

How to Run a Profitable Healthcare Practice

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Running a successful and profitable healthcare practice in today's digital environment is not without challenges. Patients are well informed about their available choices when it comes to selecting a doctor or a healthcare practice. Not only do doctors need to address economic challenges but they also need to take into account healthcare measures such as the Affordable Care Act among others and the kind of impact it can have on their practice profits. This is why healthcare practices need to be proactive about managing the business side of their practice.

How to Remain Viable in a Competitive Environment

Achieving practice success in a highly competitive marketplace takes time and strategic planning. Although healthcare practices face their own unique set of challenges, it is not completely impossible to build a profitable practice. By focusing on areas that are high-impact such as the online reputation of a practice, patient service experience, cash inflow among others, practices can achieve long-term sustainability. Consider the following strategies.

Make Your Practice Invaluable

The most important element of running a successful medical practice is the kind of value a practice brand builds and how well that value is communicated to a target audience. Relationship building is the first step in that direction. Here is what you can do;

Create a brand culture of delivering exceptional clinical care and service. Communicate efficiency and quality of your practice brand at all stages of the patient service experience cycle.

- Make use of the collective might of various digital marketing platforms (your practice website, blog, social channels, review sites) to build brand exposure.
- Personalize communication via your monthly email newsletters.
- Include elements that are of specific interest to your patients.
- Build social groups and share information through interesting and useful content.
- Create a system of rewarding your brand advocates – introduce attractive offers, discounts, or gift-cards.
- Try to find ways in which you can add value to the relationship – easy scheduling options, discounts or first access to new services and products are just some of the ways to build relationship value.

Focus on Patient Satisfaction

Your practice front desk plays a crucial role in the patient satisfaction journey. It is vitally important to create a positive first impression. Depending upon how a first time patient was treated, your front desk can be instrumental in creating practice brand ambassadors or a one-time patient.

- Encourage your staff to be warm and friendly. Staff that is proficient in soft skills while also being efficient in managing more important issues such as insurance verification is the ideal fit.
- Streamline patient intake. Don't keep your patients waiting; ensure your intake forms can be easily downloaded and filled or provide a secure system for submitting their information online.
- Organize your schedules for optimal delivery value. Schedule appointments based on "first-time" patients, "regular routine" patients, and "time-consuming" patients. If you are unsure how much time you are going to spend with a "time-consuming" patient, it makes little sense to schedule a "first-time" patient immediately after. This is why it is best to organize your schedule to fit different patient types.

Find out what Patients are saying about your Practice

Review sites like Healthgrades and Yelp can help you gain a better understanding of what your patients want and how best you can deliver on their expectations. Keep in mind, your relationship with a patient does not end as soon as he is out of your clinic. The real time nature of the digital space and social media makes it easy for patients to post their experiences with a medical practice almost instantly. And it is true – an unhappy patient will readily post negative reviews online. But it can take a bit of coaxing to get your happy patients to drop positive and raving reviews.

Don't shy away from asking your patients to share their experiences. When happy patients share their experiences online it can help tremendously in creating awareness for your brand first and then adding positive layers to your brand reputation. What you need to keep in mind is that it is perfectly fine if a happy review does not always come with a five-star rating. You don't want to appear too perfect all the time!

Re-look your Practice Operations

A key aspect of good financial management is to maintain a reasonable level of practice overheads while also maintaining your revenue flow. It is important to ensure that your revenue flow exceeds your expenses at all times. Here are a few things to keep in mind;

3 Steps to a Profitable MEDICAL PRACTICE



Better business practices can be the defining line between a successful healthcare practice and a failing practice.

Only when you appreciate business value and its impact on the bottom line can you work towards a system of improving returns on your practice profit strategy.

CLEARLY OUTLINE YOUR MARKETING PLAN

Plan each step of your marketing strategy. Focus on the following;

- Brand promotion.
- Practice mission statement.
- Communicating quality of service.
- Patient service experience.
- Operational efficiency.
- Digital and traditional advertising avenues.
- Social media presence.



PROVIDE AWESOME EXPERIENCES

Patients approach a practice with the following questions in mind;

- What can I expect from this medical practice?
- How does the practice treat its patients?
- What kind of experiences did previous patients have with the practice?



The answer to all three questions should at all times be – AWESOME.

Take a closer look at your patient service cycle. Identify areas and ways in which you can improve patient experience over and beyond their expectations.



IDENTIFY NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND YOUR PRACTICE

Change, advancement, and growth do not necessarily mean a bigger facility and bigger staff always. It is more important to look for opportunities that can help you expand the scope of your service and audience base.

Emerging target market

Millennials and Gen Z are a hot target demographic for any healthcare practice. Identify ways in which you can reach out to and connect with them.



Gaps in Competition

Keep a close eye on your competitors. If you find an opportunity to improve upon their service offering that will be beneficial to your patients and your practice, work on an implementation plan.



New equipment or services

Modern technology not only shows that you keep up with technological advancements but also builds confidence and trust in your patients. Try to introduce a new service or offer a service that you previously referred out to other practices.



- Take a closer look at your recurring costs. You don't want to spend massively on software and hardware expenses if cheaper and better options are available. Look for cost-effective alternative or service providers who can work well within your budgets.
- Try to connect with older patients, or more recent one-time patients. A good way to entice dormant patients is by offering them discounts on a checkup or on a new product or service.
- Re-look contracts with all your insurance companies. If you can work a reimbursement improvement even if it is a small percentage, the annual impact can leave you happy.
- See how best you can improve staff performance. Sometimes positive motivation or a more workable schedule for the women staff can bring in the desired results. Look at how best you can improve present conditions before you decide you absolutely need to hire new staff.

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