

MARKETING FOR THE
ELITE NURSE
PRACTITIONER SIDE
BUSINESS

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By Justin Allan, NP

MARKETING 101

Marketing is an essential function of your business. In my opinion, it should be the main function of your business. It is absolutely critical to market your new practice on a regular basis. Businesses will fail or prosper based off how much they market. Medical practices are no different. If you want your side practice to become successful quickly, you must market it effectively.

Remember, this should be a part-time practice if you are utilizing The Elite Nurse Practitioner Model. You need to get this practice up and running as fast as possible to determine if it is a worthwhile endeavor to pursue or not. Therefore, you need to market it hard before you even open. Wasted time = Wasted money.

Very few practices will become successful without a marketing plan. Sure, it can become successful after time, but your goal should be to generate revenue as fast as possible. You do this by getting your practice's name out into the community as soon as you start the business. No one will know your practice exists until they see it advertised. Just because it is important to you does not mean that it is important to the rest of the world, thus you must start

marketing your new practice 2 weeks before you open and then very heavily for the first 3 months.

Heavy marketing involves these 4 pieces:

1. Having marketing be your number one expense.
2. Having a budget of at least \$1,000 a month for marketing in the first 3 months of your new practice.
3. Utilizing multiple marketing channels e.g. billboards, magazines, radio advertisements, etc.
4. Having a referral system in place.

Marketing should be your number one expense. You should spend more money on marketing your practice than your rent. Does a \$1,600 a month rent payment bring in patients and make you money? NO! Does \$1,600 of billboard advertisements, a few ads in local magazines, and a radio ad bring in patients and make you money? You better believe it!

If your rent is \$700 a month (which it should be, a **cheaply started business is a business that can be cheaply closed**), then your marketing budget should be \$800 a month. This will pay for itself multiple times over. I believe you should budget \$1,000 a month for the first 3 months of your new practice. When you spend this kind of money on marketing, people will quickly know you exist. You will receive phone calls immediately and begin to schedule appointments. This will set you on the path for success.

Once your business goes on autopilot (this is when your business revenue covers 100% of your business expenses), then you can dial

down your marketing budget if you choose to. Your marketing budget should always be more than your rent payment. Keep this budget in place! Always have your name out in the community. Sometimes it takes a patient to see 20 of your ads before calling you.

I have had countless patients see multiple different types of ads for my practices before they decided to call. They have told me this. They researched the services I provided, checked out the website, and talked with others. When you operate a cash practice, people tend to do their research before handing you their hard-earned money. One of the first places they look at is your website!

It is imperative you have a nice website. This is the “brochure” of your practice that is freely accessible to the world. It needs to look professional, organized, and get straight to the point. I have looked at many practice websites when I consult with nurse practitioners that are confusing and disorganized. This will turn people away from ever calling you. I guarantee it. You must have a nice website where a potential patient understands what you provide within 30 seconds. If the person has to click through multiple tabs and scroll all over your site to figure out what you do exactly, they will leave. Get straight to the point.

If you are not tech savvy enough to create your own site, then hire a reputable website developer. Ask to see their work and make your own judgement. Do not settle for crap work.

Make sure your website is listed with Google My Business and Bing. These are the top 2 search engines that 90% of the population

uses. Your practice must be listed on Google maps. If it is not, people will have trouble finding you. Not only that, but potential patients love to see reviews of your practice. The best way to have reviews is through your google listing. The more reviews you have, the more patients you will have. **Ask every patient to leave you a review.** It is very important.

A website and your online listings are cheap and an absolute must within your marketing plan. Outside of this you need to use another 4-5 marketing channels. The more you have, the more potential patients will know you exist, which ultimately means more business.

What marketing channels should you utilize?

