



Rural Health Care

Marketing & Education Consultancy

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Heath Care Providers – Take Advantage of Good Times

What time of year do you think about advertising your facility?

First, it is important to understand that any type of advertising is only a piece of a marketing plan.

Well, if you are like a lot of health care facilities, you probably think about marketing mostly during your slow seasons and the logical reaction would be to go out and run some type of ads or promotional campaigns.

Makes sense, right?

Wrong.

It turns out that your **slow seasons are absolutely the WORST possible times of year for you to market** your practice. While it would be great if prospective patients thought about you all the time, in real life people have a natural predisposition to think of you during certain times of year.

Just as snow skies don't sell well in July, it will be very difficult to motivate prospective patients during the wrong times of year also.

So, when should you market?

As the title of this article implies, you should only contemplate external advertising during your best times of year.

So, when will I know is the best time to put forth an advertising campaign?

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In rural health it is dependent on the type of services that are offered. However, this is a generalization:

- Primary care doctors tend to be busier during the winter months due to cold and flu season.
- Orthodontists tend to get flooded with new patients around August before school starts.

As you can see it varies due to the many areas of specialties and we have only touched on a few.

Still confused? Here's a great tip.

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We recommend checking your past five year's worth of records, and **count up your numbers of new patient visits by month**. (Not production or revenues, because those measures will lag.) This step will give you an idea but, now let's look back another five years and take into account the area, population growth or decline etc.

Then come up with averages, and then plot them on a graph where the average new visits are plotted on the Y (vertical) axis, and months are plotted on the X (horizontal) axis. In most cases there will be clear peaks and valleys.

What if we are a new facility and do not have those types of records? No problem then look; into the area in which you practice and calculate population strategies to narrow down your market trends.

"But that means my busy times will get even busier?"

To some degree, yes, so you'll have to **put your leadership skills to practice**. However, there are some ways you can "even things out."

1. Remember that patient inquiries will usually not come in all at once, for many providers the actual work will be spread out over time.
2. In rural health internal marketing is more powerful in motivating people to action than external marketing because you have a relationship with patients. Therefore, feel free to ask for referrals all year long (besides, it can never hurt).
3. If you are a specialist, slow seasons are great opportunities to get out there and build relationships with your professional referral base. As stated in another one of our articles become the area recognized authority.

"Need Now" advertising on and off is wasting money and time!

WHAT!

First, it is important to understand that any type of advertising is only a piece of a marketing plan.

As stated above I have left hints throughout this article. Most health care providers focus on the **"NEED NOW"** and do not take the preventive course of action. It is **contradictive to what is preached** to their patients to take the preventive course of action for their health.

The solutions stated in this article are beneficial. However, they could have been prevented. **Effective advertising should be part of a marketing plan.** Your plan will take into account good and sluggish times in your market with a comprehensive strategy that will save your facility time and money in the long run.

Makes sense, right?

RIGHT!

Do it right the first time. When it's done right and well, the personal and professional gains are satisfying and the value of a recognized authority will gain the respect of the community, patients and staff and is an effective marketing plan that is rewarding.

Trizzie understands that successful characteristics are developed over time and are an important part of any business. Let Trizzie assist you in evaluating and implementing the right strategies for your current and future success. www.trizzie.com