



CONVERSIONS—

THE UNTAPPED REVENUE GOLDMINE

Brandi Musgrave and Keri Layne-Tarman

“We need more leads! If we just had more leads, our practice could grow.”

How many times has your practice said these exact words to your internal marketing department or external marketing agency? While it is true that leads are absolutely vital for the success of elective surgery practices, it is only half of the equation. It is even more important to master the art of lead conversions to truly increase your revenues.

Consider the average cost-per-lead (CPL) of various advertising media for elective surgery marketing:

- \$50-\$100 CPL for internet leads
- \$250 CPL for radio leads
- \$200-\$500 CPL for print ad leads

Regardless of the amount you spend to secure each lead, this is not an instant guarantee of conver-

sion from lead to patient. If your internal staff has not honed their skills to properly cultivate the leads that come into your office, you are wasting valuable revenue resources. Unfortunately, many practices share this shortcoming.

LEARN YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

It is all too easy to get so caught up in the daily challenges of multitasking, troubleshooting technology problems and filling out paperwork that you lose focus on the patient experience, both on the phone and in the office.

One way to grasp the image your practice is projecting on the phone—and know how phone leads are being handled—is to commission secret shopper calls. Arrange for objective, third-party individuals to call your practice at random times and record their experiences. Many practices are surprised at the findings.

Periodically analyze the flow of your office to ensure that people in for consultations are receiving a positive experience at every step. Short wait times, smooth transitions from coordinators to doctors, and the two-way flow of communication will show potential patients that your practice is truly putting them first. There are companies that have extensive experience evaluating the internal processes of elective surgery practices and recommending new approaches to improve patient care.

METHODS TO IMPROVE CONVERSIONS

Once you have identified your weaknesses, you can start to make small, but extremely effective, changes.

Get details. Ask for contact information (name, phone number, email address) from every single lead who calls your practice. This cannot be stressed enough. Do not just let callers ask questions and

5 REASONS CONVERSIONS FAIL

1. Failure to gather contact information
2. Assuming leads only require one connection
3. Lack of follow up
4. Negative patient experience
5. Insufficient staff knowledge about procedures

hang up. Truly engage with callers and provide guidance that can help them overcome their personal barriers to having an elective surgery. If a caller becomes upset when you are requesting contact information (they typically will *not* be angry), explain that you would like to follow up after the call to share information with them about the procedure in which they are interested. Clarify that you want them to be fully informed about the options for vision improvement your practice provides.

Nurture leads. In this business, it's important to remember that leads require more than one single connection. Implement a drip email marketing program for your lead database to share educational information, address common concerns and keep your practice top-of-mind. Decisions to have elective surgery are not made overnight; it may take years of continual contact to help a lead take the leap.

Know the details. Your secret shopper calls may identify that your staff is not fully educated about the services you provide. If a person takes the time to call your office,

s/he expects to connect with someone who is knowledgeable enough about the procedures to answer most of the questions asked.

Create a VIP environment.

People who come to your office for consultations should be treated like royalty. Address them by name when they enter your office, make introductions as you pass them from counselor to doctor, and never leave them wondering what is coming next.

Close with confidence. During in-office consultations, always end the appointment with an outline for next steps. Schedule a specific date and time to follow up so there is less chance of the person putting the procedure on the back-burner. This technique can also be implemented during phone conversations.

Establish trust. Keep your promises to both leads and patients. Follow up when you say you will, and do what you say you are going to do.

Get training. If your staff feels uncomfortable addressing patient concerns, arrange for elective surgery sales training. Teach them the skills to help potential patients realize the life benefits of your procedures. Sales training should be ongoing; periodically schedule role-playing sessions to keep their skills sharp.

OVERCOMING STAFF RESISTANCE

Help your staff to move out of their comfort zone and learn how to place more attention on lead conversions by offering incentives. Set lead conversion goals and reward achievements with gift cards, office parties—anything that would motivate them to make the most out of every phone call and visit to your office.

Remind staff that the better your office becomes at lead conversions, the more revenue your practice will generate. This all equates to job security, raises, and more. It's a win-win-win for your staff, your practice, and your patients.

The bottom line: Lead generation is only half the equation for revenue growth. Leads have the potential to be a revenue goldmine, but only if you have the processes in place to secure the conversions from leads to patients. Continual staff training and role-playing sessions will help them build the confidence they need to maximize conversions. This will increase your ROI and grow your practice. **AE**



*Brandi Musgrave
(brandi@fast-trackmarketing.com;
303-731-2634) is the
Director of Business
Development at Fast
Track Marketing in
Broomfield, Colo.*



*Keri Layne-Tarman
(keri@fast-trackmarketing.com;
303-447-9192) is a
copywriter at Fast Track
Marketing.*

IN A BLINK

- Leads are not a guarantee of patient conversion.
- Leads must be properly cultivated.
- Small internal changes to your lead conversion process can be extremely effective.

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