



The essentials of setting up, building and running your practice.

Episode 10:

Your Practice Breakthrough Formula

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Hi, I am your host Matthew Holmes and this is episode 10 of PracticeDNA, the podcast that helps you set up and run your own practice. We have recently put together a free course on unlocking the internet for your practice. The five part course starts with an overview of online marketing, we then delve into search engines, social media, pay per click advertising and tie it all together with an internet marketing strategy for your practice. It is a really great way to get an overview of marketing for your practice online as well as giving some useful tips that you can start using today. You can get the course for free at clearhealthmedia.com.

In today's episode we are going to give you another overview, in fact a revolutionary way of looking at your practice. I would like to be able to claim the insight that we are going to discuss today as my own but in fact it comes from Dean Jackson of ilovemarketing.com so I definitely I recommend that you go and check it up that website there. Dean's overview enables you to look at what you need to do to get the patients in your door and to give them a great experience into your practice and then to keep in touch with them afterwards to maintain your relationship with them.

First of all what we do is we break your business down into three parts and this is the first great insight, rather than thinking of your business as one complete unit, you break it down into these three individual parts. The first one is the before unit, the second one is the during unit and then the last one is the after unit. The before unit is concerned with marketing your practice, this is the bit that defines your target market, identifies what they are interested in and how is the best way to reach them. It creates your ads in such a way to appeal to your target market and it educates your potential customers as to why you are the best person to answer the needs that they have. It also attracts the conversion rates and works out how best to allocate your marketing spend to get the maximum profitable results and all of this is which we have talked about before on this podcast.

The during unit is the bit where you actually deliver your service, it starts from the moment your potential patient picks up the phone and calls your office or sends a message via the contact form on your website. It is then how the patient interacts with your front desk, your intake paperwork, it is how you interact with them as a practitioner, your bedside manner and the efficacy of your treatment. Your billing procedures and your follow up phone calls as well is also ways that you interact. So most of these interactions should be systematised so as to deliver the best and most consistent customer experience possible. We have also talked before on the podcast about the importance of systematising your practice.

And then lastly there is what is known as the after unit and the after unit is where you have a procedure or a plan in place to keep in regular contact with your patients to insure that when they need your services again you are the person that they think of. This may overlap with the during unit in terms of educating your patients about the benefits of check-ups and so forth as well. The temptation as a practitioner can really be to focus on the during unit and forget about

the rest. You may do no marketing and you may have no follow up procedures but instead you spend all of your energies focusing on getting treatment just right. This is fine to improve your treatment quality and if it leads to better outcomes for your patients then certainly go for it. However ignoring other parts of your business means that you are limiting the number of people that you can help and you are also stunting your business growth.

These three divisions are helpful and just focussing on improving your operations in these key areas can transform your practice. However you can divide those up further to give greater insight and that is what we are going to do now. These sections are like the stages that your practice runs through in order to take the sort of so called raw materials of your prospects and leads and turn them into healthy, happy and satisfied patients at the other end of the process.

So if you take the before unit, you can divide that into three sections or three stages and the first step is that you need to go through and identify your niche markets or you are on the market segment that you aiming for. We talked about selecting your practices focus in an earlier podcast so check out that if you want more detail but the essence is that the more focused that you can be in the selection of your target market the easier and more cost effective that it is to reach them and not only that, it is easier to communicate with them. You see, every potential customer has certain needs and wants and they are going to have a certain conversation going on inside their heads. They have got different motivators that are going to encourage them to visit your practice. For example, the things that motivate an elite athlete are going to be different from the things that motivate the mother of four kids and if you try and target them both with the same advertising material then your material is really going to end up not talking to either of them whereas if you narrow your focus to one group it is going to enable you to really engage with that prospect and talk with him about the things that matter to them most. This can seem very scary to business owners because they are afraid of limiting themselves but you need to remember that that doesn't mean that you can only have one marketing campaign to one marketing segment and that is it, you can have lots of them. You can talk to different market segments but the key is that you do it individually with specific content that matches them and that really is the first key to expanding your practice in the first part of the before unit.

Secondly once you have identified your target market, the second part of the before unit is that you need to compel them to call you. I am not talking about some shady technique of manipulating them into your office or anything like that but we have already sort of touched on this earlier on and that you need to be thinking about the questions, the fears, the thoughts and needs that your target market has. Now, the way we approach this through Clear Health Media is that we have our customer, that is practices, create short, one to five minutes videos about topics and questions that their clients have. We then post this on their websites and on other sites around the internet, transcribe the content etc. And so that is one way of getting a lot of material out there that your potential customers can access and you can talk one to one to them. Alternatively, you could write a series of articles for a sports club newsletter on how to prevent injuries, you could talk to mothers' groups on childhood development and all these things are going to establish you as the authority in your area. So when people need the services that you offer you are going to be the one that they think of, so your marketing should be about them answering their questions, not about you.

