Marketing Strategies for the Established Allergist
Why Do Marketing?

- Increase income
- Deter new competitors
- Retain market share
- Shift payer patterns
- Introduce new services/products
- Recruit/introduce new providers
- Enter/expand new marketplaces
- Combat negative publicity

What is Patient Marketing?

Any activity to attract a new patient or retain an existing one.

**Internal Marketing** typically targets existing patients and referrers

**External Marketing** is directed toward “strangers”
You Must Have A Marketing Plan

If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll never get there!

The 10-Step Allergist Marketing Plan

Success!

now...
Step 1: Set Objectives

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Step 2: Define Your Targets

- Age
- Gender
- Location
- Language/ethnicity
- Payer Class / plan
- Clinical diagnosis / demand

Create a plan for each target.
Step 3: Define Target Desires

- **Patient / Referrer Desires:**
  - Availability: no-wait, hours, location
  - Affability: gender, language, race, manner
  - Ability: experience, boarded, reputation

Step 4: Self-Assessment -
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

- Availability
- Capacity / efficiency
- Image / reputation
- Existing patient mix
- Market share
- Price / plans
- Differentiation
Step 5a: Assess Competition

- Similarities
- Differences
- Targets / niche
- Allies / foes
- Image
- Marketing

Step 5b: Assess the Market

- Managed care impact
- Specialty demand / saturation
- Cash / elective market
- Expanding / contracting / aging
- Anticipated market changes
Step 6: Determine A Budget

Spend time and / or money?

- 1-3% of $ goal in underserved markets
- 5-10% of $ goal in very competitive markets

- Is co-op marketing money available?
  - Pharma / Corporate / IPA / Payer / Hospitals

Step 7a: Determine Strategies

- Cooperate or compete with specialty peers
- Into or out-of managed care, or both
- Solo, group or network
- Add or delete services
- Retrain, retire, relocate
Step 7b: Evaluate Cost Effective Strategies

- **Internal Marketing:** typically increases referrals or retains patients
- **External Marketing:** directly attracts patients or attracts new referrers

Step 8: Create A Written Calendar

- Production lead time
- Budget accommodation
- Seasonality
- Pacing
Step 9: Implement Plan

- Assign responsibilities
- Engage support services
- Inform entire staff
- Involve entire staff

Step 10: Track Data & Respond

- Establish data tracking process
- Track, review & report data monthly
- Determine evaluation / renewal dates
- Modify plan as needed
- Experiment annually
Strategy #1

Listen, Listen, Talk

* Determine what the market wants!
  * Ask referrers
  * Ask insurers/IPAs
  * Ask consultants
  * Read the journals
  * Watch others’ ads

Strategy #2

Give the market what it wants!

* Availability: especially 1st visit
* Affability: perceived time, body language, friendly staff, etc.
* Affordability/low risk (in capitation)
* Positive outcomes
Strategy #3

Right-size your practice to serve the market

- Tailored to your market
- Single specialty group
- Consider multi-specialty group
- Consider closed panel networks

Strategy #4

Prove & publish your expertise

Provide data on:
- Cost / savings (in managed care)
- Clinical outcomes (studies)
- Use of protocols / UR / QA
Internal Marketing Strategies

• Good location
• Attractive, clean & modern office
• Attractive, modern logo and image
• Copious patient ed literature
  with your name on it
• Well-trained & pleasant staff
• Seasonal mailings to patients

Internal Marketing Strategies

• Communicate with your referrers
• “We welcome referrals”
  - on signs & in words
• Office brochure with promotional wording
• Dispense RX and sell products
External Marketing Strategies

• Sign clearly visible
• Listings in all Yellow Page categories
• Fictitious name starting with “A”
• Seasonal direct mail to strangers
• Press releases
• Meet 3 potential new referrers per week
  • Including non-physicians like chiropractors, herbologists, pharmacists

External Marketing Strategies

• Nice professional web page
• Web address on all printing & ads
• Web page “Search Engine Optimization”
• List with hospital referral-lines
• Out-reach to health fairs
• Speakers’ bureau participation
• Seasonal advertising