

## Show Me the Money

by Kriss Barlow

Marketing and its related activities have come under heavy scrutiny as healthcare organizations have been forced to cut costs and justify their expenditures. The Balanced Budget Act is just one in a series of belt-tightening strategies. The result is that leaders are challenging departments to show their impact on the hospital's bottom line.

### **Demonstrate Return-On-Investment**

In the ranks, reactions to the ROI mandates are varied. Some abandon activities that are tough to quantify, others scramble to find creative ways to measure the impact and a few are still saying, "Trust me." For most, it is a reminder that the support entities are seen as nice, but not always critical.

Because the need to demonstrate results is not going away, the key is development of an outcomes-oriented approach.

Assess what's measurable, how it can be measured, what the measurement tells you and what it takes to get the job done.

- Match what you are able to measure with the hospital/health system's strategic goals.
- Begin to educate internal and external audiences on quantitative and qualitative outcomes.
- Consider strategies for building numbers short-term and building relationships long-term.
- Articulate how customers buy via process maps, tools, and satisfaction indicators.
- Stay committed to the process.

### **Get a Head Start**

It goes without saying; the process is much easier if it's done BEFORE it becomes a mandate. While there will always be activities that are "the right thing to do," it's critical that we manage our time, energy and dollars. That's what long-term viability is all about. In healthcare, programs that are able to gain the support of the internal team and provide the right message for the external market are the leaders of the future.

### **Getting It Done**

While your team will likely have great suggestions, here are some ideas to get started:

1. List, then evaluate current tactics: the activity, expectations, audience, cost, data and outcomes.
2. Assess vulnerabilities and highlight the priorities.
3. Look at what the organization ultimately wants.
4. Begin internal education.
5. Develop a 1-page measurement tool that service-line requestors complete with you.

6. Gain internal consensus on accepted measures and outcomes: Trends/new admits/satisfaction/referrals into physician offices and clinics/specific procedures.
7. Work with the call center.
8. Start with key strategies, apply a simple measurement guide, share the results and credit with your team.



*Kriss Barlow, Corporate Health Group,*  
[www.corporatehealthgroup.com](http://www.corporatehealthgroup.com), 1-888-334-2500