

PUMC's New E-mail Protocol
**HOW TO CONVERT E-MAILED INQUIRIES INTO
SURGERIES...QUICKLY!**

PUMC clients are reporting that on average, e-mail shoppers using the Internet now account for as much as 20% *or more* of all new patients coming to their practice. Of even greater significance, our clients are reporting that a high percentage of these patients easily convert into surgeries!

Yellow Pages, which can cost three to five times more than a Web site, will produce about 30% of new consultations! There is often a great deal of follow-up needed to secure these Yellow Pages contacts. Most practices have allowed for this and have in place follow-up systems for Yellow Pages contacts.

However, if a prospect has requested information via the Internet, you would need to have a follow-up communications process that is carefully executed to achieve or exceed this 20% average.

Cosmetic surgery shoppers from the Internet versus shoppers from other media have a unique advantage of being capable of quickly shopping several surgical alternatives for their needs. Therefore, prompt reciprocal and thoughtful responses to inquirers are essential if you want to take these transactions to surgeries in *your* office. These shoppers often boast that they have "done their homework" before they commit to surgery, so you want to be quick to help them get the best grade!

What's needed to be on top?

1. A standard e-mail response mechanism (a click on "contact us" that presents a standard e-mail form to complete) will not give you the advantage you need to be the best competing communicator to your prospects. You will need a mechanism on your Web site that allows for detailed e-mail responses (contact page) that put the following minimal information from the inquirers in your hands for communications.
 - a. Full name
 - b. Address (or at least zip code)
 - c. E-mail address
 - d. Phone number
 - e. Key area of interest
 - f. The best way to contact them



2. You now need a separate terminal/computer with on-line capabilities and personnel capable of responding to e-mails on a routine basis at least two or three times a day. You only have 24 hours to get their attention.
3. A sophisticated non-AOL browser e-mail management system, i.e., Internet Explorer, Netscape, Eudora or Outlook. In the future you may desire to e-mail forms and brochures as well as capture the e-mail information.
4. An ability to transfer the e-mail data into a data base management system so that you can efficiently conduct follow-up. AOL does not allow for this through its e-mail addresses.
5. Ability to have the inquirer make an appointment or at least start an appointment on line.
6. Ability to print out the initial patient information forms from the Web site so that the individual can complete the forms in the privacy of their home without your spending the \$.37 plus to mail them.
7. Your current hosting organization should be able to provide you the following support services as a minimum: e.g., Are you being provided with monthly documented detailed e-mail summaries of your emails and quarterly hit reports that will tell you?
 - a. Traffic count
 - b. Average site visit time
 - c. Most significant referring browsers
 - d. Monthly increases or decreases in volume
 - e. Number of e-mails and when received
8. Of course, you will need a marketing tracking software package that will remind you of follow-up events and will allow you to send communications via customized templates. Some examples are Microsoft Outlook, Goldmine, NexTech or Breckel.
9. You must have unique printed materials to mail to inquirers.
10. We know that you have a schedule of seminars to offer as an option to a consultation, but we just wanted to mention it.
11. How could you even consider this opportunity without having dedicated phone lines for callbacks for follow-up activities? (optional)



12. A schedule that will allow an appointment for a consultation in no more than 30 days will cinch all future deals!

How does the follow-up process work?

1. First, have an option on your contact page that gives you permission to contact by both phone and/or e-mail so that you know this in advance.
2. Prioritize e-mails by zip codes or addresses so that you answer all requests in close proximity first.
3. Respond immediately with an e-mail answering the question and offering to set up an appointment. See an attached page with some samples of responses.
4. Set a reminder to follow-up within two days for all e-mail responses.
5. For individuals that indicated they desired to be contacted by phone contact them and be prepared to answer their questions or send information.
6. Schedule a time to follow-up for those that don't schedule an appointment. Be sure to tell the person that you will be following-up within two weeks and obtain permission to call or e-mail.
7. Phone follow -up
 - a. Confirm that they have all of their questions answered
 - b. Ask if they are ready to make an appointment
 - c. If they are not ready to make an appointment then ask if they desire to remain on the e-mail list to receive information on new services and seminar dates.
8. E-mail follow-up
 - a. Confirm that you have answered all of their questions.
 - b. Invite them to a seminar to meet the doctor and see the office.
 - c. Inform them that they will remain on the e-mail list for new services and additional seminars unless they reply that they desire to be removed.
9. Mail follow-up
 - a. Send a letter confirming that if they have further questions they can call the office. Be sure to include the names of persons to speak to.
 - b. Invite them to upcoming seminars.

E-mail broadcast to logically grouped e-mail inquirers

You will want to maintain your e-mail lists so that you can send out broadcast e-mails at least every other month. This is an inexpensive "contact justification" that can be used for not only new services and specials but also for your on-line newsletter.

PUMC recommends setting a schedule at least bi-annually of specials that fit the



seasons or holidays and your newsletter schedule to be sure you send broadcast e-mails at the first of the month.

Also, it is best to use the link method for specials on-line or newsletters on-line. That allows the person to receive your e-mail and immediately connect to your Web site versus having to type in the address. In this way the person will go to your site quicker.

Conclusion

Your investment of time and resources for obtaining maximum results from your Internet commitment will more than pay for itself almost immediately.

Remember, this will be one of your most effective communication mechanisms for the future.



SAMPLE RESPONSES FOR E-MAIL INQUIRIES

For pricing questions – PUMC recommends that you provide the same general ballpark prices as you would on the phone. However, be sure to use a disclaimer indicating that you would not be able to quote an exact fee until they came into the office to meet with the doctor. However, at the end of the consultation they would have the exact fee for the services.

For questions regarding whether they are a good candidate for the procedure – Here you would use whatever information they have included (i.e., weight, age, height) as an indicator but stating that “it appears they could be a good candidate but nothing would be definite until they have met with the doctor and completed the consultation process.”

For the questions about procedures not listed on your site or listed briefly – You can offer to send additional information, invite them to a seminar or recommend that you could call them or they could call the office and make an appointment to see the doctor.

For questions about where the procedure would be performed – If you do not have an in-office surgical suite and it appears they “think” that makes the cost cheaper you can emphasize the benefits of a certified surgical facility. If you do have an in-office surgical facility you must stress the benefits of “private and confidential.”

If the inquiries are from a distance and you can or have provided accommodations in the past -- You need to provide information on your “out of area” or “out of town” packages. If you feel the person is located at a distance that would not be practical to come to your office you have the option of a reciprocal relationship with other physicians, or invite them to your office when they are in town.

