

Guidelines for Physical Therapy Marketing and Promotions for Private Practice Owners: Effective Steps That Can Be Implemented to Produce Results

Neil Trickett, PT, CEO of Practice Promotions, 7350 Hancock Village Drive, Suite 117,
Chesterfield, VA 23832, Fax 561-594-1717

(Edited Version Jan 4, 2014, with updated comments and reference section)

Abstract

As a result of the advent of digital media (e.g., email, websites, social media, etc.), physical therapy practice owners are confronted with a plurality of choices and decisions to make when determining the most effective methods to use in the promotion of their businesses. Use of various forms of media can be advantageous, but are only as effective as the underlying marketing and promotion strategies, themselves. The relevance and importance of these fundamentals are discussed.

Introduction

In the world of physical therapy, your practice is only as good as the satisfaction of your patients with your services.¹ You can't expect them to be satisfied if you are not a good physical therapist. But even when you have excellent services, you still need effective physical therapy marketing strategies to spread the word about your practice.

Creating a Marketing Plan

You need to market your practice if you want to get new patients and hold on to the existing ones. The first step should be to develop a marketing plan. A good plan should take the following factors into consideration

- **Market:** Determine your target market and get to know them better. The more targeted your marketing is, the more effective it will be. It is important to know the specifics of your market, from their age and gender to their income and location. Identifying a target audience is all about knowing their common characteristics. It also helps if you know why your target market needs your services, their reasons for seeking your services, how they find information about your services, and the factors or people who can affect their buying decisions.
- **Competitors:** Do you know the other physical therapists in your area? Assess your competitors, which also include those who offer the same services as yours. These could be wellness centers, Pilates, yoga, or chiropractic care. Determine how your services are different from theirs. If you can't distinguish your practice from theirs, it would be a good idea to start looking for another niche.
- **Industry:** To create effective marketing strategies, it's important to keep up with the developments in the industry and the world, in general. Read all about the economic, marketing, and political trends that could affect the medical community so you will know what future measures to take to promote your practice. This will also help you avoid spending money on the wrong marketing strategies.
- **Strategy:** If you have determined your audience, scouted your competitors, and stay up-to-date with the latest happenings in the medical community, it's time to start hatching marketing strategies. The following questions will help your brainstorming process:

- What marketing tactics will get the attention of your target audience?
- What are your marketing goals?
- What metrics will you use to determine the success of your marketing?
- How frequently and at what times should you promote your services?
- How much are you willing to spend on marketing?
- What is your timeframe to get results?
- Where do you expect your practice to be after a year?
- Where do you desire to be in ten years?

After figuring these things out, you can start writing your marketing plan. Make sure it addresses your business goals, specifies your purpose and describes your target audience in detail. The plan should contain the marketing strategies that you plan to use, the messaging tactics that you think will work on the market, and the budget for all these things. There should also be an explanation on how you are going to carry out all your strategies within your budget. Since there are goals, there should also be methods to measure your progress. Long-term marketing goals should be put in place as well.

Marketing Strategies for Physical Therapists

There are various marketing strategies for physical therapy that you can try to increase the exposure and number of patient referrals for your practice. Some of the strategies that you can try include the following:

- Tell your family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances about your physical therapy practice. Educate them about the injuries, ailments, and physical problems that you can treat. This is a good start for your word-of-mouth referral.
- Discuss your services with your patients. By educating them, they might know people who might also need your services. If you also do a good job of making them feel better, you will develop a good reputation as a therapist and attract more patients.
- Establish connections with fellow health care professionals, as well as employees in different physician's offices and clinics. These people may be in contact with potential patients.
- Create an optimized website for your practice. People usually go online to search for the products and services that they need. If they can find you on Google, at least you'll be one of the practices that they will consider.
- Get positive reviews and testimonials. Let your happy patients talk about your practice and post their feedback on your website.

These are only some of the things that you can do for physical therapy marketing. You can do more, but the most important thing is that you have laid out a solid foundation in promoting your practice.

¹ What is a Marketing Plan? And How Do I Make One? <http://www.webpt.com/how-market-your-physical-therapy-clinic> Accessed Jan 4, 2015.

² What is Target Marketing? <http://articles.bplans.com/target-marketing/> Retrieved 4 Jan 2015

³ How to Promote Your Business <http://www.wikihow.com/Promote-Your-Business>

⁴ 31 Low-Cost Ways to Promote Your Business

<http://www.businessknowhow.com/marketing/24waysto.htm> Accessed Jan 4, 2015.

⁵ 7 Ways To Promote Your Business Online For Free <https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/7-ways-to-promote-your-business-online-for-free/>

⁶ "Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning". University of Southern California. Retrieved 4 Jan 2015.

⁷ Stolley, Karl. "Primary Research". Purdue Online Writing Lab. Retrieved 4 Jan 2015.

⁸ Developing Business Strategies, David A. Acker, John Wiley and Sons, 1988