



11 WAYS TO GROW YOUR HEALTH CARE PRACTICE USING DIRECT MAIL

By Joy Gendusa and Joe Niewierski

There are many places to go and get advice on how to grow your health care practice, but we have been helping health care practitioners with their direct mail marketing for over 8 years now and we have seen it all.

We know what works, what doesn't work and we have great inside knowledge about how health care practices work and can be marketed.

You want to grow your practice but you've hit a few road blocks. Maybe you have a great base of regular patients, but you just can't seem to drive in new business. Maybe you have plenty of new business but can't seem to get second and third visits. Whatever the problem is that you are trying to fix, direct mail can help.

Here are what we have found to be the top 11 ways that you can grow your practice using direct mail – in no particular order. Each one handles different aspects of your marketing, so it would be impossible to say that just one is the most important. You may not find that every one applies to your practice, but I guarantee you will find something useful in the tips that follow.

1. EDUCATE YOUR PATIENTS AND PROSPECTIVE PATIENTS ABOUT YOUR SERVICES

The majority of people don't really know all of what their health care practitioner does. Most have a limited knowledge of what your professional license actually enables you to do for them. If you educate your public on all of the ways you can help them, you will definitely start to see more people coming in your door for your (at this time) lesser-known services. There are ways to let your patients and prospective patients know what you do – newsletters are a great way to tout your services. You can mail them out to your database as well as put them in your reception room. A great way to educate your prospective patients on what you do is to write a column for a local paper on healthcare issues pertaining to your profession. You may find many people coming in for more advice based on those published articles. You should also send out mailings to existing patients as well as your prospective patient list educating them on health risks or procedures you offer to help them. Bottom line is that if people don't know why they should use your services, they never will use them, and direct mail is a great way to educate the public.

Use direct mail to invite people to a FREE informative seminar and host the seminar at your office. For some health care professionals, like Physical Therapists, it is best to have someone outside of your organization as the guest speaker, because it will be more credible in the eyes of the public and will feel less like you are only trying to sell them something. That is not always the case. If you are the doctor, it lends credibility to you and your practice if you present the seminar yourself. Keep the topics of your seminars current and you will get more people in the door. The nice part is that you can get in new business with these, but you can also use them to reactivate old patients. Get them in the door, let them see your office and mingle, promoting yourself the whole time.

2. EMPHASIZE YOUR SPECIALTIES AND PROMOTE YOUR PRODUCTS

In addition to educating patients on your services, promote your specialties and/or products. You have to let people know what you have to offer and how you can help them.

Are you the “Golf Injury Specialist”? Maybe you have the most experience in your area working with seniors. You can use any strength that you have and emphasize it to a specific list of people that are going to require those services, such as a list of people within a 5-mile radius, over the age of 55, or the subscriber list of a golf magazine in your area. The more you target your list to your services, the more you will get back in return.

If you're an optometrist, do you have frames that other optometrists in your area don't carry? Do you specialize in hi-tech lenses for small-framed presbyopes? What about the newest type of contact lens? Or how about if you're a dentist? Do you have cosmetic dentistry services like ZOOM!® or other whitening services? How about Invisalign®? Some health care professionals can appeal to the style in people. By letting them know that you can help them with their appearance, you can get them in the door. At that point you can educate them on how regular check-ups can prevent many types of maladies, and you will be able to land patients who would otherwise never have come in.

3. REMINDER NOTES TO PAST PATIENTS

It's pretty safe to say that someone who needed your services at one point is a good candidate to need them again in the future. At the very least, you know that they are open-minded to the prospect of your services. That is why you always need to keep in touch with your past patients and direct mail is a good way to do it. Send them something asking how they are doing and remind them to give you a call if there is anything you can do to help.

Sending birthday cards is another great reminder to stay in touch with your patients. You can offer a discount on their next service or a product purchased within a specific period of time as birthday present from you to them.

In fact, this Birthday Program is a great way to reach new patients, too. Even if they are not yet your patient, you can purchase a mailing list of people with specific demographics similar to your current patient database along with their birthdates. By mailing to these prospective patients, you will be targeting similar people to those that already patronize your practice, and you will be celebrating their birthday by offering them something they might not normally ask for – like a percentage off a teeth whitening product or a free consultation. This New Patient Birthday Program is wildly successful.

