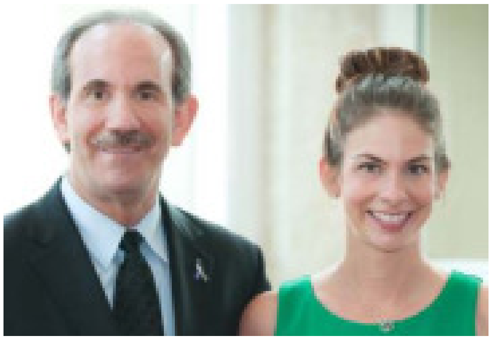
ADDRESSING PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT AT THE:

Practice Wing



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The Essential Role of Office Personnel

Let's face it: as a provider, you can't be everywhere at once. Your focus should be, and needs to be, on treating your patients. While you're busy performing surgery and otherwise treating patients, it's your staff and office personnel serving as the face of your practice, and as your practice grows, how they represent you is more important than ever.

So how do you make sure the brand you've built is being properly upheld? Let's break it down in six easy steps:

1. Remember that "receptionist" you hired? Scratch that title and make sure s/he is represented properly as your Director of First Impressions, because when patients first dial your digits, that's who they'll be speakig with. Make sure the phone is answered with a smile that can be heard on the other end. (Don't believe the theory? Test it: I guarantee you'll hear the difference.)

2. Ditch how you used to answer the phone and replace it with this script: "Hello, (name of your practice here)'s office. This is (name of your Director of First Impressions). "I can help you." Make it a bold statement, not a question. But more importantly, make sure the statement is true by educating your staff about each and every procedure and practice policy, remembering, of course, to instruct them to NEVER diagnose patients over the phone. Instead, make sure they are including credentialling of the providers they'll see, as well as positive personal experiences.

3. Make sure your staff works to get the patient an appointment time that works for their schedule, and collect as much contact information as possible in advance. This will certainly save time when the patient comes in for their first appointment. No one likes having to fill out all of that boring paperwork. Ask them how they'd like to be reminded of their appointment and note it in your system... and actually schedule the reminder. (Options to do this include a manual phone call/email/text-reminder or scheduling the reminder through your existing EMR/EHR software). If your practice doesn't have the capabilities, try outside software like Solutionreach, to make patient reminders easy on your team, preventing them from slipping through the cracks. Make sure to ask the patient how they prefer to be contacted, of course. Why the push for this? It drastically reduces no shows and ugly last minute holes in your schedule.

4. When your patient does come in for the appointment, your team should greet them with the same smile they've come to know and love and personally welcome them into your office. Whether it's their first or fifteenth visit, your staff should show them how grateful they are they're there, not slam a glass window in their face.

5. Keep in mind the patient may have come in for one treatment and not be aware of other services you offer. Include plenty of practice-branded marketing in your reception area, including your custom brochures and photo books of Before and After collections, a television monitor showcasing your services, framed signage promoting your gift cards and e-newsletter promotions, beautifully displayed retail products and more. Nix magazines on your end table and Judge Judy on your TV; they do nothing to promote your practice and educate your patient.

6. Finally, make sure your staff is rebooking your patients before they leave your office (we all know busy lives kidnap even the best scheduling intentions), and the patient's current email address is in your practice management software to use with regularly scheduled e-newsletters to stay top of mind.