

The art of receiving referrals

Rob Berman November 16, 2017 Chiropractic Economics Blog



It's no secret that the best way to gain a new patient is via referral marketing from a center of influence or current practice member.

But what's the best way to do it? How do some practices always have a full schedule yet never advertise? It's part art, part process and 100 percent delivering on what you promise.

If you are struggling with getting referrals, or are considering launching a referral program, here is the process we suggest you follow.

1. Brand evangelists

Brand evangelists or influencers are extremely loyal people to a specific provider, brand, product, or service. For chiropractors, an evangelist is typically one of the following: current practice member, fellow clinician such as a primary care physician, PT, OT, etc., friend, family, or someone in a mastermind group you belong to. Mastermind groups are just that, a group of likeminded individuals who meet on a regular basis to share business ideas and garner referrals from each other. To have a successful referral program you need to build up a base of people who are willing to refer business to you.

2. Create a solid WHY statement

What is your secret sauce? What differentiates you from your competition? Why should someone refer friends, family, and colleagues to you? This is critical because no one is going to refer someone to you unless they feel confident and comfortable that you will deliver on what you say you can. Your [elevator pitch](#) or your 18 minute TED Talk needs to be clear, concise, and people need to easily digest it.

3. Content marketing

Your content needs to be 80 percent thought leadership, things your patients find valuable. The content can be used by your brand evangelists to increase your trust factor with potential referrals. Great content such as [blog posts](#) or white papers on a myriad of health issues, including your point of view, are perfect. Consider [videos](#), [speaking engagements](#), and [social media posts](#). Build up your content library to reinforce your WHY statement and make sure to let your centers of influence know where to find it!

4. Make it easy to refer business to you

Make sure you communicate your availability to take on new patients with your referral sources. Nothing is worse than referring a patient only to find out there are no appointments for months. Consider setting up an email to current patients and evangelists that goes out when you have pockets of openings or on the flip side, communicate when you are booked several weeks in advance.

5. Acknowledge, always

Don't forget to say thank you and even consider offering a reward for referrals such as a \$25 account credit or a giftcard to a local business. Trust us, this will go a long way to solidifying ongoing referrals from those sources.

6. Be public

Have signs in your office waiting room about your referral program, encouraging practice members to refer their colleagues, friends, and family to you. Perhaps you have a quarterly drawing for a larger prize or gift for all those who refer to you.

7. Web and social

Don't forget to note your referral program on your website and social channels – including any ongoing email marketing you do!

8. Patient experience

Make sure your patient experience is A+. Have a cozy waiting room that is relaxing with comfortable chairs, and current reading material. Put up signs asking to limit cell phone conversations to help create an amiable atmosphere for everyone there, including your staff. Lastly, don't forget to communicate to patients if you are running significantly behind, upcoming vacations, etc. The more transparent and authentic you are, the better.

Creating a referral program isn't hard, but it does take patience and diligence for success to happen. Create a game plan and make sure you have your key players in place. Invest the time and enjoy the rewards.



Rob Berman is a partner at Berman Partners, LCC, a medical device sales, service, and marketing company. Berman Partners specializes in new and pre-owned therapeutic lasers. He helps doctors improve patient outcomes while increasing their income. He has held a variety of marketing roles during his career. He can be contacted at 860-707-4220 or rob@bermanpartners.com, or through www.bermanpartners.com.

Cindy Donaldson is President and CEO of Red Barn Consulting, LLC a strategic marketing, sales and business operations consulting firm located in Connecticut. Red Barn's niche is working with small to medium size companies helping them find their voice, tell their stories and increase revenues by creating and implementing strategic processes and aligning them with innovative marketing and sales plans. Niche markets include healthcare, insurance and banking. She can be reached at 860-469-8090 or cindy@redbarnconsultingllc.com. For more information about Red Barn Consulting, visit www.redbarnconsultingllc.com.