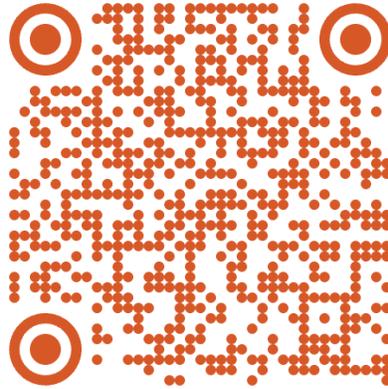




Practice Focus

Practice Focus



Series 9 / Session 9

Creating Patient Ambassadors

-
1. Listen to the audio recording.
 2. Follow along with this transcript.
 3. Use the transcript to help complete your Team Activity: **key points are highlighted.**
-

Practice Focus

Hello everyone. Welcome back to our Practice Focus series. Today we're going to be talking about one of the most untapped hidden assets in your entire practice. And it's not a procedure, it has nothing to do with production. As a matter of fact, it is about your patient. It is your patient! And in all the years that I've done this, a couple of decades now, if you ask anybody, "Tell me who your best patients are." They'd always say referrals. They would say word of mouth, best marketing, word of mouth. And a long time ago in a book called The Five Golden Rings of Referrals that I wrote, it was all about the fact that referrals must happen on purpose. That word of mouth is not a strategy. So there are lots of videos, there's lots of resource material, all about referrals as a strategy, or word of mouth as a strategy.

Today, I want to talk about a broader point that I would call turning your patients into ambassadors. Now, there's a few key principles here. The first is, you have to be an ambassador yourself. If you're not an ambassador, how's the patient going to be one? So this goes to your friends and family, people your spouse works with. It goes to your circle of influence, your social dynamics, other businesses that you are a patron at. It has to do with your kids, your grandkids, and their parents. So we want to be our own best self-promoter. We want to be our own best ambassadors. Now, first of all, that means you have to be a good patient yourself. You have to be the product, not just the preacher, as I like to say. Number one, okay?

Number two, we want to systemize ways to engage our patients in referral dynamics, referral conversations. I have a long been a proponent of not waiting for "stranger danger marketing." That's what I call it. Go market to the masses, bring in strangers, have to convince these people to become great patients. Yes, you should do that, and there are great people who can help you, but you don't want to be dependent upon that. My friends over at My Dental Agency do a great job because they don't simply rely on external strangers to become patients. They also nurture and grow and focus on relationships and referrals as well. So that's the idea behind this. So how many systems, systems, do we have in place with our new patients and our existing patients with our daily flow and our overall experience that can stimulate more word of mouth and referrals? And the main point here is to make your patients proud products of what you do and then to give them permission and resources to pay it forward, to be ambassadors.

Okay, so with that said, I don't want to belabor this because I want you to do a brainstorming session around where do you get referrals now? Who are your best patients who refer? Who are your best practices, for our specialists out there, your healthcare network of, maybe it's GPs, it might be other specialty providers. It's whatever, but everybody has patient get a patient referrals. Everybody has centers of influence within the community. "Healthcare Partnerships" is what I call them. You should be providing them with the booklets that represent your brand and who you are. And then there's other things that are on the periphery, like retirement or independent living facilities. Like HR managers, like other community networks that you can tap into. So there's these different pools or ponds you could go fishing in, but these ecosystems that are outside of the core of your practice that your patients can be conduits and ambassadors for and into.

This is an everybody thing. Marketing is everyone's responsibility and baking it into your system and your process and your experience, it's the only way to get it done. It will be a rising tide. If you want patients that are more apt to be high value, high quality, accept at a great level, then you've got to go where those kind of people exist, and people who are that are the ones that are going to lead you home.

Practice Focus

So let's talk about creating patient ambassadors. **The easiest, the first and easiest is what I call the "Couple's Consult."** It's at the end of the visit. The patient says yes, and you say, "Great, now let's get your spouse in here too." If you're doing it properly, you're bundling in, you're getting both spouses or decision makers involved in whoever the initial patient is. So we ask on the phone, who would you like to bring with you? Or we want to schedule this at a time when your spouse can come too. If you can't do that on the Discovery Visit, you always do it on the Decision Visit, so that you're presenting to two people. And when it's about one person and they say yes, you turn to the other one and say, "Great, let's get you in too." "Okay, we don't want to leave you out." "Okay, let's set up your pathway to health."

