

Selling Technology to Today's Patients

by Eric Kaplan, D.C., F.I.A.M.A.

WHAT IS SELLING IN TODAY'S market? Why is it selling? In its simplest terms, selling is the process of helping a person to conclude that your product or service is of greater value to him or her than the price you are asking for it. Today, decompression is selling. One of our doctors had so many calls last month from our infomercial he had to cut back his air time; he could not handle all of his calls. The average American spends seven hours per day in front of a television; now combine this with a computer screen. We need visual stimuli; television marketing, when done cost effectively, works.

How Modern Markets Work

Our market society is based on the principles of freedom and mutual benefit. Each party involved in a transaction only enters into it when he feels that he will be better off as a result of the transaction, than he would be without it. Marketing must show benefit to the patients. Testimonials are an effective tool; patients like seeing others rave about their success. Today's consumer has choice; this is consumer freedom. Why should a patient choose you, or your office? Results, will bring about talk, talk will bring about referrals. Infomercials done professionally and which are specific to your equipment and have solid endorsements and testimonials work.

Patients Have Options

In a free market, the customer always has three options with any purchase or medical decision. First, the customer can buy your product or service. Second, the customer can buy the product or service from someone else. Third, the customer can decide to buy nothing at all. This is why it is important to have a quality office, a friendly staff, and the most updated equipment. Don't be impressed with the car you drive if your office equipment is outdated. Be impressed with the technology you have, and the services you offer; they pay for that car. Decompression is not about money; it will make you money for one reason only: results. That, in itself, will enhance your self image; that will grow your practice.

Educating the Patient

For the patient to invest in your particular product or service, they must be convinced that it is not only the best choice available, but they must also be persuaded that there is no better way for them to spend the equivalent amount of money. Decompression often offsets surgery. Know the cost of back

surgery; explain the cost effectiveness of decompression combined with reduced risk. Real spinal decompression machines cost money. It is not unreasonable to charge the patient a few thousand dollars for their decompression treatment. This is why the high end machines draw the patient's attention and they are willing to pay more. The problem is when doctors look to cut corners on less expensive machines that offer less to the patients but still want to charge more. Please understand, both Honda and Mercedes offer a great product, both have similar parts, both are good cars with good warranties. But would you

pay the same price for both? Of course not. Both will take you from point A to B, but the consumer is willing to pay more for one than the other. Why? In one word, IMAGE. Image is developed by marketing: specific, not generic marketing. Don't be fooled by companies that offer generic marketing for any

machine, based on the research of the quality machines. Get an infomercial with real people, not paid actors.

The primary job of any doctor is to educate the patient. In today's world of technology, there is an alternative to surgery for disc herniations: decompression. Once you can educate them, they will make a commitment to your treatment plan. This is why video marketing with specific DVD's for your equipment is so important. This builds image of treatment in the eyes of the patient.

When educating a patient, don't sell them. Tell them what they have and how you will treat them. Honesty is the best policy. My goal was never to sell, but to tell. If they have a herniated disc, focus on the problem and recommend a solution. I tell them what is needed based on the objective and subjective findings and the technology I have at my fingertips. I don't sell them on lifetime care, or chiropractic; not on day one. Not that I don't believe in both. I offered them both in my clinic. Over time, due to results, they will develop confidence in both you, and chiropractic, then they will want to be lifetime patients.

Customize Your Patient Presentation

The field of marketing, professional selling, has changed dramatically in the last fifty years. Selling methodologies are merely responses to customer requirements. At one time, customers were relatively unsophisticated and poorly informed about their choices. This is no longer true. "In the Day" salespeople catered to the customer with carefully planned and memorized sales presentations, loads of enthusiasm and a bag



**Do you have a Honda practice?
Or are you a Rolls Royce practitioner.**

full of techniques designed to crush resistance and get the order at virtually any cost. Often this was done door to door, by vacuum sales people. Door to Door is out, because the computer and television touch the world faster, easier. Customize your web site for your equipment. Make a power point presentation on your equipment. It is your job to set up lectures, or meetings and explain how you and your office, manned with decompression, can make a difference. Make your marketing visual and don't advertise today like you did in the past. Times have changed, so change with the times.

Treat Potential Patients with Respect

The customer of the past has matured into the customer of the 21st century. Patients today are now more intelligent and knowledgeable than ever before. They are experienced buyers and they have interacted with hundreds of salespeople in their lives. You are a doctor, not a salesperson; act like a doctor. They know the difference. Today's patients, due to the Internet are extremely sophisticated and aware of the incredible variety of products and services that are available to them as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Patients today are far more careful about making a buying decision of any kind. Making a decision for treatment costing thousands of dollars, which often is not covered by insurance, is a commitment. Help them through educational material, through ethics, and guide them to make the right decision. Be patient, and treat them with respect.

Our Need For Speed

Often, today's patients are overwhelmed with work and under-supplied with time. Because of the rapidly increasing pace

of change, down-sizing, restructuring and the competitive pressures surrounding them, patients today are harried and hassled. They are swamped with responsibilities, impatient, suspicious, critical, demanding, and spoiled. To sell to today's patient requires a higher caliber of professionalism than has ever before been required before. And it is only going to become tougher, but more complicated, in the months and years ahead. This is why we need to stay competitive, to provide what the consumer wants, which is updated technology. The world is changing to HDTV by 2009. What about the technologies of your office? Are they outdated? The world is changing at a rapid speed driven by technology. Unfortunately, it the rapidly changing world we live in. If you don't change, you may be left behind. Don't be left out of the game. Update your office, educate the patient, and provide a positive environment—a place of healing after their long stressful day. Many of the better machines offer DVD for the patient to watch while they are having treatment. Accommodate the patient. Do you have a Honda practice? Or are you a Rolls Royce practitioner. To be the best, you have to provide the best. Now is your time to change. Do it quickly, do it professionally, do it educationally.

Dr. Eric S. Kaplan, is CEO of Multidisciplinary Business Applications, Inc. (MBA), a comprehensive coaching firm with a successful, documented history of creating profitable multidisciplinary practices nationwide. Dr. Kaplan is the best selling Author of DYING TO BE YOUNG, www.dyingtobeyoung.net, and co-developer and President of Discforce the next Generation on Spinal decompression. For more information, call 1-561-626-3004 or visit www.discforce.com. TAC



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