

EARLY RESULTS FROM AN ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY PRACTICE CASE STUDY 0020

FULL SERVICE ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY PRACTICE.
ENGAGEMENT BEGAN IN DECEMBER, 2009.

This 40 year old 11 Man Orthopaedic practice based in suburban Philadelphia has long enjoyed an outstanding reputation for medical excellence within their community. The team is staffed by board certified surgeons and providers, including Physical Therapists, who enjoy a loyal following by community members at two offices in the Tri State area. The practice is one of five like practices under a corporate umbrella of administrative and marketing support services.

Despite having a team of corporate field Liaison's who market the five corporate practices, we were brought in with the belief that our experience and management support could make our approach to direct marketing even more effective for this practice.

During the audit we learned that Rothman Orthopedics, (An 80 man highly advertised practice), had recently built a new state of the art building just six miles away from this practice in an effort to increase their market share in this affluent bedroom community. This new competitor was having a clear impact on the referrals of many practices in the area and overall our client's referrals were down significantly in Q4 of 2009.

Strategy

Based on our audit we decided to develop our marketing strategy in three areas: 1) Pursuing the fracture and pediatric market as these were weak points for our competitors. 2) Pursue newer markets across nearby bridges and State lines where patients are often reluctant to pass. 3) Develop inexpensive marketing materials that introduce and reinforce our outcomes, procedural capabilities, and personal service compared to others in the market place.

Initially we focused our direct marketing efforts towards the pediatric referral market. We emphasized our immediate access for fracture care and rapid access for sports medicine and concussion treatment. We made a special effort to make sources aware of our high school and professional sports team affiliations in the area so that students and parents would gain an additional sense of security in working with our practice.

The practice had been planning to open an additional office 12 miles away in an adjoining State. Rather than wait for them to move there we decided to pursue the PCP community in that area in an effort to raise early awareness of our practice while gaining early referrals from patients willing to cross the bridge to our current site. Initially we facilitated this campaign by offering free parking and bridge tolls but soon we found this wasn't necessary.

We also began to explore nearby southern markets across another State line. Here we found that we had been routinely taking certain insurances that were not accepted by the providers in this market. This proved to be "door opener" for us as we persuaded numerous practices to try us for the first time based on our current insurance acceptance policy.

During both campaigns we were careful to reinforce our efforts with custom designed "Leave-behind" flyers which highlighted our outcomes and procedural capabilities. Our direct marketing strategy drove home the concept of "personal service" to many providers who were happy to meet with us in person while we addressed their questions and concerns.

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Results

The client initially agreed to fund our efforts for 30 calls per month. During this period we were to call on and market to current and past referral sources with a special focus in the pediatric market. This approach proved to be an immediate success and we began to see both new and increased referrals almost right away. Within three months we were seeing new patient referrals never seen before.

Once we made 3 passes on the targeted pediatric practices we began to shift our focus to the remote PCP referral community in more distant markets. Here we had to introduce our practice for the first time to many referral sources that had long standing relationships with other specialist. Our “Try us” approach with a specific insurer seemed to have an immediate impact and we began to have practices send as never before in this market.

After just five months we reviewed the data and realized that we had **gained more than 83 new patients** from both existing and new referral sources!

Now, at the end of six months, the practice has increased our number of calls in the field to 40/month so that we may pursue the workman’s comp market in addition to our ongoing efforts in the new remote markets and pediatric referral community.