The second thing is I want your mindset to be that we're not treating patients, we're treating households. That we're not treating households, we're treating family trees. And then I could say, **we're not treating family trees, we're treating literally family forests.** As silly as that analogy is, that metaphor, I mean it legitimately, you really should just start going up and down the family line. If you have a middle-aged person here, you go up and down. If you have an older person here, you go down and down up until the point of which you don't see them. If you are not seeing children, fine. If you are doing implants, then you're going to work the adult side of this, but if you have wisdom teeth, you're going to do that. If you're doing TMJ for adults or you're doing pediatric airway also, or maybe if you have a comprehensive complete health practice and you stop a certain age, that's okay. You work within where you've got. Now, if there's a type of patient you do not see, you want to create a sister relationship with a practice that sees that type of patient that probably doesn't see the type of patient you want. Okay? **The easiest example here is don't hoard the kids. Find a pediatric partner and then market to all that pediatric partner's parents of their children patients.**

I'm just giving you an example. You're going to brainstorm this. So couples, households, family, trees and beyond. Then I want you to think of every patient. **The easiest place for them to be an ambassador is their centers of influence.** That starts with where do they go in their life? Where else are they a customer at and where else do they work? Those are kind of the easiest ones, but it's also about creating business partnerships around your practice where you have patients or customers in common, and you should do that. I used to joke like walk outside your practice. Look left, look right, look across the street, look down the corner, go around the block. Every place that's within a community, within a driving distance, any business there, you want to be leveraging those partnerships, but you certainly want to be leveraging your patient as an influence.

When we set up healthcare partnerships, we say, what patients do you have that are doctors that are married to doctors, work with doctors that are a patient with another doctor? That's everybody! And these are all places where you could get a high value referral. Then we can be specific like I'm in insurance contracts or I'm not. If I'm not, go to all the other businesses that don't do with insurance. If I am, go to all the other businesses that are attached to that insurance. There's just so many ways to correlate this.

The next one is a patient's social media. Now, here's what you got to do. You got to make it interactive. You got to get 'em to check in while they're at the office. You got to get 'em to post a review or testimonial to their friends or followers. You can bribe them, you can make it a contest, you can do something, but **we've got to look at how to get a person to proliferate you as an ambassador to their people.**

Practice Focus

If you are doing social media, short form, video, content, articles, goofy, gimmicky, holiday, pictures, posts, whatever, you want to leverage those and get your patients to not just follow you and like you, but to repost you. Okay? So this is a specific strategy and you really should, as a practice, talk about how we do it, what our strategy is. I've always recommended have a place in the practice where you get your patients to check in on their social media platforms, and then you give them raffle points or something you do monthly or quarterly contests, like in the old days when you would go into a bank, which most people don't now, but you go into a bank and they would have a giveaway for if you open an account here, and every month you're getting this giveaway if you open an account here. Well, that's kind of the type of format we want to have. Patient ambassadors, contest, bribes, whatever you can ask for favors, people will do them. But you want to also make sure you're infiltrating the social platform for your people.

And then probably the most valuable, but yet it is, is more of a, it's indirect; indirect referral is the patient ambassador is the testimonial. If you can get a testimonial, it has shelf life: welcome material, reception area, TV loop, online, social media. You understand what I'm saying? That's the ultimate ambassador is something that is shelf life and it tells the story again and again. How can you facilitate these? All the patients that finish cases you invite to a little evening celebration or a quarterly patient appreciation and you just do tons of video testimonials. You have 'em bring their friends and family. You can do events for ambassadors and the whole thing, it will just blow up, it will take on a life of its own.

Imagine if you took your top 20% of patients and you 5x them? You would make your a hundred percent of patients, your top 20% of patients. You have five ways here to do it, but it has to become a strategy. How we say, are you an order taker of problems in the mouth to insurance or patients, or are you a leader and a guide, you're a facilitator. Well, the same deal goes for new patients. Are you an order taker? Are you sitting back waiting for the apple to fall, the phone to ring the marketing to do the work? Or are you a leader and a guide, a facilitator? That's what this is about.

