



# The Ultimate Guide To Multi-Location Practice Marketing



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# Healthcare is evolving like NEVER before

## Healthcare consumerism. Population health. Value-based care.

If these terms aren't on your radar now, you aren't paying attention. The world of healthcare is changing faster than it ever has in our lifetimes—at least from a business perspective.

The consumer mindset of today's patient, combined with aggressive shifts in how multi-location practices are managed and acquired, means you're likely seeing massive changes in your specialty. After all...

- Millennials command incredible purchasing power and demand healthcare on their own terms.
- Private equity is aggressively acquiring healthcare practices.
- Tech mergers (like Amazon, JP Morgan, & Berkshire Hathaway's new health plan for employees) and acquisitions (like CVS/Aetna) are shaking up the industry.
- 90% of patients check a doctor's online reviews before scheduling an appointment, even with a referral.
- Many long-standing referral patterns are disintegrating, forcing specialists to embrace consumer-direct marketing to survive.
- Practices are relying on new technologies like telehealth to stay competitive in their markets.





**The future of healthcare is here today.**

By staying on top of what other multi-location practices are doing to successfully market themselves and run their businesses, you can compete in a constantly changing healthcare landscape.

The future of healthcare is now. And if you own or manage a multi-location practice, you have to keep up with everything from new reimbursement strategies to multicultural marketing to shifting patient behaviors.

With decades of healthcare marketing experience, we've seen that there are more changes in the past 5-10 years than there have been in the past 30. Follow our Ultimate Guide to Practice Marketing to build your brand, grow profits, and compete in the changing world of healthcare.

# #1: Take a closer look at the patient experience

Dr. Jim Merlino, Chief Transformation Officer at Press Ganey (and a friend to Healthcare Success's CEO Stewart Gandolf) recently told us in a podcast interview:

"Patient experience is about delivering safe, high-quality, patient-centered care. If we can't deliver that, we have no business of being in healthcare."

Today, the conversation around patient experience goes much deeper than the idea of the happy, smiling patient. It's certainly helpful if patients are satisfied, but it should be more transformative than that.



Committing to the patient experience means developing a patient-centered strategy that's not just a motto but embedded in what you do every day. Adapt the idea that safety, quality, and patient-centricity are one and the same, and follow this through with your execution by:

- Using data and analytics to measure and improve and being transparent about those findings.
- Focusing on cultural development and leadership development.
- Improving processes to truly put patients at the center of care.



## #2: Look for ways to add value

Today, a successful multi-location strategy includes considering which tactics will help to grow the value of the business.

You may have various service lines that each deserve individualized attention to compete with specialists who focus on only that service. For example, ENTs can look for ways to expand out their hearing aid services, as their competing with specialists who make this their entire business.



In addition, consider that other modern practices are finding new technologies and processes that bring patients into the office—or keep them out (such as telehealth and telemedicine services).

Think about the drivers of growth in your business and figure out the best way to take advantage of this in order to build value.

What could do the most good for your overall growth? Is it...

- Generating the right contracts?
- Negotiating reimbursement rates?
- Ethically getting the highest value from coding?
- Revenue cycle management?

The real driver that most people don't think of is in creating a value-added brand. The ultimate goal is to generate patients for high paying cases through effective marketing.