4. REFERRAL PROGRAM

You already know that some of your best patients have come from referrals. Start a referral program to give some premium to past patients when they refer a friend or family member. Telling patients about the program at the end of every visit will work well, but using direct mail to remind them will work even better. Send them a postcard at their house where they actually interact with their friends and family and they will be more likely to remember.

5. BRAND YOUR PRACTICE

You make people feel better. Your promo should also make people feel better. Try to stay away from the “Doctor” feeling when you are putting your name out there (especially when promoting relaxation services like massage). When people think of the doctor they normally think of being poked, prodded and tested. You want them to see your promo and think soothing and healing. Little things, like using softer terminology and remembering to use positive images of people being active can help to solidify that image. Sometimes images of people in pain will grab attention and help prospects to relate, but you need to make sure that once you grab their attention you really emphasize that you have the solution to their problem.

6. USE AN OFFER TO INCREASE RESPONSE

Giving something away or giving a discount will always get people's attention, but you have to give away the right things. Offering a FREE Injury Screening or discounts on massage are good ways to get people in the door. Make sure that the discount you are offering is related to your treatment. Giveaways like FREE Movie Tickets and FREE T-Shirts are a waste of money because they do not motivate anyone enough to come through the door. Most people who collect on those offers would have come in anyway.

7. HIGHLIGHT THE CONVENIENCE OF YOUR OFFICE

Maybe you are located in an easily accessible area. Maybe you are open for a half-day on Saturday or later into the evening a few nights a week. Most people don't like to miss work to come in for services. You can use the convenience of your office as a response multiplier. Don't make the hours you are open the main point of your direct mail promotion, but mentioning it will definitely help put you over the top compared to less convenient offices in the area.

8. MAKE SURE YOUR PROFESSIONALISM SHOWS

Make sure that the quality of the promotion you send out is the same quality as the services you provide. You could be the most skilled and caring therapist in the industry, but if your direct mail pieces are of subpar quality or not professionally designed, the people receiving them will assume the same thing about your practice. Don't fall into the trap of finding the cheapest one-color flyer that you can. Color pictures of happy people that are healthy and active will help you show the care and professionalism that you are trying to portray.

9. NEW MOVER ADVERTISING

Lists are available of people who've recently moved into your area. These are going to be people who are looking to set up their new life... they'll be in the market for lawn maintenance, a new doctor, a new optometrist or even a new dentist. Make their search as easy as possible and start growing your patient list with direct mail. You will definitely want to have a "Welcome to the Neighborhood" offer that has a specific expiration date.

10. TARGET SERVICES TO SPECIFIC MARKETS

Get a targeted list for each of your specific services. If you're an orthodontist, you may want to target it to families with a minimum annual income and children in the home. If you're a dentist and make dentures, you can target that service to people of a certain age. Not everyone is going to be interested in every service that you offer. Take a look at your past patients. See what the people using a specific service have in common and target your promotion for that service to other people that fit that description. All of these lists are available for you to use.

11. PUSH YOUR INSURANCE EASE

Many people have health insurance and are looking for a practitioner that makes it easy to use. If you accept all major types of insurance or handle Medicare issues for your patients, make sure you say so on your direct mail pieces. The easier it is for someone to use their insurance, the more likely they will be to come in. Most patients are only concerned with the "out-of-pocket" expense, so if you can make them feel more confident about their insurance, you will definitely get more business. There are also some circumstances where people have insurance plans that are "use it or lose it" style, so you can get a response from them toward the end of the year if you remind them to use the benefits that will be gone come January 1st.

Hopefully you have found something in this report that will help you in your future marketing efforts. If you didn't find anything new you are probably already doing a great job with your marketing. If you have questions, would like more information or simply want to get started with a direct mail campaign of your own, give us a call at PostcardMania and we will be glad to help. We were the first company in the direct mail postcard industry to set up a quality control department to help you get the response you need.

Also, mention to your representative that you have already read this report and they will give you 1000 FREE postcards with your first order. In any event, we hope this report has helped you in your future marketing endeavors.

