

Schatz & Company, Inc.

“Relieving the Stress & Pressure from Your Practice & Life”

How to Attract More Patients

Build your practice from the inside out. What that means is you want to fill your practice with people you enjoy seeing. With patients who are the right fit for you. By turning **existing patients** into your biggest referral source. How?

Target patients you and your staff enjoy seeing. Patients who are always on time, who always appreciate you, and who always pay at the time of service. Remember, **birds of a feather flock together**. Get more of the “flock” into your practice by asking for referrals.

Consider something like this: “Mrs. Jones, if your family and friends are as nice as you, we’d love to have them join our practice.”

Find what works best for you and then use it. When patients offer you and your staff compliments, when you finish treatment and you know the patient appreciates your work, and when you simply enjoy seeing someone, **ask for a referral**. Consider making this part of any new patient experience. Let people know that you always welcome “great” patients into your practice.

And when someone refers a new patient, always thank that person with a phone call or personalized note. No computer generated letters. **Make it personal!** You may also consider giving referring patients a credit to put toward future treatment. Or send flowers or cookies to their work—where other potential patients reside.

The key is to win over existing patients with your consistent service, your warmth, and your professionalism. Then when appropriate, ask your “best” patients to refer their family and friends.

Here are some **other practical tips** for building your practice from the inside out.

- Let specialists know the “type” of patients who are the best fit for you.
- Talk with friends, neighbors, and relatives.
- Send newsletters to your patients on a regular basis—and remind people you are accepting new patients. Highlight any patient-referral incentives that you’re offering.
- Ask for referrals on your business card. Consider putting reminders on monthly billing statements (“We always welcome new patients into our practice”).
- Contact patients who are overdue for their recare visits. It’s easier and more cost-effective to reactivate patients than to advertise for new ones.
- Create a brochure and give it out to all patients.

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That’s internal marketing. But external marketing is not all that different.

The main thing to remember when you go outside your practice is to target people you want in your practice. And not only who you want, but people who either live or work in the general area—usually within a three mile radius.

A smart external marketing campaign enhances the success of your internal efforts. Here are some **external marketing ideas** to consider:

- Give a presentation to a nearby group, school, or association. Make sure to take your business cards and brochures. And if you give out toothbrushes and floss, make sure your contact information is on those items.
- Have a direct piece designed and send it to people who are new to the area. The keys are to give people a reason to call your practice and to send direct mail repetitively.
- Visit local business owners in the area and find out how you can best help their employees.
- Sponsor community events and gatherings and consider giving out “gift bags” at these events. Create awareness in your area about your practice.
- Get brochures and information in “public places.” Is there a business you can “partner with” to advertise each others services?

No matter what mix of approaches you use, give patients reasons to come to your office AND stay in your office. **Patient retention is critical.**

In fact, you can learn a lot from the patients who leave. Find out why they left and make the appropriate course corrections. This will make your practice even stronger and your marketing efforts even more effective.

Then when you decide how you want to attract more patients, carefully **measure your results**. Train your staff on how to track the source for new patients and review these numbers. Monitor the number of referrals you and your staff ask for and make it a point to role play to sharpen your skills.

And if you want help with any part of this process, from implementing effective internal and external marketing campaigns to coaching and training staff, **please contact us**. Schatz & Company has a proven record for helping practices attract more patients. And we have a proven record for making your life easier.