

# Establishing Marketing Goals, Strategies, and Tactics

**W**e'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 1b) \_\_\_\_\_

Strategy #2: \_\_\_\_\_

List specific tactics/actions to accomplish each strategy:

Tactic 2a) \_\_\_\_\_

Tactic 2b) \_\_\_\_\_