1. *Niche advertisements:* You should provide a **niched service** to a targeted market of patients. If you don't have this, then stop right now and figure that out. It is paramount to the principle of a side practice. Each targeted demographic will frequent certain establishments and consume niched publications. We are nurse practitioners, therefore we read publications from the AANP, BON quarterly newsletters, journals, etc. Lawyers read their state bar associations newsletters, law journals, etc. Wealthier men read Forbes, The Wallstreet Journal, etc. These are all niche publications.

Certain groups of people will frequent the same establishments. The men I treat at my men's health clinic frequent golf courses, various bars and restaurants, and gyms. I strategically place ads in these locations. My patients for

medical cannabis frequent smoke shops, dispensaries, and head shops, therefore I advertise in those locations.

It is imperative you figure out where your target market hangs out and what they consume. Once you figure this out, your marketing budget will be utilized efficiently and effectively. By doing this, ads are directly placed in front of the type of patients you want. This will save you money and time. What types of niche advertisements should you look at?

- 1) Print advertisements such as magazines, journals, posters and newsletters.
 - 2) Google advertisements that will be present with specific key word searches and placed on relevant websites.
 - 3) Social media advertisements that target specific interests and groups.
2. *Online advertisements:* The two easiest ways to get started advertising online is by using Google Ads and through social media.

Setting up a Google Ads account is very simple. Just Google search “Google Ads” and begin the process. It literally walks you through starting an advertisement campaign.

The same goes with social media advertising. The two main sites you should use are Facebook and Instagram. All you need to do is set up a business page. Once you do this, open the ad manager and go through the steps. It is very simple.

The advantage online marketing has is that it allows you to specifically target a market. You narrow down your market by sex, age, income level, location, hobbies, interests, job title, etc. It is very easy to put your ad in front of the eyes of your potential patient population.

It is important to remember that when you use Google Ads or social media marketing, you will get what you pay for. The more you spend, the more patients you will acquire. If you can afford spending \$1,000 on a Facebook ad campaign, you will make your money back and put people through the door. I guarantee it.

3. *Radio advertisements:* Radio is a great advertising avenue. You can broadcast your new practice to thousands of potential patients in your region. The 2 downsides of radio advertisements are that it does not target your niched demographic well and they are expensive. If you can afford radio advertisements, go for it. They are very effective.

You can get a lot of bang for your buck with a 1-month campaign. Go to a radio stations website and look under the

“contact us” section. There should be contact information for the advertising account executive. Contact this person and inquire about their rates and specials. These prices are usually not set in stone and can be negotiated.

Usually the radio station will write and produce the radio ad at no additional cost. You generally provide them information and tell them what your goals are, and they take care of the rest. It is a simple process.

4. *Television advertisements:* Television is like radio advertising but with visuals. The visuals are a very important aspect of commercials and television advertisements. People have a short attention span and will only remember the visuals and messages that are unique. Therefore, if you utilize television advertising you must ensure your logo is memorable and that the message you are delivering is visually appealing. What is said on the commercial is not as important as what it looks like.

Have you ever seen a local businesses commercial that was done with outdated or cheap cameras? It looks like it was filmed in the 90's. It looks cheap. If you decide to film a commercial, make sure the production company uses up-to-date video hardware. Ask them for examples and samples of other commercials they have done in the past. When you contact an advertising account executive with a local station

or the cable company, they can provide you with commercial production advertisement services in your area.

As with radio, the prices for both the advertising space at the television stations and the production services are negotiable. Television can be expensive, so this option typically will be for the established practice that has cash reserves.

5. *Automobile advertisements:* You should consider putting an advertisement on your vehicle. My men's health clinic is advertised all over my truck. The back windows, sides and tailgate have my men's health clinics logo, phone number, website address, and basic information on it. Not only does this make your vehicle a business expense, but it is free advertising. I have received dozens of patients from this alone. Always park your vehicle in strategic locations at grocery stores, malls, etc. When I fly, I park my truck at the back of the parking lot with its tailgate facing the main entrance into the airport. I have received 3 patients by doing this. It is a billboard on wheels!

