

# Best Practices for Effective Patient Communication

Internal marketing is key to patient retention and practice growth. Here's how to do it well.

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Internal marketing is the practice of marketing to your existing patient database. It helps you retain existing patients—rather than watch them shop your competitors—and grow your practice by improving satisfaction, which leads to better word of mouth. The three key words to success in the real estate business are: Location, Location, Location. The key words for successful internal marketing are: Communicate, Communicate, Communicate.

## How to Effectively Communicate

Building a solid relationship with your patients begins with effective communication during the consultation and treatment process. Spend time getting to know your patients and listen, really listen, to their concerns. Use plain language so they clearly understand what you are saying. Don't use medical jargon. Take the time to answer all their questions and clarify anything they don't understand. Patients who feel they have a say in their course of treatment are much more willing to return to that provider for future care and recommend their provider to others.

Remember, communication doesn't end at the practice door. Following are additional strategies to help you maintain communication with patients between visits:

Text Messages. Text messages are a great way to inexpensively confirm appointments and offer your patients special promotions. Text messages are seen by patients as less invasive than phone calls and are more likely to elicit a response.

Email. Weekly or monthly email newsletters that highlight your providers, new services or solutions to common concerns are beneficial. You can step up your email communications by sending targeted emails based on patient interests or past treatments. These might include notification of an upcoming event or a special promotion on their favorite product or treatment.

Social Media. Use your social media to share new products, treatments and services, and to highlight new staff and staff achievements such as new certifications, awards and anniversaries. Keep the content current, educational and interesting.

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