

Igniting Your Referrals

Ignite the interest of your professional referrals with gifting and signature parties

Savvy team members interacting with the professional community quickly realize that visiting dental offices and delivering muffins and business cards no longer have the desired effect of gaining more referrals.

You may be using these strategies past their effectiveness date or you may be located in a highly competitive area that requires more thoughtful presentations. A small adjustment in your current initiatives combined with fresh strategies may result in renewed interest in referrals to your practice. I have outline below several promotions, reported as very effective returns on marketing dollar investment in the office of Dr. William Hyman and by clients I have recently interviewed.

Monthly Staff Drawing

Every month for the past dozen years I have used this concept and always experience strong participation by referring offices. Institute a monthly staff drawing unrelated to quantity of referrals. This drawing is open to staff only and is a monthly reminder of the benefits of referring to your office. Mail monthly to your full target list and select a winner strategically—either a “B” or “C” referrer whom you wish to intrigue or an “A” referrer as a “thank you.” Hand deliver the prize, valued at \$50.00, along with a food item for the other staff members.

Keep the monthly staff drawing prizes and process simple; the referring staff will complete the form and fax or mail it back to you. I have tested drawings with participation beyond completing the form, such as “my favorite movie is...” The return rate is lower for this type of format.

Suggested prizes include tickets to professional/college sports events, stadium blankets, restaurant gift cards (Marie Callendar’s, Olive Garden, or other moderate price-point selection), car detailing, gift cards (Victoria’s Secret, Barnes and Noble or Borders, Gap, gas card, Target, Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Bed, Bath, and Beyond, Bath and Body Works, or your local supermarket) water park or theme park tickets, lunch for the full office (delivered by your practice rep or in a restaurant), lotto tickets, flowers for each staff member (full team prize), fruit basket, gourmet

food basket, scented candles (full team prize), pumpkin pie, beauty bag (lip gloss, nail polish, and body lotion), manicure/pedicure, spa day, or individual gift cards for full team prize such as Baskin Robbins, Jamba juice, etc.

Birthday Recognition

In 2010 our office is focusing on birthday recognition for all dental referrers and their staff. In 2008 and 2009 I hand delivered birthday cakes to each “A” referral level dentist during his/her birthday week, with a signed card from Dr. Hyman. Our marketing team is gathering the birth dates of all doctors and staff members in our targeted list of 125 offices. Each staff member will receive a gift card and signed birthday card. Due to the volume of recipients we will mail the staff gift cards. Doctors will receive hand delivered birthday cakes. “A” and “B” level referrers will also receive a gift card to an upscale restaurant.

Signature Party and Entertaining

Creating an annual signature party at your office is a wonderful opportunity for referring doctors and their staff to familiarize themselves with your practice in a relaxed atmosphere. Invite all offices on your target list. Timeline: Save the date cards, 6 months prior, hand delivered during practice rep visits; invitation mailed 2 months prior; invitation 1 month prior to non-responders; reminder letter to all attendees 1 week prior; reminder phone call 1 day prior to all attendees. Thursday lunch hour (12:00–2:00) or early evening (5:00–7:00) generate the best response.

Igniting Your Referrals *continued on page 14*

About the Author



Nancy Hyman, founder of Ortho Referral Systems, is dedicated to maximizing patient referrals and case acceptance with innovative, cost-effective solutions. She will present “12 Marketing Concepts in 12 Months” at our 2010 Users Group Meeting.

Internet Marketing *continued from page 9*

Does all this sound like Greek to you? It did to me—until I spent hundreds of hours delving into the ins and outs of SEO and Web 2.0 Internet marketing tactics.

Test for Success

How do you determine if consumers can find your website on the Internet and how you compare with your competitors? Test it!

- Go to www.google.com.
- In the search box, type in patient keywords—“orthodontist,” your city or town name, and your state. Orthodontist is the #1 keyword new patients use to search for an orthodontist.
- Jot down your website page ranking and the page ranking of your competitors. If it doesn't show up on page one, write N/S. (You can download a free Excel template to outline this information and my video showing you how to do it correctly off my blog www.orthopreneur.com.)
- While you are there, look to see if your name is showing up on your local map.
- Repeat the same steps again with the keyword “braces” and again with the branded keyword “Invisalign” in place of orthodontist. Do your website, blog, video, and social networking sites display on page one of Google? Does your practice name and website URL show up on Google Local Maps under each keyword?
- Now go through all the steps again, but this time, one by one substitute the names of all the surrounding

towns in your area you target also. Is your website or blog visible? If not, you are overlooking a huge window of opportunity to increase your demographic on the Internet.

Practices located in major metropolitan areas are obviously more difficult to index on page one of the search engines. Competition is fierce. Web 2.0 social networking and video is in its infancy and very effective when marketing on the Internet in these highly competitive areas, if keyword coded correctly. Google's rules of engagement favor new content found on blogs and social networking sites. Information websites that rarely add new pages of content are viewed as outdated. Linking blogs, video, and social networking sites to your website increases your visibility in the eyes of the search engines, which improves page ranking. Older more established websites with long term click through rates also have a distinct advantage.

No matter how great your website design and marketing message, if you can't be found on the search engines, you are missing a wealth of opportunities to build your practice. This can translate into hundreds of thousands of dollars falling into the hands of your competitors over the years.

Your website and Web 2.0 marketing programs are very powerful marketing tools if set up correctly, start to finish. The Internet is here to stay... whether we like it or not. Successfully implementing Internet marketing tactics now, will help secure the growth of your practice in the future. You don't know... what you don't know... till you know it! Find out what you need to know to market successfully online, today! o

Igniting Your Referrals *continued from page 5*

Offer a raffle every 10 or 15 minutes for gift cards and/or gift baskets. Music and a photographer may also be included. Hand deliver photographs to staff or locate a service for instant photos. A wine and beer selection or featured cocktail (cosmopolitan, appletini, sangria, or margarita) may be included at evening events.

Try these recommended party themes:

January: Let's Have a Wonderful New Year

February: Love Is in the Air

March: Luck of the Irish or We Are Lucky to Know You

April: Ladies Spring Lunch

May: Cinco de Mayo

June: Spring into Summer

July: Love the USA or Celebrate the USA

August: Summer Days or Summer Break

September: Football Fever

October: Pumpkin Fest (give each attendee a pumpkin) or Oktoberfest

November: Thanksgiving Feast or We Are Thankful for You

December: Holiday Spirit or Tamale Fiesta

In part two of this article (January 2010) Nancy Hyman will discuss scripting for the practice representative's dental office visits and presentation of professional referral material. o

The Newsletter for Members and Friends of Ortho2

October 2009 - Volume 27 Issue 4



Practice
Complete
Management