Sales and Marketing of a Sleep Center: Best Practices

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Conflicts of Interest

None to disclose
Educational Objectives

• Describe the job description of a physician practice liaison

• Number three successful sales strategies to improve referrals

• Identify elements of a successful marketing strategy
Developing a Marketing Plan
Why Do I Need a Marketing Plan?

• Gives a clear, actionable roadmap to strategically promote your organization

• “If you don’t know where you’re going, it doesn’t matter which way you go!”
  • The Cheshire Cat, “Alice in Wonderland”
Defining Marketing

• The activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. (AMA)

• People believe that marketing is just about advertising or sales. However, marketing is everything a company does to acquire customers and maintain a relationship with them. (Investopedia)
The 4 P’s of Marketing

- **Product**
  - Functionality
  - Brand
  - Packaging
  - Services

- **Price**
  - List Price
  - Discounts
  - Bundling
  - Credit Terms

- **Promotion**
  - Advertising
  - Sales force
  - Publicity
  - Sales promotion

- **Place**
  - Channel
  - Inventory
  - Logistics
  - Distribution
The Benefits of Marketing

• Crystallizes and propels mission, vision
• Coordinates branding/messaging
• Educates, increases visibility
• A framework for decisions
• Benchmark performance, justify budget
• Strategy for funding
Social Media

- Exploding media channels
- Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, etc
- Drive to website?
- Link to fundraising, brand image
- Call to action
- Promote events, news before, during, after
- Use carefully, strategically
Funding Related

• Databases, lists
• Direct mail, email, newsletters
• Testimonials
• Celebrities
• Retail promotions
• Co ops

• Media promotions
• Sponsorships
• Corporate partners
• Other collaboration
• Website
Planning & Budgeting

• Build on ‘must do’ items
• Budget for tough times
• Plan cost depends on:
  • In-house and/or outsourced
  • Amount and type of research available
  • ‘Free’ expert help
• Measure outcomes & success
Pitfalls to Avoid

• Not involving your CEO, director or board chair at start
• Not sharing up and down chain
• Not understanding your customer
• Getting off brand, brand strategy
• Sending mixed messages
• Thinking one-off’s are fine, “cheaper”
Changing Perceptions About Sales
Stages of the Sales Cycle

- Introduce Problem
- Define Problem
- Solution Overview
- Solution Info
- Perspective/Advice

Pre-Purchase
- Expert info helps buyers define business challenge and align with business objectives.

Awareness
- Product/service-specific info helps buyers determine solution strategy, evaluate ROI, and develop shortlist.

Interest

Consideration

Decision
- Vendor-specific information aids in determining fit and ultimate selection.
What Referring Providers Want

- Practice Support
- Responsive high-quality specialty consultants
- Communication on procedures and consultations
- Convenient Ancillary Services
Physician Customers - Building Physician Loyalty

- Quality
  - Timely Access and Subspecialty Consultants
  - Nursing and Technical Staff
  - Up-to-Date Facilities and Equipment

- Efficiency of sleep center services and scheduling
  - Consultations beyond sleep apnea
  - Sleep study
  - Direct Referrals

- Convenience and Responsiveness
  - Communication
  - Adaptability
Medical Staff Are Not All The Same

- **Dependent**
  - Emergency Physicians, Anesthesiologists, Pathologists, Hospitalists, Neonatologists

- **Hospital Based Proceduralists**
  - Orthopedists, Neurosurgeons, Trauma/General Surgeons, OB, Interventional Cardiologists, Interventional Radiologists

- **Ambulatory Proceduralists**
  - Medical Specialists (GI, Cardiology, Rheumatology, Oncology, Pulmonary/Sleep), Gynecology, Ambulatory Surgeons (Ophthalmology, ENT, Plastics)

- **Referral Base - Primary Care**
  - Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics
How to Connect with Physicians

