

How Can My Staff Help Support Breast Cancer Awareness?

Jay A. Shorr answers *PSP* readers' top questions



By Jay A. Shorr, BA, MBM-C, CAC I-IV

Each fall, I get the same questions from clients. In general, practices are concerned with breast cancer awareness initiatives, end-of-year-sales, holiday specials, and smart purchasing for the coming year.

Here are some of the top questions I get during this time of year, along with their concise answers.

Q: How can my practice support breast cancer awareness month this October and give props to all the brave women who have faced or will face a breast cancer diagnosis?

Think pink! Wear pink wrist bracelets and pink-jeweled bows on your lapels. Donate a percentage from the sale of all skin care products sold in the month of October to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation or another meaningful breast cancer charity. If there is a breast cancer walk, encourage your staff to take part and ask for pledges from patients, family, and friends for each mile. Giving back is always rewarding.

Q: As we near the holiday season, our staff's minds seem to be elsewhere. Can you give a few tips on how to keep them engaged?

It's no secret that employees become distracted around holiday time. Social calendars fill up, family obligations take

over, and ultimately, your office pays the price. Make sure you're utilizing all of your employee incentives to keep them engaged. Have your vendors bring in food for lunch-and-learn sessions, host an office decorating party, and offer a giveaway for your top performers. For example, each procedure or product sold could earn them a chance to enter a raffle with such prizes as Apple's new watch, tickets to a show, or a bonus day of paid vacation to be used after the holiday season.

Q: We're examining our bottom line as we near the end of the year, and it looks like a new piece of office equipment fits into our budget. How would you recommend we find the right piece?

Congratulations! This is a great problem to have. Investing in your practice is by far a better option than keeping the money in your bank account, waiting to be taxed.

First, let the demand for the procedure drive the purchase, not the other way around. Do your research on how long different options have been available, and what sort of side effects and levels of pain they entail. Check in with your colleagues who own the same piece, and get their feedback on its utility. Examine who else in your geographic area is offering the technology and what the going rate is, then add in the costs of the equipment, consumables, staff time, and marketing needs to determine your return on investment. Be sure to check your state's laws in regard to which providers are able to use it to treat patients.

Have all of your facts in a row,

including competitors' pricing, when it comes time to make the purchase. Your vendors are hungry to make their end-of-year goals. Use that to your advantage when negotiating.

Q: How would you recommend boosting sales during the holiday season?

The holidays are a time to finish the year strong. Creating a holiday-centric marketing plan is key. Make sure you're focused on reminding patients early in the fall that NOW is the time to consider more invasive procedures, not right before their tropical getaway. These procedures are the gift they can give themselves... before budgets for gift-giving get out of control.

Remind patients that they can look fresh and fantastic for their holiday photos and at holiday parties with a multitude of minimally invasive procedures.

Skin care products and gift cards make great gifts for friends and family. Gift certificates for procedures can be excellent stocking stuffers—assuming, of course, that the recipient has actually expressed interested in said procedure. If not, these gifts can be misinterpreted. Be sure to promote any and all holiday specials in your reception area and treatment rooms, through e-newsletters, social media, and even via your on-hold message. ■

Jay A. Shorr, BA, MBM-C, CAC I-V, is the founder and managing partner of The Best Medical Business Solutions, based in Fort Lauderdale and Orlando, Fla. His column, "The Shorr Thing," appears in every issue of Plastic Surgery Practice. He can be reached via PSPeditor@allied360.com.



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