About Joy Gendusa:

Using a powerful, simple, extremely cost effective way of communicating with customers has earned *Joy Gendusa Inc* Magazine's recognition as the nation's fastest growing direct mail postcard-marketing firm with year 2007 revenues close to \$19,000,000. Gendusa began in 1998 with zero investment capital. Today, her Clearwater, FL firm called *PostcardMania*, employs over 150 people and prints 4 million and mails 2 million postcards representing 31000-plus customers in over 350 industries each week. *PostcardMania* has won many awards for their creativity, marketing farsightedness and business expansion – all of which the underlying theme contributing to their accomplishments is helping companies all over the nation expand. As an expert marketer, Joy is continuously sought out for her sound marketing advice, appearing in rivers of print media annually. Visit her website at www.postcardmania.com

About Joe Niewierski:

Joe Niewierski, the VP of Marketing & Promotion at *PostcardMania*, became a published writer after graduating with a BA in Advertising from the University of South Florida. Before his 6 year tenure at *PostcardMania*, Joe worked as a graphic designer for two national advertising agencies, *Bernard Hodes Group* and *Chenoweth & Faulkner*, branding campaigns for several of their corporate clients. Upon discovering his exceptional talent, *Joy Gendusa* hired *Joe* to run her marketing division. Gendusa attributes her explosive growth to her innate marketing savvy and her ability to choose incredible staff. About 70% of her staff are young creative minds under the age of 35, like *Joe*. Visit *Joe* at *PostcardMania's* website at www.postcardmania.com

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Addendum

In this addendum are direct mail postcard marketing case studies of health care practitioners and companies that service the health care industry to help you see the different ways postcard marketing is used and expand your horizon of how postcard marketing can help you.

Business-to-Consumer (B2C) Case Studies

- Case Study, Global Podiatry
- Case Study, Advanced Health Care Center
- Case Study, Adventure Smiles
- Case Study, Northwoods Dental

Business-to-Business (B2B) Case Studies

- Case Study, ChiroCover
- Case Study, Measurable Solutions

Successful Postcard Designs

- Chiropractic
- Physical Therapist
- Orthodontist
- Dentist



Global Podiatry

INDUSTRY:

Podiatry

LIST:

Provided by customer

MAILINGS:

Mailed to 10,000 records - 1x

RESPONSE:

“The mailing was a huge success. We had 30-40 new patient visits, and they’re still calling 1 month later. Those patients referred others as well. All in all this has been the most successful mailing we’ve ever done, and has outperformed all mass media venues (TV, Radio, Newspaper) we’ve tried about 10:1!”

Dr. Simon Donets
Podiatrist
Global Podiatry



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El Doctor Habla Español

Dr. Simón Donets
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Advanced Health Center

INDUSTRY:

Chiropractic

LIST:

Ailments List of “back pain” to households with income of \$75k+

RESPONSE:

“We’ve tried everything, and we’re finally getting a great response.”

ROI (Return On Investment):

We received 4 calls from the 1280 on the list, all of which scheduled and showed. We ended up with 1 of those 4 doing a program for spinal decompression. That gave us a 3 to 1 return for our total investment.

We expect to get more results as we do repeat mailings. I think having the “back pain” option greatly improves our direct mailing results.

Alan Coyle
Marketing Director
Advanced Health Center



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Northwoods Dental Dr. Scott Scharf

Industry: Dental

Length of time mailing mail postcards: Dr. Scharf has been mailing postcards since 1989. When he started marketing he mailed to new people that had recently moved into his area. In 2003, he started using PostcardMania's services.

Problem trying to solve: Scott was merely trying to expand his business and wanted a way to easily drive more patients into his practice.

Design idea: Scott's design came partly from Sterling Management, his consulting firm. Sterling had researched the color that he currently uses for his postcard. They found a particular color pink that pulled the best. Over the years, Scott tried fluorescent yellow and fluorescent orange, but he found what Sterling had initially discovered – that that special color pink worked the best. He speculates that it could be because the first people that come into his office are women.

What worked and what didn't: Dr. Scharf does track his responses. His reception uses a health history form that every new patient fills out. On that form, there is a question on it asking how they found out about Northwoods Dental. If the patient does not fill it out, the receptionist is trained to ask them. When something is not pulling well, they change the zip code they are mailing to and monitor the responses.

ROI: Northwoods Dental does other forms of advertising – Yellow Pages and cinema advertising, but postcards are one of their best marketing mediums. Out of the other forms of advertising, their postcards bring in as high a percentage as 34% of their total new patients per month.