Be careful though, if you have a lead foot and drive aggressively, you will create a bad impression of your business! (I actually had someone call my office because I cut them off! Learn from my mistakes).

6. *Referral system:* You need to have a referral system in place. The easiest way to obtain new patients is by word of mouth. Your patients know other like-minded individuals who could benefit from your services. Create a simple referral system that rewards your current patients with a discount or a free product. I give my men's health patients 10% off their monthly concierge bill if they refer a friend or family member. Around 30% of my current patient base is because of this referral system alone. The 10% discount is a drop in the bucket when you look at how much revenue a new patient generates. **Having a referral system is not optional, have one from the start!**
7. *Billboards:* Putting advertisements on billboards is a great way to get your name out into the community quickly. The problem with billboards is that people will only look at it for 2-3 seconds unless they are stuck in traffic. Therefore, when you design the billboard with the advertising company, ensure that the designs message is quick and to the point, like your website.

I always laugh when I drive by a billboard with a medical practice advertised on it. There are 12 services listed on it in little text. No one can read that! It is a waste of money. With my men's health clinic, my billboard simply says "Men's Health and Testosterone Replacement Therapy Clinic" with

my logo, phone number and website address. That is it! It is effective and to the point.

Billboards should be predominately utilized during the first 3 months of your practice. It will put your name into the community. During the first 3 months of your practice, have 3 billboards placed around your area if your budget allows for it. Gauge on how well it does. If it is effective, then I would drop to only having one. This will keep your name in the community.

Billboards are expensive but they can be effective. You should negotiate down the rate with the salesman and only sign a 3-month commitment. **You do not want to be stuck in a long-term contract if your business is not doing well.**

8. *Direct mail:* Direct mail is very effective in generating new patients. Yes, the majority of people will throw the advertisement in the trash, but a handful won't! The key with a direct mailing campaign is targeting people who will utilize your service. I would not send a post card for a men's health clinic to a 75-year-old females house. That is a waste of money. This is why it is critical to identify who your target market is.

Direct mail marketing companies are expensive. It could easily cost you \$2,000 or more for a small campaign if you

utilize them. I would advise just doing it yourself. Go to www.infousa.com to create a mailing list. It will allow you to create a mailing list based off people's sex, geographical location, income, etc. You will need to have a nice post card designed. You can do this yourself or use a digital artist. Once that is completed, print the cards off in bulk and put the addresses from www.infousa.com on them. You can hand write them yourself or have family help you. You can also get the labels printed. After all that is done, go to the post office and mail them off in bulk. If you do this yourself, you will literally save a thousand dollars.

These are the top channels you should utilize when marketing your practice. Be creative! Have advertisements in as many places as you can. I have advertisements on golf course score cards, billboards, Google, and above urinals in bars! These things work and generate new business. The more marketing avenues you pursue, the more successful you will be.

Ensure you ask your patients on how they heard about you. Every patient I see is asked this question on their initial intake form. It is vital to know what works and what doesn't. This will save you thousands of dollars. What is the point of utilizing ineffective marketing channels?

I once placed advertisements above the sanitation wipe stations in Bed, Bath and Beyond for my men's health clinic. My reasoning was that women would see this advertisement and let their husbands know about it. I was totally wrong. I did not receive one

patient from these ads over 12 months. I signed a 1-year contract with this agency at \$200 a month for this ad placement, I could not back out of it. It was such a waste of money. If I had not asked patients where they heard about us from, I could have continued wasting my money on this! **It is vital you ask this question!**

Remember, marketing should be the main function of your business, and then patient care. If you want a successful and profitable side practice, this is what you must do. You need to hit it hard during the first 3-6 months of your practice. You will be able to dial down the marketing once business picks up, but it is something you must always be doing. If you utilize the Elite Nurse Practitioner Model, you need to understand the importance of marketing if you want to create 2-4 profitable side practices. Effective marketing is the key in creating a successful side practice.