The days of putting your practice in the Yellow Pages or advertising through a newspaper are over. Here are some innovative marketing techniques.

Marketing is critical to get your practice information out to the public. When is the last time you took a close look at your practice and its online presence?

If the person in your office responsible for marketing is more than 35 years old, they are likely not up to date with all the marketing possibilities to get your practice information to the medical consumer. Even if you have been practicing in the same location for years, there is likely competition in your area as well as new patients that are looking for you (but don't know about you yet). And if you are new to an area, like my practice, savvy marketing can help get the word out to patients that would like to know of your medical practice and services!

I have a single employee so far. She is a recent university graduate that wants to stay in Charlottesville, Virginia. No matter that her undergraduate degree was anthropology/archeology, she is already a huge help in getting my marketing package together. Young folks these days are very well versed in anything online and tech related. My gal has so far ordered new business cards, updated my Facebook page and created brochures that I can use to spread the word about my practice services: all important things that I just couldn't get around to doing myself!

Here are a few suggestions:

1: Facebook and other social media: People want to see what your practice is up to but more importantly, they will share it with many others. Additionally, many patients use Facebook similar to how I used the Yellow Pages not so long ago! Get your young staff member to manage your page, include updates about your practice, photos, and relevant health articles that are important to your patient population.

2: Brochures: Do you have a brochure for your practice? You would be amazed how far and wide these will travel from patient to patient! Even if you have had your practice for 20 years, it does no harm to have a well-designed brochure with thoughtful content. There are many websites that have brochure designs for free. They are easy to manipulate and not very costly to have printed (we are having ours done at a local print shop).

3: Business Cards: Have you had the same business cards for a long time? Why not update them with new colors and layout to be more eye catching? Like brochures, they tend to get passed from person to person.

4: Logo and Printables: Perhaps it is time to update your practice logo? This gives a brand new face to your practice. Find a local graphic art service and see what they can come up for you. Remember, the logo is often the first thing patients notice!

5: Advertising: I quit using newspapers long ago to advertise my practice. Hardly anyone looks at them anymore and most content is now online at any rate. So, consider some novel advertising approaches:
- Put your practice information on pharmacy bags or grocery carts at your local retailers.
- Sponsor community events like 5K races or school sports teams.
- Get car magnets for all the staff and reimburse them to place on their cars (gift cards can work in place of monetary reward).
- Don't forget the little things with your logo that people love to have such as water bottles, baseball caps, and t-shirts

6: Participate in the community: Volunteer your office at community events, whether it is a health fair and you measure blood pressure and glucose for attendees or sponsor a section of road to clean (with your name on the road sign). People love to find their doctors at these events; it makes them feel proud that they come to your practice and I have found that patients talk to other people. Make sure they spread "happy talk" about you and your staff.

7: Office décor: It's time to take a hard look at your office space. Is it decorated in pink or mauve...
from the last century? Time for an update! Also check to see if the furniture looks worn or the walls are scuffed. How about stains on the carpet? Finally, look really closely to see how clean your office is. Often a deep clean will brighten up the appearance of your space.
I know there are many other ideas that would work for you. Don't let the world pass you by! Update your profile, marketing and office space. You will be glad you did!

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