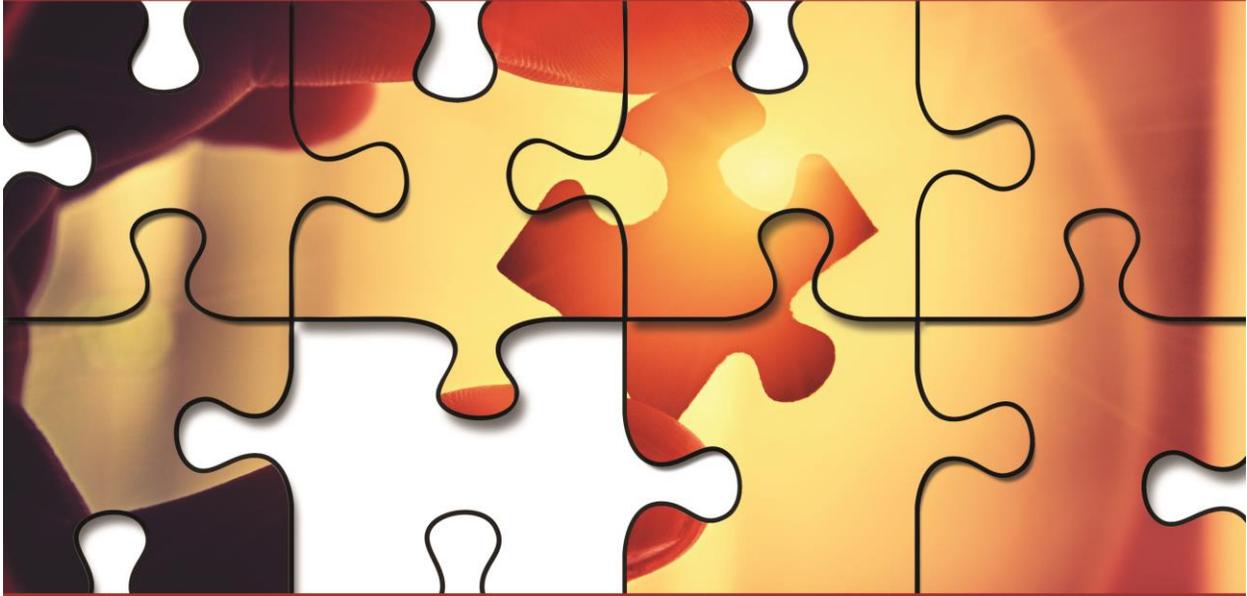




PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER: PREPARING FOR 2016 GI REIMBURSEMENT



Market Your Practice

Marketing your practice can be a way to keep your business operationally and fiscally healthy. Just as you monitor the vital signs of your patients, assessing and monitoring key operational aspects of your practice will help you better understand the status of your practice's financial health. Marketing is critical to the business side of your endoscopy practice.

Five Tips to Market Your Practice

1. Develop a marketing strategy

Having a marketing strategy will help you distinguish your practice from the competition. It will give you a road map to assess, prepare, and improve your chances for success. A marketing plan should be developed annually; however it should be reviewed, assessed and revised throughout the year based on your business goals. Your marketing plan should include your target patient population, analysis of your competition, SWOT analysis, goals, strategies and tactics and a budget. Plan goals may include increasing revenue, filling all appointment slots, and increasing your visibility. If developing a marketing strategy is new to your practice, developing long-term goals will be important; however, short-term goals will be easier to measure annually. Limit the number of short-term goals to five or fewer measurable goals. The goals will be based on the type of practice you have. For example, a new practice will have different goals than a more mature one. Practice setting is another factor that should be taken into consideration when determining your marketing strategy. Evaluate your plan annually and adjust it if your goals are not met. Include a budget for marketing activities in your annual budget process.

Resource

- ASGE Webinar: [Strategic Marketing for the GI Practice](#)

2. **Create a brand**

Like any other business, having a brand will contribute to the success of your office. A brand extends beyond a practice logo to all forms of patient/consumer communication including in-office, online and print. Your brand should highlight what you do best, core practice principles and patient experience. Engaging your entire team on the development of your brand is an important factor for consistent compliance with branding. Your message or brand should be simple and direct. Your brand should distinguish you from other practices in your market, and may also highlight prestigious awards, affiliations, unique relationships with insurers or health care systems, and accreditations you want to emphasize.

3. **Design an attractive website**

Increasingly, websites are a major influencing factor for consumers seeking physician care. According to the Pew Research Center, approximately 84 percent of the US population uses the internet. Eight in 10 Americans use it to search for health care information. Creating a website that is easy to navigate, contemporary and provides good patient education resources will help your practice capture new patients and referrals. Because your website is often the gateway to other marketing strategies employed by your practice such as social media, blogs, and electronic newsletters, search engine optimization is critical. When consumers are using the Internet to find new providers, you want to make sure your website is at the top of the list. Other information important to consumers seeking care includes the physician(s) medical background and education; insurance plans you accept; specialty-specific services; health system affiliations; recognitions for the quality of care provided; and patient satisfaction scores. Creating a state-of-the-art website will have upfront costs, but, if done well, it will be a major contributing factor to your marketing strategy's short- and long-term goals.

Resource

- **ASGE Presentation:** [Web Resources Your Practice Will Love](#)

4. **Foster your referral base**

Patients who seek specialty care often request a recommendation or referral from their primary care provider. Primary care providers serve as one of the best sources for referrals. Building relationships and having more frequent and timely communication with primary care providers will have an impact on your referral base. Because primary care providers have options of where to refer patients, it is important that they know who you are, your availability, quality of care, and reputation. Establishing a good rapport with primary care providers can help your GI practice increase its referral base and ensure timely and relevant medical records are sent to you. It is important to send back your findings to the primary care referring physician in a timely manner. (The standard is 24 to 72 hours.) Send welcome letters to new referral sources establishing their practice in your market area. Also, meet with rural primary care providers and specialists in your area to establish a rapport.

5. **Patient experience is essential to your marketing strategy**

A patient's opinion of your practice is often derived from past experiences and the perception they have of you and your practice. Most patients cannot judge the quality of the care you provide, but they can make judgments on things like the cleanliness of your office, the atmosphere of your waiting room, and the services provided by others on your GI team including the front desk staff. Your staff may be the first contact the patient has with you. Be cognizant of staff behavior, appearance, enthusiasm, and empathy for patients. Your practice is an advertisement of who you

are. Word of mouth can be the most effective way to attract new patients; therefore, it is important to ensure your current patients are happy with their care and patient experience. Knowing your patients' geographics, demographics, and behaviors will help you to meet their expectations.

A positive patient experience should include short wait times, satisfactorily answering questions, post-procedure advice, a sense of privacy and excellent communication with staff and providers. If the patient's expectations are met, the occasional, unavoidable inconvenience or delay will be more readily accepted.