketing initiatives, this new budget line may on the surface feel like additional expense. Keep in mind

The Building Blocks Goals vs Strategies vs Tactics

Example of Goals vs Strategies vs Tactics

GOAL: Increase number of new patient visits by 10%

- STRATEGY #1: Build practice awareness among potential referral sources.
- TACTICS: Develop a targeted list of new referral sources.
 - Present the AANEM's "Introduction to EDX Medicine" slide presentations at one county medical society meeting.
 - Send an introduction letter, practice brochure, and the AANEM's "Refer to a Trained EDX Physician" brochure to the targeted referral source list.
 - Take a minimum of one potential referral source to lunch each month.
- STRATEGY #2: Provide a quality experience for referring physicians.
- TACTICS: Provide written patient reports to all referring physicians within 48 hours of the patient visit.
 - Make personal calls to new referring physicians to thank them for the referral.
 - Have the office manager visit new referring physician offices.

that this in an "investment" for future revenue return. With a well documented and thought out marketing plan, you in essence have an investment plan. You will know specifically how you are investing your dollars and with quantifiable and measurable goals, you will know if your investment is working. Just like your financial portfolio, if your strategies and tactics aren't achieving your desired goals, you make adjustments by eliminating strategies or tactics that didn't produce positively and you evaluate implementing new strategies to your portfolio. Some goals and strategies will have short-term measurements while others may take years before the outcomes can be determined.

There are multiple factors and layers to building a marketing plan. Once the ground work has been laid and the framework is built, you are on your way to a deeper understanding of your practice and a road map to achieving your practice goals.

Your Practice Goals, Strategies, and Tactics

(Sample Strategy Pyramid Worksheet)

Begin listing your specific and measurable practice goals:

Goal #1: _____

Goal #2: _____

Begin building the strategies and tactics for each goal listed above.

Goal #1: _____

List strategies that will help you accomplish this goal:

Strategy #1: _____

List specific tactics/actions to accomplish this strategy:

Tactic 1a) _____

Tactic 1b) _____

Strategy #2: _____

List specific tactics/actions to accomplish this strategy:

Tactic 2a) _____

Tactic 2b) _____

Goal #2: _____

List strategies that will help you accomplish this goal:

Strategy #1: _____

List specific tactics/actions to accomplish this strategy:

Tactic 1a) _____

Tactic 2b) _____

Strategy #2: _____

List specific tactics/actions to accomplish each strategy:

Tactic 2a) _____

Tactic 2b) _____

Build Your Practice By Growing Your Referral Base

Building and maintaining a strong patient referral base is critical to the success of every medical practice. Once your analysis of this important target market is completed, the goals have been determined, and the strategic direction has been set, it's time to apply marketing tactics that will move your objectives forward and start growing your referral base.

Tracking Your Referral Sources

Do you know who is currently referring your patients? Does your practice have a protocol for tracking your referral sources? Make certain that your office staff knows the importance of recording your referral sources as they schedule your patients. Make a point to educate your staff about the importance of obtaining this information and how the information will be used. Tracking can be as simple as having a manual system in place for your staff to record the referral sources for your patients or it may be built into your computerized billing system for electronic retrieval. It doesn't matter how you track your referral sources — it only matters that it is documented, as this is valuable information that should be reviewed and filed for evaluation and measurement.

Educating Healthcare Professionals

The more your referral sources understand about your medical specialty, the more likely they are to refer you patients. Through educational channels, you can share your expertise to build awareness of the diseases and disorders that you treat while also building awareness for your practice and for you as a medical expert in these areas. Physicians feel more comfortable referring their patients to a familiar referral source that they recognize as an expert in a field. Educating other healthcare professionals can be a very effective way to market your practice.

The Golden Rule

Treat other providers the way you would want them to treat you and your patients. Make your practice

Quick tips and tactics for educating healthcare professionals:

- Offer to speak at your regional or state medical society.
- Volunteer to give grand rounds or a lecture at a local hospital or healthcare provider group.
- Utilize AANEM slide presentations to minimize speech preparation time.
- Create and distribute a newsletter or fact sheet to providers that details common disorders that could benefit from your services or treatment.
- Personally meet with referral providers to answer questions or provide teaching opportunities.

stand out from other competing providers by providing an experience that exceeds their expectations. There is a lot of competition in the marketplace and physicians will refer where they know their patients will be well cared for and their own needs as referring physicians are met. Evaluate your practice from a customer service standpoint to make sure that your practice stands out in the crowd. The patient that returns to their primary physician and recounts a positive encounter with your office will make their physician feel comfortable in sending more patients your way.