Multi-channel Interactive Communication

- Provide forums for idea and information exchange
- Off-site retreats - meetings for leaders
  - Credentialing/Privileging
  - Medical Staff Issues
  - Leadership Training & Business Education
  - Physician – Management Networking
- Board member engagement
- Structured, but informal, physician-hospital social activities
Healthcare Environment Fuels Conflict

National Trends

- Increase of Home Sleep Testing
- Declining Reimbursement
- Increased Competition
- Increasing Regulations

Local Factors

- Increasing Medicare Medicaid and Self-pay
- Rising Expenses: Staffing, Operations & Depreciation
- Recruitment Challenges
- Capital Investment Demands

Increasing Medicare
Medicaid and Self-pay

Rising Expenses:
Staffing, Operations & Depreciation

Recruitment Challenges

Capital Investment Demands
Insurance & Practitioners May Have Different Perspectives
Customer or Competitor? Both, just get used to it!

- Primary care practices
- Otolaryngologists
- Dental practices
  - In-house Home Sleep Testing
  - Alternative treatment options.
- Out of Sleep Center Testing Companies
- Durable Medical Equipment Companies
Despite the Differences
Referring Providers— Keep them engaged!

[Diagram: Two circles labeled 'What you want to say.' and 'What they're interested in.' with 'Relevance' in between.]
Successful Communication Requires Skill

• Negotiation
• Strategic thinking
• Polarity management – impact and intent
  • Establish a written conflict resolution mechanism
  • Address conflict in person and in a timely manner
  • Celebrate successes, big and small
Who Will Implement the Sales Plan?
Medical Practice Sales Representative / Physician Liaison

- Promote sleep services to the physician community
- Provides support services in sales including:
  - The utilization of affiliate services
  - Cultivating and strengthening referral activities by implementing and promoting professional services
Qualities of a Physician Liaison
Physician Liaison Qualifications

• Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in business, healthcare administration, or related field.

• Five years in a sales and business development role and 2 years in Healthcare related industry

• Ability to travel in the service area on a regular basis
Physician Liaison Responsibilities

- Market Management and Sales Analytics
- Sales Leadership
- Business Development
- Relationship Management
- Physician Liaison / Sleep Practice Communications
Market Management

• Identify target markets in accordance with organizational strategy utilizing familiarity with hospital operations and existing reporting, tools and dashboards.

• Evaluate and interpret market utilization data and market demographics, including market share data for primary or secondary facility service lines, ensuring that sales priorities are identified for both physicians and patient populations.
Sales Analytics

• Interpret current physician referral patterns, trends, and financial margins, ensuring that sales resources are optimized.

• Develop sales and retention strategies for target markets and facility service lines.
  • Closing new or enhanced physician referrals
  • Growing referral volumes based on new or established physician and outreach relationships

• Conduct pre and post call planning
Sales Leadership

- Effectively manage territory, conducting office visits to include:
  - Education on services offered, enhancement and new advances
  - Maintaining image (community-centered, patient-first, leading-edge provider)
  - Offering excellent customer service
  - Implementing new products/services/protocols
  - Communicating opportunities, market trends, and issues to appropriate management/staff in a timely manner
  - Increasing referral percentages/volume and expand services utilized
Business Development & Relationship Management

• Facilitate the retention of physician, referring hospital and community relationships.

• Complete face to face sales meetings with physicians, schedulers, practice managers, and medical staff from referring hospitals to ensure understanding, as well as to close business, ensuring that obstacles are identified and minimized.
Physician Liaison / Sleep Practice Communications

• Prepare and present opportunities, market trends, and challenges to appropriate leadership/staff in a timely manner and on a regular basis, gaining support and commitment as needed.

• Coordinate meetings between key staff, physician groups, and external customer groups to improve communication and relationships in order to increase referrals or resolve customer service issues.
Conclusion

• An effective marketing and sales plan is vital to a successful medical practice

• “If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.”
  • Henry Ford – Talking about automobile manufacturing innovation
THE END