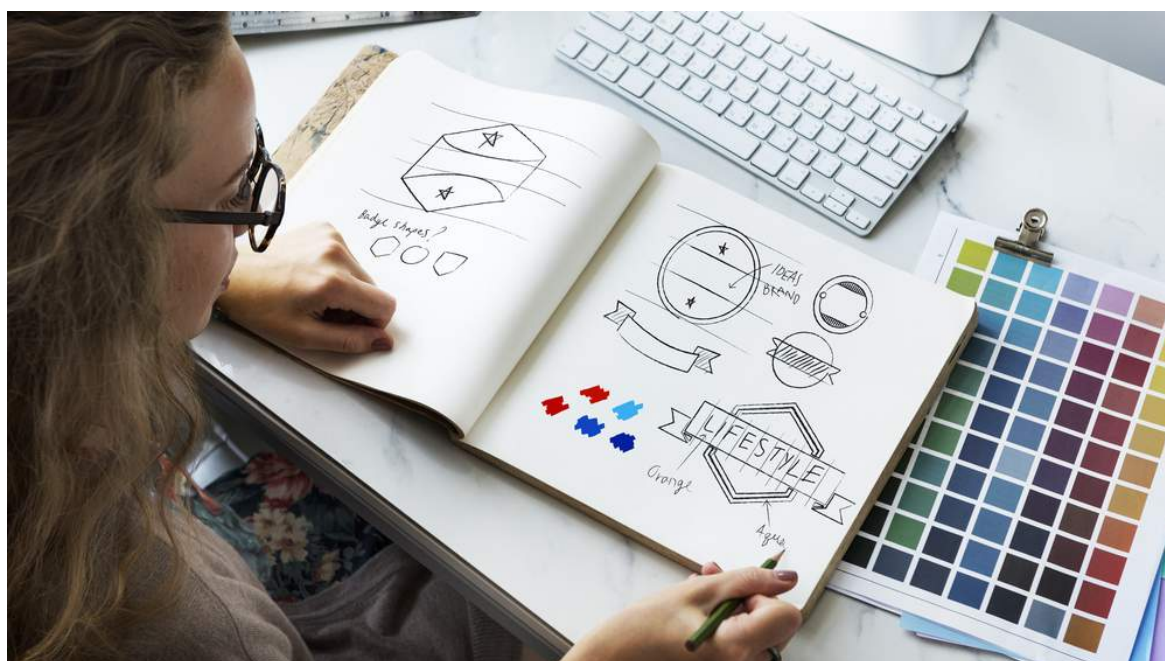
**At the end of the day, your multi-location practice is a business and should be treated as such.**

Of course, patient care is your priority. But finding ways to grow your business ensures your team is able to provide the best possible care for years to come.

Key issues like coding, collections, and reimbursement strategies are, of course, important. But an often overlooked issue is becoming far more valuable today: treating the practice like a *business* and looking for revenue centers that can be expanded upon.

## #3: Identify and promote your brand

Your brand is a lot more than the logo you use on your website and your brochures. It's about the experience a consumer has any time they interact with any of your locations.



Multi-location practices will have to ask themselves many questions about how to present themselves. For example, do you want a house of brands or a branded house? In other words, will each location use a different brand name, or will you be unified by a single brand?

Some multi-location practices have famously used some combination of the two. For example, Providence Health & Services tends to merge the existing hospital with their overarching brand name, marrying local notoriety and national brand recognition. Pacific Dental (who we've worked for in the past) unites its various practice names with a single brand look and feel, including a unified logo.





**While Pacific Dental's locations all have different names,** they share a common logo. The average consumer doesn't know that Pacific Dental is associated with this locally branded practice. Multi-location practices must weigh branding with community recognition and feel.

**Of course,** it's not all about your name either. But deciding whether to keep a sub brand alive or scrap it for a single name does require you to consider questions of brand equity and what you'll give up if you change the name of a recently acquired practice.

All in all, branding encompasses everything you do to present yourself to your patients—the consumers who interact with your brand every day. It includes:

- How you answer the phones
- The look and feel of your branded materials
- Your website and printed material copy
- Brand equity

The most important thing is that you position yourself to be competitive in a changing multi-practice landscape. Help consumers (patients) answer the all-important question: “Why you?”

## #4: Figure out your strategy for the phones ASAP

Multi-location practices can lose millions of dollars every year without a strategy for the phones.



The phones are a crucial part of your marketing strategy. They're a prospective patient's first interaction with a practice and a key interaction with your brand.

If a your staff does not have the right information, puts people on hold for too long, or does not ask questions that get patients to book an appointment, you miss out on a huge opportunity—and that adds up fast. Think of it this way: if your average revenue for a new patient is \$3,000, and you lose one patient per day (over 250 business days in a year), that's **\$750,000 lost every year—per location.**

Multi-location practices have to think over the details of the phones if they want to successfully convert callers into patients. Will you have a call center? If not, every location is on its own, and you'll have to provide plenty of training. Our team can help advise with this training or introduce you to call center experts.