And this is where it gets fun and somebody in this room, right here's got to have some fire in their belly. They like social media, love video or they just like the referral stuff. Maybe somebody who's in this very room is even into direct sales or has other side hustles and stuff; leverage all of this. This is how the world moves. This is how it works, is people tell other people what they love, what's impacted them and what they would recommend for others. So there's the five pillars. And then remember your best patients you want to multiply, you have to give them reasons why they do this. Well, just to pay it forward, to give it back, to share with others. We want more people just like you in your morning huddles, you're identifying patients to ask for referrals, to capture testimonials to do this, but I want you to think of baking into a systematic approach. Where it's part of our DNA, just like with a new patient, we take photographs. Just like when we present a pathway to health, we use photographs. Just like we go for prepaid, just like we have value-based scheduling. What is our ambassador structure? What is our system and program and protocol to bake it into the relationship and the experience?

Next, ask and you will receive, trust me on this. People want to help other people. You're giving them a privilege to do so. They won't if you don't ask. And it's kind of like saying, "Hey, would you like to pay today? Is that all right? Do you mind?" You would never do that. You would get paid. So you say, "Hey, by chance, I'm not sure, but would you happen to know somebody?"

Practice Focus

No! You say, “Listen, we love you, and we want more people like you. And the only way we know to do that is to get your friends and family in here and you can give us a great gift to help us help more people if you’d be willing to spread the word, invite some friends, post some stuff online.” They’re like, **be proud of it, we’re all in the same game here.** Don’t be so passive and timid about reviews. Oh, a review, a review is great. You need that, but that’s like the lowest common denominator, alright? **You have to focus on going bold, going bigger, being proud, and by truly getting your patients involved in helping you to grow your influence, your impact in helping others in the community.** And it’s no different than I always say: “Think bigger, be bolder, move faster, decisive, all the way.” We talk about that with diagnosis, with case acceptance, with prepaid, with schedule control. But right here, this is the rising time for the whole thing. **So patient ambassadors, define your vision behind it, systemize the strategies, and then go all in.**

And that’s what I said, **how do you go all in? You make it easy, you make it fun, and you make it memorable.** That’s what you got to do. And you commit to this being part, because just like we go to source, or root cause, or origin, we talk about creation all day long. The greatest form of creation is proliferation. The greatest form of creation is multiplication. So if you want creation, you have to proliferate, you have to multiply. And that’s going to be done through your efforts in your inner circle, through your patient’s efforts in your outer circle, to the greater community of influence of one to many. Okay? So there you go. It’s fun stuff and it’s not the things that we talk about all the time.

So I want you to sit down together, talk about what’s our referral approach like right now? Are we completely negligent, or we do some things, we’re not real consistent, we’re definitely not all in. Hey, how often and in what ways are we capturing testimonials? And how often and in what ways are we leveraging social media? You can repurpose all the content, how often and in what ways, who are centers of influence right now? Patients, professionals, ourselves.

And then, by the way, **what is our means and methods around expanding one patient to spouse, to household, to family tree, to up and down and in the periphery. And then you have to commit to revisiting this.** Put it in your tracking system, set goals for referrals. Make it a condition of doing business with you, an expectation. We want to take care of you: health, function, beauty, all in, problems, prevention, possibilities. **Once we achieve transforming quality of life enhancement for you, we ask of only one thing, reciprocity, of help us do that for someone else you know and love.** And then you have so many resources, okay? You have your websites, you have your social medias, you have your welcome booklets, you have your appreciation letters, you have all the things. If you want to add super advanced strategy is in addition to all this, is those events, customer appreciation, other things, patient appreciation.

So hey, listen, I want somebody to champion this thing, but remember, **marketing is everyone’s responsibility because it’s, ultimately, it’s the first line of creation.** It goes all the way back to the seeds that bear the fruits. You don’t plant the seeds. Eventually you’re out of things to cultivate. So that’s what I’m here to say. **I would like for you all to come up with the top 10 or 20 patients, the top five or 10 businesses, the top two or three or four or five strategies and immediate action items and to-dos that you can chase down and go get.**

And I’ll finish with this. There is a saying in business, a mantra: “The people who refer, refer, refer, refer.” It’s just like the people that buy, “They buy and buy and buy.”

Practice Focus

When you find people that play the game, leverage them. They want to be helpful, they are an influencer in their life, they are a networker, they have this sphere, this ecosystem. And so they find value and pride and fulfillment and even significance and self-worth out of this. So, hey, you know what? **Don't be the best kept secret, okay? Be the proudest promoter.** That's the deal. I'm here for you. I believe in yourselves and get your patients to proliferate and multiply. Thanks so much.