The third part of the before unit is to educate your prospects before they call you. This ties in with step two about compelling them to call you as you are creating the material that you distribute, whether it will be written material, videos, audios and you can be educating people about their problem and this could include things about the underlying causes, how long it takes to get better, what getting better is and how the absence of symptoms does not equal the absence of disease. And the idea behind all of this is that your prospects will be pre-educated before they call you which means that you don't have to spend loads of time educating them about your services, the processes involved and so forth. They will already know what is involved, how long it takes and you will already be seen by them as the expert in your field. Because they see you as the expert in the field the costs to them becomes less of an issue and so this makes your practice much easier to run and your clients much easier to work with. That is the before unit in your practice, its job is to deliver the educated targeted prospects to your during unit and these targeted prospects already know, like, trust and respect you and the during unit is designed to take on from there.

Step one of the during unit is to ideally make it as easy as possible for people to get started with you. So this should be a low friction way for them to taste out your services and get to know you even better. So this may be a free screening consultation, it may be an introductory evening where they come along and here about your services etc. So some way in which these people can get started with you which is relatively low friction and relatively easy for them to do so. The second step of your during unit is to really sit down and work out what would be an ideal customer experience for your prospect. So you should map out your customer or patient experience from the beginning to the end and think about what would be the best experience for that customer and this is obviously going to vary from group to group. Elite athletes may want a quick targeted consultation with minimum distractions whereas a mother with four kids in tow is probably going to want consultations after school with toys to occupy the kids etc. One way to get a grip on this is to do a brainstorming session where you describe what everyone loves or could love about your service and what does everybody hate about your service or other services similar to yours and this is going to give you an insight on what you need to include to make it a great customer experience.

The third step of the during unit is to provide continuing value to you patients even after you have been paid. This could be something like a follow-up phone call to see how they are doing after their consultation, it could be something like posting them a free bottle of vitamins to keep them healthy after the consultation. It is about delivering some sort of value to them even after you have been paid and the reason you do this is that this really exceeds their expectations. As far as they are concerned the transaction is kind of complete, they are not really expecting you to deliver any additional value and if you go and give them even more value than they feel that they are paid for then you are exceeding expectations and they are going to love it.

Finally in your business there is the after unit and part one of the after unit is to continue to build your relationships with your clients and to focus on the lifetime value of your clients. If your patients spend on average say four hundred dollars with you then if you could ensure that they came back to you again when they needed you then you potentially could increase that amount to six hundred dollars per customer and that is going to be a fifty per cent increase in revenue to

your business just by increasing the lifetime value of your customer. The reality is that it is much easier to encourage somebody who has used your services to return than it is to gain a new customer and that is about five times easier. So it makes a huge amount of sense to try nurturing long term relationships with your existing clients. So simple ways of doing this can be to have things like a patient newsletter that delivers useful information to your clients on a regular basis, you can be doing things like sending birthday cards or birthday SMS messages, you can send cards for special events like births, deaths, marriages etc. You really want to let people that you are thinking of them and what will then happen is that they will start to think of you.

The final part of the part of the process and so the second part of the after unit is to try and orchestrate referrals to your practice and the key to generating referrals is to remember that people don't refer people to you as a favour to you. They do it to help somebody else and to reinforce the rightness of their choice that they have faith in you. So when your patient refers somebody with a problem to you that you can help and that person is helped too, the referral is going to feel good about the fact that they did that and they are also going to feel good about the decision to place trust in you so that is going to be reaffirmed. So remember this and next time you feel guilty about asking for referrals don't basically you are helping somebody else feel good about themselves and other people are going to be helped in the process. So in order to refer somebody, three things really have to take place, your client is going to have to notice that a conversation is taking place about something that you can help, they have to think of you and then they have to mention you in the conversation. So start thinking about how you can educate your patients to think of you, teach them about the things that you can help, let them know that you appreciate referrals and encourage them to send people to you.

So that is the overview of how to structure your practice and how to build systems to deliver a great experience and to have a great experience and to have a successful business at the same time.

Once again thanks to Dean Jackson from [ilovemarketing](http://ilovemarketing.com) for this ideas and concepts. I would recommend checking out their podcast on all things marketing, it is a really great one. In the meantime be sure to post a comment on the blog or Facebook page and if dare to brave that terrible iTunes interface, leave us a five star review on the iTunes store, it helps other people find us and they are going to benefit too.

So until next time, best of luck in building your practice.

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