Quick tips & tactics for creating a positive patient and provider experience:

- Provide consultation request forms to frequent referring sources for ease in making a referral.
- Provide priority appointment policies for frequent referring physicians.
- Provide prompt, timely, well-written, and understandable reports to referral sources.
- Provide an excellent patient experience by treating patients with kindness, compassion, and helpful information.
- Create an easy system for referral sources to schedule patients with your office.

Get Personal

People like to do business with people they know so get to know your referral sources on a more personal level. Find opportunities where you can network with other medical professionals. Getting to know them on a more personal basis can build strong and effective relationships that can be both professionally and personally rewarding.

These are just a few tactical ideas that may fit into your strategic marketing initiatives to increase your referral base. Get your entire office involved in brainstorming ideas around the strategies that you have developed and you will have an entire team of people working toward the goals you have set for this important target market.

Quick tips & tactics for getting to know your referral sources:

- Send an introductory letter with the AANEM brochure, "Why You Should Refer to a Trained EDX Physician," to new physicians in your identified target market area.
- Provide a sample brochure explaining EDX procedures, such as the AANEM's "What to Expect With Your EMG," for referring physicians to provide to the patients they refer in advance of their consultation.
- Host a business luncheon or event where you can promote your services.
- Invite a referral source to a medical society meeting where they can also meet other area physicians.
- Encourage your office manager to meet the office managers at other physician offices to build relationships and network.

Growing Your Referral Base

(Sample Worksheet)

Step #1: Review the current goals, strategies, and tactics outlined in your "strategy pyramid" (see article Establishing Marketing Goals, Strategies, and Tactics) related to building your referral base.

Step #2: Evaluate the effectiveness of past strategies and tactics. List the strategies and tactics that have not produced desired measurable outcomes. Eliminate or change the listed strategies and tactics identified.

Step #3: Brainstorm and list potential new tactics that could support your goals and strategies to grow your referral base:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Step #4: Review the generalized and specific referral source target markets outlined in your plan. Will a generalized marketing approach work for all referral sources or could you benefit from developing separate strategies and tactics for specific niche markets?

Step #5: Review your referral source "needs assessment" to maximize opportunities to develop tactics that will meet the needs of this target market.

Step #3: Review your SWOT analysis to assure that your referral source strategies and tactics are promoting and utilizing your defined strengths and addressing opportunities.

The Patient Comes First – Even in Marketing

Never underestimate the marketing power of the patient. This very important target group should not be overlooked in your marketing plan. In an era where their patient has a world wide web of medical information at the fingertips, patients are taking more control over the direction of their health care. They can investigate their symptoms online and evaluate provider options in their area. No matter how your patients find their way to your office, on their own or from a referring physician, that patient will provide word-of-mouth marketing when they leave your office.

The Patient Experience

The patient's experience starts before they even arrive at your office. Your practice location, patient access to physicians by telephone or email, timely appointments, short waiting times, and easy access to the office all impact the patients perception of a practice. It is key that you have a commitment from your entire office to provide patients with efficient and friendly service. Evaluate all points of contact between the patient and your office. Incorporate strategies and tactics into your marketing plan that will assure a positive patient experience and positive word-of-mouth marketing referrals. Measure the patient's satisfaction using a patient satisfaction survey. Surveys can easily be created using a paper form or by using a free online survey tool such as SurveyMonkey.

Physician-Patient Communication

Your thoroughness in explaining the patient's illness and treatment plan is one way of demonstrating your knowledge and your personal concern. Educating and informing your patient about findings and procedures put the patient at ease and demonstrates your genuine caring for the patient's well being. Complement your verbal communication with helpful written communication tools such

as educational brochures and helpful websites that the patient can read when they return home and have time to process the information received during their appointment. The AANEM has brochures for patients on what to expect during an electrodiagnostic test that outline the procedure in basic terms. After their appointment, provide patients and their referral sources with timely reports and comprehensive findings. A patient who has a good experience will share their comments with their friends, colleagues, and referring physicians. This word of mouth expands your marketing reach and will help you keep patients and your referral base. Keep in mind that a negative experience will spread the same, but with opposite outcomes. It has been stated that when someone has a negative experience, they tell 10 people where as if they have a positive experience they say nothing at all. That is why it is important your patients have a great experience.

