



How to market your new location so that it becomes wildly successful

CONGRATULATIONS! You have signed the contract for your new office space, and your staff is on top of all of the administrative details (like movers, phones, change of address notices, etc.). *Now what?*

Well, whether you are moving an established practice or starting a brand new one, this moment is a rare window of opportunity to ethically and powerfully market your practice. Here's why:

- Practice locations only get to be new once, and from a marketing point of view, “new” sells.
- You are going to have to print new practice materials anyway, so why not create materials that sell?
- This is a fresh opportunity to create the practice of your dreams with improved branding and a stronger message. Get ahead of this idea, because later will be too late.
- Most importantly, you are making a tremendous investment in your new location, and the overhead will be the same amount each month — whether you are busy or not. Just a suggestion ... but we think “busy” really beats the alternative.

To make the most out of your new location, create and follow a well-designed practice marketing plan for your new location. Think of it as an insurance policy that protects your investment.

Over the years, many dentists have called us just before their “grand opening.” They had thought of every detail in creating a new office, except how to fill the appointment book. That nagging little detail kept them awake at night.

Some of the strategies and tactics you'll want to incorporate into your marketing plan include:

- 1 Whenever you change locations, you are certain to lose some patients. The only question is, how many? The good news is, you can vastly reduce your “defection rate” by promoting the move — early and often — to existing patients. Don't send simple “we are moving” postcards. Instead, talk up the move to patients, and make sure every patient gets a mailer that promotes how he or she will benefit from your move.
- 2 One of the most important marketing truisms is that the message should never be about *you* or your new office — it should be about what is in it for *them*. Maybe it's a more convenient location, better parking (that's a big one, actually), or new and more comfortable facilities and equipment to serve your patients better.

The cornerstone message is all about the patient benefits.

- 3 Put up a new location sign as soon as possible, as large as possible, and well in advance. Don't wait for the permanent sign to be installed three months after you open the doors. Post a large and prominent temporary sign if necessary. Highly visible signs are a powerful and effective marketing tool.
- 4 If you have an open house, make it special and make it fun. Pigs-in-a-blanket will draw a big yawn — and no visitors (with the possible exception of your mom). In addition to the ceremonial event on a specific day, extend the open house theme for several weeks to involve and impress the patients who come in initially. It makes an impression and helps spread the word to their friends and family.
- 5 Since you'll need to print new stationery anyway, now is the opportunity to create fantastic new and powerful marketing materials. This is a tremendous opportunity to finally get around to creating image-enhancing stationery, a logo, brochures, a Web site, etc. Budget for this and begin well in advance of the move.
- 6 Don't even think about simple announcements or appropriately named “tombstone ads” to announce your move. Instead, use the event to make special offers to prospective patients. The star of the show needs to be direct patient benefits, not the office itself.
- 7 Devise something special about you, your practice, or your move that would make it newsworthy for the local media. Be creative. For example, a family dentist we know restored a historical building as his new office, lovingly preserving and upgrading the unique architecture inside and out. It made a big splash with local citizens and local media.

Your move should be just the first phase of your 12-month marketing plan. Fortunately, you will now have many of the creative elements (logo, brochures, etc.) already available to support other segments of your plan. **DE**

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