## #5: Treat advertising like a revenue center



We cannot stress this enough: marketing is a revenue center, **NOT** a cost center.

Too many stakeholders at multi-location practices treat marketing as just another cost they would rather cut back on wherever possible.

But marketing is an **investment** in your success.

Even if you are comfortable with your current patient volume, you cannot expect that number to remain high without any effort to retain patients and gain new ones with a solid marketing strategy. Your budget must reflect this.

That means you should be willing to give marketing sufficient budget and time to succeed. More importantly, rather than focus solely on how much a given marketing vehicle costs, you'll need to consider what it returns compared to its cost.

Is \$25,000 for a given strategy expensive? Not if you'll get \$125,000 or more in revenue!

**Marketing is a revenue center, not a cost center. You must treat it as such.**

That means you need to be willing to give marketing sufficient budget and time to succeed.

From today forward, always calculate projected and actual Return On Investment (ROI) figures (simply dollars in divided by dollars out). Marketing that works is actually not a cost at all, it is an investment.

Your goal should be to find strategies with a 3:1 to 5:1 (or better) ROI. When you do, you should generally invest more in order to make more.

In the end, you'll multiply your winnings by creating successful, ongoing marketing systems.

## #6: Recognize the shift towards digital marketing

Today, the majority of people make many of their healthcare decisions online.

Patients use their mobile devices to make a decision about most things—including finding a primary care doctor, specialist, or addiction treatment center. Digital marketing is more important than ever before, and that includes:



- SEO (search engine optimization)
- PPC (pay-per-click or paid search ads)
- Social media advertising
- Email marketing
- Online reputation management

Unfortunately, a lot of multi-location practices do not have a well-researched, data-driven digital marketing strategy. They may try to do the same strategy for every location—even though they all have different needs—or they may simply pick tactics without any overall approach to strategy.

The best digital marketing tactics for your business are determined by the data—what people in your area are searching for as well as competitor research. The strategy is designed to sell and convert patients with a consumer-driven website and specialized marketing programs.

The truth is, **digital marketing isn't everything**. The important thing is to have an overarching strategy that includes digital marketing, SEO, branding, traditional advertising, and more.



# #7: Reevaluate your online reputation

Around 90% of people look up a doctor online—even if they’ve received a referral.

Your brand reputation is on the line...do you know what to do when you receive a negative review all your prospective patients can see? Online reviews are a key factor in many people’s decisions about whether to book an appointment.



It’s important to know what you can and *can’t* do when you receive a negative review. Per HIPAA, you cannot acknowledge that the reviewer was ever a patient at one of your locations.

It’s often a good idea to request that the patient reach out to try to resolve the issue.

However, in many cases, you may simply need to accept the criticism and move on. Thank the patient for their feedback, and inform them that you are working on improving your processes.

Focus your energy on getting more positive reviews to outweigh the negative.

If you are working with an outside marketing agency, you may be able to delegate some of this work to them. Many agencies offer reputation management systems that automate the process of requesting reviews from satisfied patients.

## #8: Fine-tune your doctor referral systems

For many specialty multi-location practices, 80% or more of their business comes from referrals.

Your reputation alone isn't enough for referrers to continue to send patients to your locations. You must have systems in place to keep referrers and to obtain new ones—you're never guaranteed to maintain the same reliable referral sources.



When is the last time you evaluated your physician referral systems? If it's been years since you've done a serious audit, it's time to rethink your strategies:

- Should you use claims data?
- What software should you use to track referrers?
- Should you have a dedicated physician liaison.

While this is a hugely important issue, few agencies discuss the topic of doctor referral building and physician liaisons. We consult on these issues for our marketing partner clients; contact us at 800-656-0907 to learn more.

## #9: Generate referrals through internal systems

You interact with your brand every day—but patients are quick to forget (even if they had a positive experience).

Getting patients **back** through the doors is one of the most valuable things you can do. It costs far less to keep an existing patient than it does to acquire a new patient, and patient recall programs are relatively inexpensive to run.

A patient recall program can send personal and targeted reminders to patients.