Office Policies and Accessibility

You have completed the patients appointment, but the patient experience is not over. Charges were incurred and the next step is billing the patient. Timely and accurate billing is important not only to the finances of a medical practice but to the patient. When payment, credit, and collection policies are carefully explained, it can reduce the severity and quantity of billing related problems for your office staff. Unexpected or unexplained policies and procedures are not pleasant experiences for patients.

Patients in the Plan

In a successful medical practice, the patient comes first. Quality patient care is at the forefront and a well thought out strategic marketing plan dedicated to your patients will improve the care provided to your patient and assure a quality experience that will keep them coming back.

Enhance Your Practice Exposure With Public Relations

What does the public know about your practice? The next question would be – what are you telling the public about your practice? Public Relations (PR) is the practice of managing the internal and external communication about your practice to create and maintain a positive image. Some businesses choose to hire a PR firm to manage the messages and information that the public will hear about their businesses, but you can easily define your own PR strategies and implement some easy tactics that will be worth their weight in gold... and cost you next to nothing.

Get the Word Out

To get the word out about your practice, you may need to get out of your practice. Developing strong PR requires getting out into the community to educate the public. The most common activities include speaking at professional society meetings or conferences, service clubs, providing radio and television interviews, or even writing a weekly newspaper column. Use these public outlets to demonstrate your areas of expertise and your willingness and accessibility as an expert speaker or commentator on relevant subjects of public interest. Prepare and distribute a brief biography and summary sheet of topics that you are prepared to address. The AANEM has numerous slide presentations on a variety of topics that can easily be adapted to use in your next presentation. By educating the public, you will establish yourself as an expert in the topic area while gaining exposure for your practice.

Be Seen AND Heard

People like to do business with people they know. Get known in your community by getting involved with the local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, or a church group. Be prepared with a 30-second “elevator speech”; a brief introduction that tells people who you are, what

you do, and where they can find you. Getting involved is different than just paying your dues. Most civic and service organizations have organized meetings or networking events that make it easy to meet new people and begin building your relationships.

Expand your Reach

When everyone in your office is an ambassador for your practice, you can expand your reach into the community. For instance, you may not be interested in getting involved in the Chamber of Commerce, but your office manager might enjoy that opportunity. Make sure your staff is aware of your PR goals and strategies, and get them involved. If they know you would be willing to speak on specific topics, they may find a speaking opportunity within their personal network. Your staff members should feel comfortable talking about your practice and should have an “elevator speech” of their own to use when the opportunity presents itself. Don’t forget to inform your own family about your PR objectives – PR can be built from all avenues.

I’ve Heard About You

There are four little words that are an immediate measurement of success for your PR efforts: “I’ve heard about you.” Building an effective PR plan into your marketing plan takes an investment of time – but not a lot of money. The return on your investment will come back to you through the enhanced positive image you cultivate for you and your practice.

Keep your practice in the public eye by sending press releases to the local media when you have something new to announce. Did you just become board certified or pass your Maintenance of Certification Examination? The ABEM has sample press releases available at www.abemexam.org.

Education, Targeting are Key Components in Payor Marketing

Marketing your practice to payors may be one of the most important and challenging target groups in your marketing efforts. Payor groups include insurance providers, third-party administrators, attorneys, self-insured employers, and workers' compensation case managers and adjusters. This target market can present tremendous referral potential for your practice and can have a positive impact on overall payor policy related to EDX medicine.

Educate

Education is the key component to successful payor marketing. Selling your practice to insurance companies by providing positive and documented outcomes and communicating a willingness to review cases creates a win-win working relationship. Consider providing an educational session or in-service for case managers highlighting diagnostic and treatment protocols that will ensure that patients receive quality EDX care without overutilization. Present your practice as a high-visibility practice with quality outcomes, accessibility, and cost-effective treatment. Adhere to and promote the AANEM Practice Guidelines as the standard of care in your EDX practice. Get a head start on your educational presentation by utilizing any of the AANEM presentation slide sets that are available on the website.

Get Personal

Meet face-to-face with plan administrators, medical directors, or physician liaisons to show them what you can do for the plan and how you can save it money. Having the necessary documentation to back up your information and

AANEM Marketing Resources to Reach Payors

A sampling of resources to help you reach payors is available at: www.aanem.org/publications/MarketingYourPractice.cfm

2008 AANEM Annual Meeting Course Book,
"Practice Management"
Presentation Slides
AANEM Practice Guidelines
And more!

patient satisfaction surveys to support your commitment to quality patient care and customer satisfaction will build credibility with the payor.

