

CHG Case Study: CHRISTUS Schumpert Health System

CHRISTUS Schumpert had its share of challenges in recent years. The Shreveport, Louisiana, health system was dealing with a constrictive managed-care environment and watched its competitor move further into the market, build new hospitals—and lure away dozens of its physicians.

But a new administration and the desire for a new strategy soon started turning things around. “We needed to rebuild our relationships with physicians,” says Nancy Dugas, vice president of marketing and planning. “And we knew that that would only be accomplished one physician at a time.” With 750 physicians on staff—and many in surrounding communities—it was no quick or easy task.

A team, including CEO Wayne Sensor and senior leadership, began meeting with physicians and asking their opinions on the current environment in the system, and their expectations for the future. Establishing a relationship built on trust and credibility was the priority. Soon, the strategy was paying off.

“We found that physicians were no longer leaving to go to the competitor,” Dugas says. The retention strategy helped stabilize the organization and stop the losses, and enabled CHRISTUS Schumpert to plan for the future.

In the next phase of the program, Corporate Health Group worked with Dugas and her team to develop a sales growth strategy aimed at physicians. The goal: to bring a message of value to each physician, strengthen that relationship and return business to the hospital.

To do that, the health system analyzed its retention data and examined its referral sources, specifically to its hospitalists. They then developed customized retention strategies for physicians in outlying areas who brought business to hospitalists and to the system.

The results? In 45 days, CHRISTUS Schumpert saw a 19 percent increase in referrals to the hospitalists, including those from physicians who previously hadn’t done business with the hospital.

A key to the success of the overall strategy, Dugas emphasizes, is having the support of the CEO and senior leadership. “Our CEO is absolutely, positively 110 percent committed to this strategy.” And CHG, she says, has helped the health system recognize and promote its “sizzle factor.” “They’ve really ignited us and helped us show physicians that we have a lot to offer them.”