A good patient recall system makes it easy for patients to schedule an appointment with online booking through your website.



Additional opportunities for generating referrals through internal systems include asking existing patients for referrals and cross-referring patients to other services. These are all things that could become mostly automated with the right systems in place.

## #10: Get stakeholders on the same page

When it comes to marketing, **everyone** seems to have an opinion. Partners, staff associates, spouses, patients, friends, and the guy who cleans up all want to give their two cents.



Many a healthcare organization has put valuable marketing plans aside because key players couldn't agree on the tiny details involved in executing a plan. When you wait for complete agreement, you may find yourself waiting idly by as competitors beat you to the punch.

Even when you finally reach a group decision, the result is often a watered-down version of an effective vehicle that will wind up doing little or nothing to accomplish your growth goals.



**Your Marketing Director** is responsible for overseeing the implementation of your marketing strategy and organizing the priorities of your locations. They can work with any qualified third party agencies to see that collateral is on-brand and meets expectations.

**The solution is** for your key decision makers within your multi-location practice to come to an agreement on objectives and budget, and then engage a qualified third party to write a marketing plan.

Once the plan is approved, if you don't already have one, you'll need to appoint ONE person within the organization to take on the role as "Marketing Director."

Empower this person to make all decisions and approve the elements of your campaign, so you can evaluate his or her performance periodically based upon results.

This way, you'll avoid massive hassle and lost opportunity.



# #11: Focus on scale-ability

A well-designed business plan for any multi-location practice is focused on scale-ability.

All in all, any new processes, systems, technologies, or marketing programs you implement must be scale-able as you continue to grow your business. You must be able to quickly implement new strategies as you continue to grow your business.



Everything from your new employee onboarding systems to your marketing program to your doctor referral systems should be fairly simple to scale. Opening a new location will be much less stressful with these things in place.

A growth mindset will help you to feel more confident as you expand and grow—but you can't do it on your own.

When it comes to marketing, very few agencies think about these issues when developing programs for their multi-location practice clients. But with 20 years of experience, our team is focused on helping you scale with marketing programs that adapt and grow with each new location—while still providing a customized plan for each one.

# There's no one-size-fits-all multi-location strategy

## Don't let the treatment plan get ahead of the diagnosis.

Occasionally, when we speak with multi-location practices, doctors and executives tell us they just need help with their SEO, brochures, digital advertising, or whatever they deem to be most important right now.

Imagine if a patient presented himself with a request for a specific medication before your medical staff had any history, exam, tests or a dozen other medical considerations.

The same principle applies in successful marketing programs regardless of the profession, marketplace, audience, etc. Don't jump ahead. Invest the time to ask these questions of yourself, and get a clear and unbiased perspective on where you are and what you need to do to achieve your business development goals.



**The right marketing team** can help examine and diagnose your various locations, while providing the treatment and follow-up needed to keep your plan on track.

**We often say that developing an effective healthcare marketing plan involves four steps:**

- Examination
- Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Follow-up

Don't jump ahead without a clear idea of what you need moving forward.





**A strategy personalized to your brand and each location's needs.**

Healthcare Success can guide your marketing, as we have done for thousands of others around the nation, providing ethical, creative and evidence-based marketing strategies.

## **We Deliver Patients**

Our principals have marketed over 1,000 hospitals and practices over the past 20 years. When you work with Healthcare Success, our singular mission will be to deliver new patients to your priority locations and service lines.

Our branding experts can help your team find a strategy that keeps you top of mind for new and existing patients. Our digital marketing and direct response advertising will make your phones ring (and ring). Best of all, our reporting dashboard will give you access to your marketing results 24 hours a day.

**Call (800) 656-0907 today!**

*We specialize in multi-location  
practice marketing that **delivers**  
results.*



You won't find another agency with our level of experience in healthcare. Our principals have marketed thousands of hospitals and practices over the last 20 years.

We live and breathe healthcare every day. We understand the secret passwords like HIPAA, Stark, MCO, PPO, MSO, EMR, ACO, and ASC. We have also marketed *every* medical specialty. As a result, we can help you win over even the most skeptical doctors and executives.

Call (800) 656-0907 for your free consultation!