Targeting Payors in Your Area

You can identify your target payors by starting with the payors who currently send you referrals and expanding your marketing efforts to this key group. Look to major employers and plans in your demographic area for potential market growth opportunities. The AANEM has trained State Liaisons who may be able to assist you in identifying key payor contacts in your state or region. Want a more active role? Sign up to take part in the next State Liaison program.

Using education to reach this important target group will increase their knowledge about EDX and neuromuscular medicine and through your marketing efforts will open a gateway to new working relationships with payors and a source of referrals to your practice.

Measuring Your Marketing Success

The goals are set, the strategies developed, and tactics have been determined. Before you begin execution, it is important to establish the metrics that will be used to measure your marketing success. Evaluating the impact of your marketing efforts is critical to the long-term success of your marketing plan, and having the measurement systems in place from the beginning will ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of results.

Where to begin?

Before you can identify change, you must define your current baseline data. Assess your marketing goals and establish the current state of your practice. Once your baseline data is documented, you have a starting place to begin measuring the growth you plan to achieve.

What are you measuring?

Determine what is important to your practice and let your goals guide you in defining the most relevant factors to monitor. If you have a goal to increase the number of referrals to your practice, you will need to determine how many referrals you currently receive, and then determine the mechanism within your office for measuring the number of referrals. Equally important is defining who will be responsible for tracking the information within your office and monitoring the measurement against the goal. Designate staff members in your office to supervise the data collection process.

Methods of measurement

Tracking activity—Building mechanisms into your practice that allow you to easily capture and analyze this data is an important step. It may be as easy as the receptionist asking patients how they heard about your practice. But, to

complete the process, the information must be documented and quantifiable. In today's practice, the office computer system can provide beneficial data entry and retrieval for your marketing plan analysis.

Examples of commonly tracked marketing activities:

- New patient visits, or admissions
- Physician referrals
- Attendance at screenings, classes, or health fairs
- Web analytics (such as unique visitors, hits, or click-throughs)
- Call center activity
- Requests for information
- Distribution of materials

Patient demographics – A wealth of marketing information is included in your patient information form. When registering new or established patients, your staff should obtain information such as: age, sex, address, occupation, marital status, insurance information, referral source, etc. This data over time will build a useful database of information to analyze your practice, patient needs, payor and patient mix. Utilize this information fully to reveal change of time and shifts in your patient demographics and compare the changes to your marketing plan growth goals.

Satisfaction surveys –Are your patients and referral sources satisfied with the service they received in your office? Happy patients and referral sources translate to positive word-of-mouth marketing. Surveys can provide a means of collecting invaluable information about your practice and help you to judge the effectiveness of your marketing campaign.

Referral sources can provide insight into the factors that influence their choice of referrals as well as their perceptions of your practice. Patient surveys can provide feedback on the quality of service, accessibility of your office, staff competence, friendliness, and professionalism.

Surveys can be as simple as a questionnaire at the patient appointment or mailed following an appointment or referral. There are also numerous affordable and easy-to-use electronic survey tools available such as SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com), Zoomerang (www.zoomerang.com), and Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com).

Monitoring your progress

With periodic checkpoints throughout the year, if you find your progress does not measure up to your expectations, you are able to determine why and make the necessary adjustments to your plan. In other words, the actions and goals in the marketing plan are not written in stone. If a direct mail campaign has been carried out as outlined in your marketing plan without the desired results,

try other actions. It is important not to expect immediate results on all marketing initiatives. You may not realize the full impact of a comprehensive marketing plan for a full year.

Successful practices never stop analyzing the changes in their practices and the marketing tools they utilize. Marketing is an ongoing activity that can have a positive impact on the growth of your business.

Examples of Practice Baseline Data

- Average number of patients seen each month
- Average number of new patients seen each month
- Current referral sources
- Average number of referrals per month

Marketing Your Practice on the Web

When patients look for a doctor they can trust, they often search the internet. Can your patients and referral sources find your practice on the World Wide Web? Incorporating an internet presence into your practice marketing plan broadens your market reach, regardless of your practice size, budget, or goals.

