

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.