The Four Cs of Marketing Success

By Marc Swerdlick

A successful marketing campaign begins with a focus on comfort. The goal is to have your practice call out to your patients and basically say, “Come on in and make yourself at home.” Just as insecurity may result from boarding a small airplane that looks like it hasn’t been cleaned in a month and is piloted by someone who hasn’t slept or showered in a few days, you can’t expect an individual who’s not entirely comfortable with your practice to be receptive to your message.

Clarity

Our next C is clarity. When we talk about clarity in respect to marketing, we’re talking about a patient’s understanding of your services and the details concerning his relationship with your practice (i.e. insurance), forms of payment and hours of operation. The importance of clarity is often overlooked. Nevertheless, it’s crucial for you to understand that any confusion from the patient’s perspective is conducive to a very common reaction—namely, withdrawal.

Looking at it from a different direction, a patient who has had everything explained to them in detail, and subsequently is less confused, is a patient who is very likely to enjoy his relationship with your practice.

Credibility

The third C is credibility. I have no doubt that most people understand the importance of credibility, and by no means am I planning to delve into that subject. Having said that, the message that I want to deliver is where credibility falls in importance when comparing it to the other Cs. Many marketing experts will tell you that credibility should be the first of the Cs. I respectfully disagree.

You must have a comfortable environment, as well as clarity in the communication between practice and patient, well before even thinking about credibility. Puzzled? Think about it like this: You walk into a doctor’s office and the first thing you notice is that the place is a mess. Without even making the slightest bit of eye contact, the receptionist gives you a clipboard with a stack of papers, but doesn’t give you any directions. So far, it would be fair to say that the doctor’s office gets poor grades for comfort and clarity. If this were your office, what do you think your patient’s first impression would be? Is it possible that the patient’s impression could hurt your own personal credibility along with the credibility of your practice?

Confidence

The payoff from giving consideration to comfort, clarity and credibility is of course the fourth C—confidence. It is confidence that is critical in creating practice-building momentum. Its importance is founded in the understanding that confidence is a catalyst. To put it simply, a patient who is confident in every aspect of his relationship with your practice is very likely to stay with you throughout the years—and equally likely to refer.

Implementing the four Cs into your practice’s marketing program will increase the strength of your message. But more important, using the four Cs will create a better internal environment for you, your colleagues and your staff. That makes for a better experience for all.

About the Author

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