Unlike print material that can be outdated quickly, a practice website allows you to maintain the most current information about you and your practice and have it immediately accessible to your audience. An effective website contains a good design with frequent updates, information about your practice offerings, and user-friendly applications and navigation.

Depending on the complexity and size of your website and the human resources available within your office, you may decide to hire a website company to take charge of your website project. But, thanks to many affordable online website development services, you may choose to save thousands of dollars and create your own website.

www.yourpractice.com

The first step in creating your own site is to purchase a domain name or uniform resource locator (URL). Select a name that reflects your business and is easy to remember and communicate. Domain names can be purchased through sources such as Network Solutions (www.network-solutions.com) or GoDaddy.com (www.godaddy.com) for less than \$10 per year. These same sites also offer the ability to host your site for a monthly fee.

Mapping Your Site Content

What information will your website contain? Begin by making an outline (site map) of the information you want provided to your patients and referral sources. Your main website tabs or headings will dictate how your information is categorized for the user. At a minimum, provide a brief description of the services offered, biographies and photographs of each physician, plus appointment and insurance information. You may want to include a section that describes commonly performed procedures or disorders that you frequently treat and another section that provides information or forms that can be accessed by patients

before their appointments. Your website content should provide helpful tools for your practice, your patients, and referral sources.

Looking Good

Your website should project a professional image. While a website can entertain, its main purpose is to deliver the information that your prospects want. Don't let your site become bogged down with Flash and moving objects that will make it potentially slow to load. The design of your website should mimic your practice and existing promotional material to present a consistent visual brand. When it comes to navigation, execute the "KISS theory" (Keep It Simple, Stupid). Navigation should be intuitive, and users should be able to move from one section to another on your site with one click.

Marketing Your Website

Once your domain name is secured, take an inventory of the promotional opportunities you can use to get your website in front of your audience. Common promotional items include adding your website address on your business cards, stationery, brochures, print advertising, email signature, and in your newsletters. Look for outside opportunities where other businesses or referral sources may benefit from including a hyperlink to your website. Announce the launch of your website or even the redesign of your existing website with an email, letter, or postcard to your referral sources to raise awareness of your Web presence.

Get on board. Get online. Get on the World Wide Web!

10 Quick Places to Promote Your Website

1. Office voicemail message
2. Business cards
3. Stationery
4. Email signature
5. Facebook or Twitter accounts
6. Print advertising
7. Practice brochures
8. Email announcement to referral sources
9. Postcard or letter to referral sources and/or patients
10. Office signage

Promote Your Practice With Better Brochures

Though many physician practices use the latest internet marketing tools, there is no replacing the printed brochure that tells people about your practice, the physician(s) and staff, and the services you provide. A high quality practice brochure may be mailed to potential referral sources, new patients, and payers or given to an audience after a speaking engagement.

Know Your Readers' Needs

What do your referral sources or patients need to know about your practice? Start at the beginning and write an outline in the order your patients would ask questions. Include information about the services you provide, what makes your practice stand out from your competitors, where your office is located, office hours, and contact information. Feature the physicians in your practice with their credentials and areas of expertise. For a personal touch, include physician photos. Putting a face to a name makes people more comfortable about visiting or referring to your practice.

Shorter is Better

Don't get too wordy or technical in your writing. Make the brochure easy to read with short words, sentences, and paragraphs and plenty of white space. Focus the content on what the reader wants to know.

Make it Personal

Highlight how your various practice features benefit your patients. It can be easy to confuse features with benefits. Make a list of the features of your business.

After each of your practice features add the words "which means that..." to draw out the benefit to your patients. For example, perhaps you have a convenient location, which benefits patients by making your offices easily accessible.

Provide Clear Signposts

Your brochure should be organized in a manner that makes it easy to find the necessary information. Provide clear headlines throughout the brochure to allow easy scanning. Headings also should state the desired action, such as "How to make an appointment."

Make it Attractive

Your practice brochure is often the first impression that someone gets of your business. Create a professional image that reflects your business. The brochure doesn't need to be expensive to make an impact. A good graphic design can grab the readers' attention, reflect your practice, and be completed within your budget. If you do not have a graphic designer on staff, you can contract with a freelance designer or use a designer who works for a printing company.

Get the Word Out

Once your professional practice brochure is completed, it is time to get it out the door! Your marketing plan should outline a plan for how you will use the brochure, including who your target market is for distribution. The sooner you can get the word out, the sooner the appointments will come in.

