

Innovating Your Practice: Case Study

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An Infectious Disease Specialist

The following scenario demonstrates how a medical specialist can create a persistent, assertive marketing campaign that is tasteful and politically correct. This campaign targeting potential referring physicians enhanced the practice's reputation in the medical community and generated an abundance of referrals.

Doctor X, an infectious disease specialist, left a multi-specialty group located in a major city and opened a solo practice in an affluent suburban community. Although there was only one competitor located in that suburb, the other infectious disease specialist was a well-respected female physician within the medical community. Both she and Doctor X had attended respected medical schools and provided excellent quality of care.

So, Doctor X had his work cut out for him. Since most patients who visit an infectious disease specialist are ill, he decided to build his practice based on superior customer service, knowing that quality of care was a given. He implemented the following innovations:

- Furnishing the waiting room with reclining leather chairs.
- Making arrangements for rides to and from the office for those who needed it at a special discount rate.

- On request, sending an office staff person to the parking lot with a wheelchair to meet ill patients and escorting them to and from the office.

Offering and serving water, juice, and healthy snacks to patients at their seats like a waitress or flight attendant. They also furnished pillows and blankets.

Showing old comedy movies in the waiting and exam rooms to help patients take their minds off their illnesses and to relieve stress. If the patients expressed they liked the movie, they were given a free copy at the end of their appointment as a gift from the practice.

The office staff provided a brochure to each new patient that explained their high-touch patient program. In addition, their practice brochure stressed both the quality of care and the specific elements of his customer service program. The doctor then regularly sent an outgoing front-office staff person to potential referring physician offices to deliver both brochures as well as flyers. Each of the latter focused on a specific point of their customer service program. The practice brochure included photos and detailed enthusiastic patient testimonials. They also advertised on local media websites. The result was the practice grew rapidly and took enough business away from his competitor that she soon approached Dr. X with an offer to form a partnership. He accepted and now

they together not only dominate the market within their community but draw a significant volume of patients with PPO insurances from neighboring communities.