

Reach Out to Your Physician and Employer Customers—Starting Today!

By Carolyn Merriman

Seems as if we're always torn between two jobs these days: the quest to find new revenue or referral opportunities and the business of implementing them. As you work on your customer relationship strategy this year, here are some points to ponder:

What do your customers want and expect from you? Most say they want:

- Ease and simplicity
- Seamless delivery and communication
- Solutions for their business initiatives that they value
- To be engaged and treated like a business partner
- A return on investment, one that's tracked and reported
- To be asked to give their opinion about how you can improve the relationship—and to hear your response!

How can you and your team be all that a physician or employer wants?

- Listen and learn from your customers and prospects and process their feedback internally.
- Create a sense of “ownership” of the customer's experience with you—from the patient, his supervisor, the personnel or safety manager, all the way to the president.
- Build your program from the outside in; design your product and services from the customer's perspective—not yours.
- Train everyone on sales and service, and the messages and behaviors that reinforce the value of the customer in every way.
- Be able to track, measure and prove your results, and demonstrate value all the time!

How to Strengthen Your Physician and Employer Relationships

Customer Acquisition:

- 1) Learn what the business and personal needs are of the buyer and her organization.
- 2) Identify ways that your services can meet those needs and the value or benefit they provide.
- 3) Position the differentiating factors of you, your organization and the services you provide.
- 4) Ensure satisfaction and exceed expectations.
- 5) Support the customer's decision to do business with you.

Retention:

- 1) How does the customer measure success? Are you helping him track the results of your services?
- 2) How well do you communicate with the customer? What's the frequency, quality and value of information?
- 3) Do you demonstrate that you value the relationship? If so, how? Are there other ways for you to enhance the relationship?
- 4) Are you sure of the customer's loyalty—and do you have all of his business?
- 5) Will the customer provide you with a reference—or refer you to her peers?



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