Top Tips For Recruitment: *Best Practices and Advice for Efficient Hiring*

The days of circling “want ads” in the newspaper are long gone. Today, job seekers are web savvy and on-the-go. It’s critical that your job postings are spread across many websites and appear near the top of search results. You know better than anyone that healthcare professionals are busy, and potentially glued to their iPhone, Blackberry, Droid, etc. So consider your audience. Does your job appear on their smartphone? Expose open opportunities to more audiences through multiple outlets. Jobs posted through the AANEM CareerCenter are published across hundreds of employment sites: TopUSAJobs.com, bizjournals.com™, Indeed.com, plus many more - at no additional cost. This provides you with local, regional, general, and field-specific exposure to qualified candidates.

According to WEDDLE’s 2009 Survey of Recruiters & Job Seekers:

- More than 40% of recruiters would prefer to use niche job boards (such as AANEM CareerCenter).
- 30% of candidates obtained their last position on an online job board.
- 50% plan to utilize an online career center to find their next job.

Time and resources

In today’s competitive healthcare market, it can easily take up to a year or more to recruit a physician. If you have an opening for a physician assistant or allied healthcare

professional, a month or two is typically sufficient online advertising time. Nursing positions can vary between a few months to a year. As can be expected, there are many variables that impact the time it takes to fill a position, including the location and size of your practice, workload, hours, benefits, and the supply of candidates.

Most online posting services provide details about how many candidates have viewed and clicked on your job opening. Choose a service that provides personal consultation to help you interpret this information effectively. For example, if your position is receiving a large number of views, but no responses, your consultant should offer advice and assistance to reach qualified candidates.

Entice and inform

Remember that as job seekers look for a new position, they may consider several prerequisites. Location, community, schools, and cost of living are all taken into consideration. Your job posting should market your company culture and the surrounding community. Think beyond the requirements and qualifications of the position to what makes your opportunity attractive to potential job seekers. Do not assume candidates will be informed about your location (even if you are in a major city)! Including this section provides candidates with the full scope of your great opportunity. The demand for doctors also allows them to be even more selective when choosing a position.

Geography is Important

Geography is typically the number one reason for choosing a job, according to a 2008 study commissioned by the *New England Journal of Medicine*. In addition, more than one-third of physicians said it is very important to work within a 100-mile radius of their state of licensure. So, don't forget to include specifics about cultural, recreational, and educational offerings.

Many healthcare positions are still categorized by shortages of qualified candidates, making it even more crucial to utilize multiple outlets to find the right applicants. Posting your opportunity online is essential, but if you're hiring for a physician or a technologist, you need to consider doing much more. Attending the AANEM Annual Meeting can be an important part of your recruitment strategy and a prime opportunity to meet with candidates face-to-face.

For example, through AANEM CareerCenter, you can post your job in advance of the meeting, indicate you are planning to be on-site during the event, and provide your local contact information. Both candidates and employ-

ers can search for attendees, connect, and set up on-site meetings to maximize their time at the conference. Take advantage of this networking opportunity - a complimentary service offered through the AANEM CareerCenter, for job seekers with active profiles and any employer with job postings.

Catch those who may not be looking

To fill a position within your practice, you may need to convince qualified, employed professionals to make a change. By ensuring your opportunity is posted on multiple sites through the AANEM CareerCenter, you are likely to catch passive candidates, who are not actively looking for a new job, but see posting while visiting our association site for industry information and resources. If you are hiring for a PA, nurse practitioner or other allied or nursing position, those opportunities can be listed on the appropriate association site as well.

Leverage Online Resources to Find Your Dream Job

Unlike many industries, there are often more open healthcare positions than candidates. As a physician, you likely will be contacted with multiple opportunities well before you graduate and often throughout your career. Rather than limiting yourself to these options, educate yourself about all career options, not just those that come directly to you or through your friends and peers. In today's market, it is important to leverage all available resources to find your dream job.

Online resources offer the tools you need for a job search and can be complemented by print publications. General job boards have broad resources and positions, but niche career centers are focused on specific industries. Take advantage of healthcare-specific, online services that are regularly updated. Print publications should be paired with online offerings for the best exposure.

Use online resources like the AANEM CareerCenter that allow you to store your resume on the site, apply for jobs, track the status of applications, create an online profile, receive emails or other notifications about open opportunities, and access additional industry resources. The CareerCenter is better than others, because it offers a network of industry partnerships and affiliated sites

is free for job seekers. Go to aanem.org for additional information.

