

CARDIOLOGY PRACTICE CASE STUDY 0017

PRACTICE MARKETING RESULTS IN FIVE STRAIGHT YEARS OF GROWTH

A 17-person cardiology group based in Central Pennsylvania had been growing organically for 22 years despite an extremely aggressive, competitive group in the same town with similar capabilities and ancillary services.

In 2003, the practice administrator returned from an MGMA conference where he had met an associate with experience in practice rep-based marketing from another cardiology group in New Jersey. Intrigued by the concept, the administrator decided to try a limited part-time trial of just 4 days per month for his practice, with the goal of driving new referrals for DX and general cardiology consults.

Strategy: During the marketing audit with this group, it became clear that this was a well-run practice staffed by trained associates who worked as a cohesive team to the benefit of patients and referrals alike. While this practice was run well from a clinical and administrative standpoint, there had been virtually no marketing efforts to date short of a typical practice brochure. In addition, there had been little in the way of staff training for customer service or patient recruitment/retention efforts over the past 22 years.

The Practice-Reps team went to work on several fronts, beginning with our survey system for patients, employees, and referral sources to determine perceptions of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement for the practice. Over the next 5 years, the practice rep instituted the following marketing tools for this practice:

- Personal meetings with the PCP community to educate, inform, and improve communication between respective groups
- A referral tracking system with monthly analysis
- Monthly/quarterly lunch and learn meetings with PCP office staff
- Updated website with email address registration, new patient forms, welcome packs, education, past patient surveys, risk factor analysis, referral portals, etc.
- Improved logo design and creation of brand identity
- A “closed loop” communication system with past, current, and future patients for increased “patient to patient” referrals
- Symptom-specific mailers, flyers, and a few print ads
- Staff training for enhanced telephone and in-person presence

Marketing Results: Baseline referrals were 1,669.

In Year One: The practice realized a **40% growth** over the previous year in outside referrals to **2,345**.

In Year Two: The practice realized a **31% growth** over the previous year in outside referrals to **3,076**.

In Year Three: The practice realized **15% growth** over the previous year in outside referrals to **3,525**.

In Year Four: The practice realized **2% growth** over the previous year in outside referrals to **3,595**.

In Year Five: The practice realized **5% growth** over the previous year in outside referrals to **3,774**.

One additional associate and two NPs were hired during this period. No new ancillary services were introduced. This group continues to grow and market with the tools developed during this campaign.