Scott mainly looks at the number of new patients that he gets into his practice as his tracking method. He spends a minimum of 5% of his income toward marketing and sometimes as much as 10%.

Statement: “Since we started with you [PostcardMania], our gross income has gone up from \$150,000 to \$275,000 per month!”



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Our Gift to You

Call our office before January 13th, 2004 and our gift to you will be a complete consultation, exam, and bite wing x-rays. There will be a \$20.00 charge to you with this card. This offer is good for new adult patients only.

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Measurable Solutions

Kathy Wach, President

Industry: Business Consulting

Length of time mailing postcards: January 2000 to the present.

Problem trying to solve: One of Measurable's owners is a Physical Therapist and he knew that PT's as a whole generally have difficulty getting new patients into their practices. Measurable needed a marketing medium that would allow them immediately get across their message that something could be done about that problem.

Design idea: They use very simple designs with colors that they know work in ads (yellow, blue and red).

ROI: They spend 14% of their gross income on marketing which equates to about \$15,000 a week on marketing. In fact, they measure their growth by graphing certain functions. If you place their weekly 'Promotion Out' graph [number of promotion pieces mailed out] next to their weekly 'Gross Income' graph, they are nearly identical.

Measurable Solutions tracks the leads coming in, but Kathy didn't have the exact response rate for each postcard.

Interesting Note: Measurable Solutions made Entrepreneur's 11th Annual Hot List in 2005 as one of the fastest-growing new companies in the USA.

Statement: Measurable Solutions' statement to Entrepreneur Magazine of their success secret was: "Promote broadly to all potential public, and internally make sure everyone's purposes align with the goals of the group."

[Attached are some of the successful designs that they have done.]



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out the wazoo!!**

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“The one key phrase that always stuck with us, and ultimately made our decision to attend The New Patient Course was, **‘If you keep doing what you’re doing, you’re going to keep getting what you’ve got.’** We attended the New Patient Course and implemented what we learned. It worked immediately. We finally felt in control of the amount of patients coming in the door, and Brian no longer had to spend his time going out and meeting with the doctors. He finally has been able to move closer to being the CEO for the first time in seven years. We have found that Measurable Solutions has the most genuine interest of YOU and YOUR practice in mind, and will do everything they can to see you succeed.” – LG

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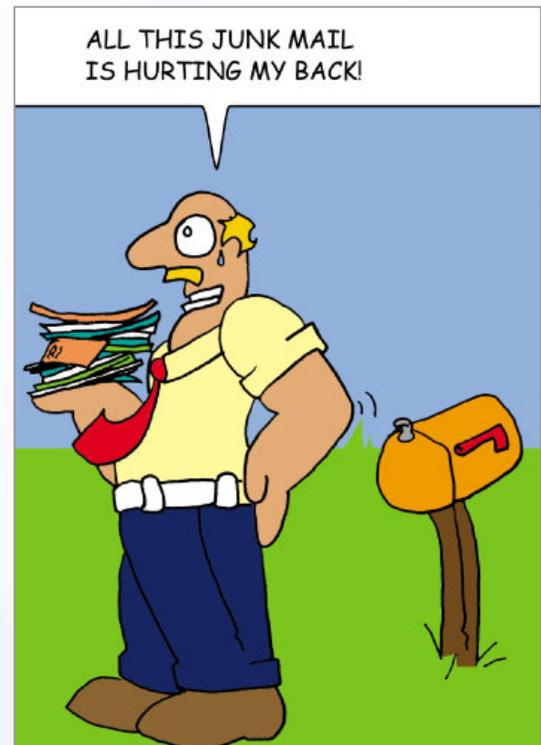


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STRESS STRESS STRESS
FATIGUE FATIGUE FATIGUE

Relieve All of Your Pain & Stress - Drug Free!

A chiropractic practice using this postcard design has mailed out 76,000 postcards over a 2 year period, to a mailing list of \$200K+ home value with income \$60k+.



A physical therapy practice successfully rotates these designs. They mail out 6,000 postcards p/month to a mailing list of household income \$40k+ that complains of the following: back pain, osteoporosis, arthritis or frequent headaches.



An orthodontist repetitively mails this postcard design to a mailing list of female children ages 7-18.



Healthy Teeth and Gums for Life

This is one of the many successful designs that a dentist uses who has been mailing postcards repetitively since 2004.