Do your homework before accepting a job

One of the main reasons new hires do not succeed is that they do not fit in to the new employer's culture. Doing careful, thorough research before accepting a position helps you avoid this outcome. When you go to work for the wrong employer, your performance goes down, which can hurt your standing in your field. The recruitment company Pinnacle Health Group cited the wrong job as a top reason physicians begin to look elsewhere for new jobs.

Before looking for a new position, know which practice type fits your background and interests. For example, single-specialty groups can offer stability, ownership opportunities, and more occasions to use or maintain all your skills. However, hospital-based practices and single-specialty groups may offer weekends off, the security of a larger facility, and unique benefits.

Don't make the wrong move. And inadequate research virtually guarantees an inadequate work experience. Some job boards and postings will help you avoid this mistake by also providing details about community amenities and an office's culture alongside other job specifics.

Before you begin your job search:

- Identify your objectives: expected salary; work hours; drive time; etc.
- Define your goals: Are you looking to advance? Does this job meet your long-term career plans?
- Update your CV and cover letter: Include all relevant experience and certifications

When you find a job you like and secure an interview, remember to:

- Do your homework: Research your potential employer beforehand
- Wear a suit or other formal attire
- Arrive early
- Present a firm handshake
- Maintain eye contact
- Bring extra copies of your CV

To ensure you make a good impression:

- Prepare a 2-minute speech about yourself and stay on message
- Do not discuss politics or religion during the interview
- Write thank you notes
- Show courtesy and respect to everyone you encounter
- Have a list of questions you would like answered

Report Sample

Helping physicians improve the quality of their reports is a key goal for AANEM in 2011. The report template below is based on the AANEM's educational paper Reporting the Results of Needle EMG and Nerve Conduction Studies. A report template helps the EDX physician adhere to and document required procedures —by checking them off a list. This process will help the EDX physician complete a thorough analysis of the patient's history, physical, and EDX data that

will improve diagnostic accuracy and result in quality patient care. The template also will help laboratories applying for the laboratory accreditation program meet the criteria used to evaluate EDX reports. The template was developed listing the key elements for a standard EDX report, excluding F-wave, H-reflex, and repetitive stimulation studies. Physicians are strongly urged to utilize this template to improve their reports.

