

Top of Mind Awareness



Marketing essentials for referral based healthcare providers
A service of Brazzell Marketing Agency

Quick! Name a good place to buy diabetic shoes!

The first place that you name has your top of mind awareness. In the minds of every nurse, physician, and PA exist lists of providers. Your position on the lists determines the number of referrals you receive. More importantly, *you can control your position on the lists.*

The heading for each list is a statement of need: “a good place to buy shoes,” “a home health agency,” “a DME provider,” etc. The statements can be very specific: “an option for treatment of cellulitis,” “ways to manage sports injuries,” “a bad place to buy shoes.” Largely, what you say and how often you say it determines where you are on the doctors’ lists. Your advertising can also create new lists in the minds of doctors. The goal of good marketing is to make a list in the mind of the customer that suits your needs and to stay at the top of that list.



Top of Mind Awareness is more than Name Recognition

Business owners often confuse name recognition with top of mind awareness. The distinction is important, because it determines your patient census. Name recognition simply means that a person will acknowledge being aware of your business. That does not generate new referrals. Top of mind awareness means that a person will name your business when confronted with a particular need. Business owners frequently conclude that advertising will not help them because, “everyone knows who we are” – name recognition. The question that managers and administrators must answer is, “will referral sources think of me when they have a need for my product or service?” – top of mind awareness.

Out of Sight – Out of Mind

Business owners should keep the adage above in mind when planning their marketing. The more a doctor sees your message, the more likely you are to maintain his/her top of mind awareness. *Sales and Marketing Management*, a leading trade journal for marketing professionals, recently reported that the average U.S. sale last decade took 12 impressions before the sale was made. That means 12 incidents of calling, mailing, or visiting. The good news for you is that 90% of businesses abandoned their marketing strategies after only four impressions.

This solution begs another question, “How do you stay in front of referral sources without annoying them?”

1. Be helpful. When you have their attention, be informative and concise.
2. Offer new information. Doctors will not see any reason to give you their attention when you say the same thing every time they see you. On the other hand, any good marketer knows that effective marketing requires *repetition*. A good compromise is to repeat a major theme but prove it in new ways every time you have the doctor’s attention.
3. Be unobtrusive. Meet the referral sources on their terms at times that are convenient to them.

Top of mind awareness has served as a conceptual model for consumer behavior for decades, and has served marketing planners well. When conducting your marketing, have a budget, a goal, and a comprehensive plan. Using the top of mind awareness model can help you shape a more effective communications strategy. Watch for future mailings of the Advisor for more concepts that improve marketing planning. Call Brazzell Marketing Agency anytime you want assistance with the planning or execution of your communications strategies.

