

Advertising

Advertising is purchased media. While advertising can be costly, the greatest benefit is that you have complete control over your message: when and where it appears, how it looks and what it says. You can choose from many advertising options.

Print Ads

Print ads may be:

- Newspaper ads
- Magazine ads
- Event program ads

Your total cost includes expenses for ad production (concept, writing, design) as well as the cost to place it in the publication.

Tips

- Ads must be placed more than once to be effective. It takes the average consumer seven times seeing a message before they recognize it.
- Advertising with a specific message (i.e. a skill, new physician, event, etc.) typically generates more response than a general ad.
- Designing the ad yourself can reduce your cost, but using a graphic designer will create a professional look that reflects the high quality of care your practice provides. The publication in which you are advertising may have designers on staff to assist at no charge, or you can hire a designer.



- Paying for color usually adds to the cost, but color creates more impact for the reader.
- Weekly and local papers are less costly than larger daily papers.
- The Dayton Daily News and Cincinnati Enquirer offer zoned or community editions that are significantly less expensive than a full newspaper run and allow you to target your ad to specific geographic regions.
- Some specialty sections or publications also will help you target your message by audience (for example, seniors).



See a sample ad on page 20.

Brochure

A key piece in marketing your practice should be a brochure. Its biggest advantage is the ability to convey a lot of information about your practice and the services you provide. A brochure can tell a detailed story about your practice that cannot be told through advertising, and it gives you the flexibility to communicate your message with both words and graphics.

People read brochures because they are seriously interested in gaining information. They are interested in learning more about you and your practice.

A brochure's shelf life can be quite lengthy, depending on the information. To keep it up to date, consider listing physicians or staff on an insert, so if someone is recruited or departs, only the insert has to be reprinted.

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Brochure content to consider includes a welcome, overview of your practice and what makes your practice special, how to make an appointment, location, hours of operation and a phone number.

See sample brochures on pages 21 and 22.

Newsletters

Newsletters can help you share the latest news about your practice with your patients. They are a good vehicle for explaining new procedures or technology, introducing new physicians and staff, and keeping patients informed. Newsletters are a great way to involve your patients and give them a sense of ownership in your practice.

The expenses involved in setting up a newsletter are design, printing and mailing costs. Another option is an email newsletter. Email newsletters provide immediacy and cost effectiveness, but they are not always the best option, depending on your audience.

Tips

- When you include general health tips, healthy recipes and other “news you can use,” patients are more likely to pass your newsletter along to others in the community.



- Consider posting newsletter articles on your web site for added visibility.
- Professionalism counts, so watch your readability, relevance, typos and design to



- ensure your newsletter conveys the proper image for your practice.
- If you develop an email newsletter, be sure that recipients “opt in.” Ask permission from your patients to email them so you avoid being labeled as spam. You also need to offer a method to “unsubscribe” to your newsletter (typically at the bottom of the message).
- Email newsletters are easy to forward to others. Your loyal patients can send them to their friends — new prospects for you. It’s easy for these prospects to sign up for your mailing list when you put a “Join Our Mailing List” button on your web site. Through regular communication, you could turn those interested prospects into additional loyal patients.

See sample newsletters on pages 23 and 24.

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Phone Books

Phone books can be a huge investment because there are many local and regional directories. To be most effective, consider how people find you — by the physician's name or by the practice name — and use that information to create your listing. Advertise under relevant headings in the Physicians and Surgeons section.



Tips

- Limit access to one call-in number to reduce cost.
- Your office should be listed for free in your local directory's white pages. If you don't have a free listing, contact your phone company to ask for details.
- Tailor your advertising to your patient base. Older patients are more likely to use the phone book to find you. Younger people are more likely to go online for information.
- If you're considering paying for a listing in an online directory, your money may be better spent investing in a quality web site.

Billboards

Billboards, like all advertising, need to be visible for an extended period to be most effective.

They can cost thousands of dollars, but they can reach a large number of people every day, depending on location.

To be effective, billboard messaging must be brief. We recommend no more than seven words, along with a prominent picture.

Radio and Television

Some people in Butler and Warren counties can choose to listen to or watch either Dayton- or Cincinnati-based media (radio and television). Keep this in mind when determining your media buy. In general, the larger Cincinnati market is twice as expensive as the Dayton market.

- The cost of television advertising depends on the ad's length, time of broadcast (prime time/peak time) and the popularity of the selected television channel. You can target your ads based on the show in which your ad appears.
- Cable advertising can be less costly and can provide more geographic targeting than general broadcast stations.
- Radio is a great way to advertise upcoming screenings or events you are hosting.



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Direct Mail

Direct mail is a marketing term for unsolicited mailings to a target audience. Direct mail for a medical practice could be as simple as a letter or as elaborate as a professionally designed brochure.

Direct mail can be an effective tool to educate existing patients and alert local residents to your practice's offerings. When considering direct mail, take into account costs for design, materials, printing and postage. Talk to your designer, printer or post office about ways to reduce the cost of mailings (even postcard size can impact mailing cost), and consider bulk mail rates to save postage costs.

Tips

- Mailings can be sent to zip codes in your service area to target recipients and reduce costs. To supplement your own mailing list, you can “rent” a list from a mail house that meets the criteria of your target market.
- Remember how little time you spend with the mail that arrives at your home or office. It's important to keep your message simple.
- Have a reason for sending your mail piece (i.e., new physician, new procedure, new hours, prevention tips, health screenings, etc.).
- Be sure to use a call to action on your mailer to help track results.
- Use quality production methods, because cheapness shows.
- Periodically review your practice materials. It may be time to retype forms or letters that are looking a little rugged from lots of copying.

See sample direct mail postcards on pages 25 and 26.