Name: Patient Name:	Patient ID: 01234	← Patient Demographics																																																																											
Address: Patient Address:	Gender: Female																																																																												
	Date of Birth: 01/01/65																																																																												
	Height/Weight: 5'7" 300lbs																																																																												
	Examination Date: 01/10/11																																																																												
Referring Physician: Dr. X																																																																													
History and Physical Examination																																																																													
A 46-year-old female was referred for an EDX examination because of increasing problems with numbness and tingling in her left hand over the last 3 years. The patient notes numbness during the day when gripping the steering wheel of her car. She has been waking during the night with pain or paresthasias in the left hand relieved by shaking the hand.			← Reason for Referral																																																																										
Her past history is significant for a successful right carpal tunnel release 3 years ago for similar symptoms. She had a right sided mastectomy for breast cancer 10 years ago. A brief general examination was remarkable for lymphedema of the right upper extremity and a well healed scar over the right carpal tunnel. A brief neurological examination demonstrates normal deep tendon reflexes, normal strength and sensation in both upper extremities.			← Description of History and Physical Exam																																																																										
The EDX studies were performed to evaluate for a left carpal tunnel syndrome.																																																																													
NCS Examination																																																																													
For sensory nerve conduction studies, the amplitude is measured peak-to-peak, the latency reported is the distal peak latency, and the conduction velocity, if measured, is determined from onset latencies and is over the forearm.																																																																													
For motor nerve conduction studies, the amplitude is measured baseline-to-peak, the latency reported is the distal onset latency, the conduction velocity is calculated over the forearm, and the F wave latency is the minimum latency.																																																																													
Unless otherwise noted, the hand temperature was monitored continuously and remained between 32°C and 36°C during the performance of the NCSs.			← Limb Temperature																																																																										
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="11">SENSORY AND MOTOR NERVE CONDUCTION STUDIES (shaded results are abnormal)*</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Type of Study</th> <th>Side/ Nerve</th> <th>Stimulation Site</th> <th>Recording Site</th> <th>Distance</th> <th>AMP</th> <th>Reference Normal Values</th> <th>Latency</th> <th>Reference Normal Values</th> <th>Conduction Velocity</th> <th>Reference Normal Values</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sensory</td> <td>Left Median</td> <td>Index</td> <td>Wrist</td> <td>13 cm</td> <td>14</td> <td>(>10 µV)</td> <td>3.5</td> <td>(<3.6 ms)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sensory</td> <td>Left Median</td> <td>Palm</td> <td>Wrist</td> <td>8 cm</td> <td>55</td> <td>(>20 µV)</td> <td>2.5</td> <td>(<2.3 ms)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Motor</td> <td>Left Median</td> <td>Wrist</td> <td>APB</td> <td>7 cm</td> <td>13.5</td> <td>(>4.0 mV)</td> <td>4.1</td> <td>(<4.5 ms)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Motor</td> <td>Left Median</td> <td>Elbow/Wrist</td> <td>APB</td> <td>24 cm</td> <td>12.9</td> <td>(>4.0 mV)</td> <td>8.2</td> <td></td> <td>59</td> <td>(>49 m/s)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>											SENSORY AND MOTOR NERVE CONDUCTION STUDIES (shaded results are abnormal)*											Type of Study	Side/ Nerve	Stimulation Site	Recording Site	Distance	AMP	Reference Normal Values	Latency	Reference Normal Values	Conduction Velocity	Reference Normal Values	Sensory	Left Median	Index	Wrist	13 cm	14	(>10 µV)	3.5	(<3.6 ms)			Sensory	Left Median	Palm	Wrist	8 cm	55	(>20 µV)	2.5	(<2.3 ms)			Motor	Left Median	Wrist	APB	7 cm	13.5	(>4.0 mV)	4.1	(<4.5 ms)			Motor	Left Median	Elbow/Wrist	APB	24 cm	12.9	(>4.0 mV)	8.2		59	(>49 m/s)	← Tabular NCS Data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side & Nerve • Stimulation & Recording Site • SNAP/CMAP Amplitude • Peak Latency • Conduction Velocity • Reference Values
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Sample report continued on next page

EMG Examination

The study was performed with a concentric needle electrode. Fibrillation and fasciculation activity is graded from none (0) to continuous (4+). The configuration and recruitment pattern of motor unit action potentials under voluntary control, if not normal, are described below.

Needle EMG Results*									
Side	Muscle	Insertional Activity	Spontaneous Activity			Voluntary Activity			
			Positive Sharp Waves	Fibrillation	Fasciculation	Amplitude	Duration	Polyphasic	Recruitment
Left	Pronator Teres	Normal	0	0	0	Normal	Normal	None	Normal
Left	Flexor Pollicis Longus	Normal	0	0	0	Normal	Normal	None	Normal
Left	Abductor Pollicis Brevis	Normal	0	0	0	Normal	Normal	None	Normal

Findings*

(*The results of the NCSs on the left ring finger study for CTS and left ulnar are not included due to space considerations. In addition, the EMG results for the other upper extremity muscles, biceps, triceps, flexor carpi ulnaris, abductor digiti quinti, and first dorsal interosseous are not included.)

- The left median sensory conduction study was **ABNORMAL**: the peak latency was prolonged with orthodromic stimulation of the ring finger and the palm.
- The left median motor conduction study was normal.
- The left ulnar sensory conduction study was normal.
- The left ulnar motor conduction study was normal.
- Needle examination with a concentric needle electrode of selected muscles of the left upper extremity was normal.

Diagnostic Interpretation

The study was **ABNORMAL**.

The findings were compatible with a diagnosis of median nerve pathology at the left wrist affecting primarily the median sensory fibers in the carpal tunnel segment.

There was no electrodiagnostic evidence of more proximal median nerve pathology or ulnar nerve pathology.

Notes

Right upper limb comparison studies were not performed due to lymphedema following right complete mastectomy and a history of a previous right carpal tunnel release.

In comparison with prior EDX studies of the left upper limb, which were reported to the patient as normal, today's study demonstrates median sensory neuropathy at the wrist consistent with a clinical diagnosis of a mild left CTS.

Tabular EMG Data:

- Side
- Muscle Tested
- Activity Data
- Voluntary
- Insertional
- Spontaneous



Description of Findings



Probable Diagnosis & Location of Pathology



Study Limitations & Previous Study Information

