

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