

## **Filling the Patient Pipeline on a Budget: Using Your Data and Niche Strategies to Compete with Mass Media**

### **Executive Summary:**

Jackson County, OR - population 200,000 – is home to two regional medical centers. In 2008, Providence Medford Medical Center (PMMC) was outspent 3:1 by its competitor, and battled to maintain its market share. Together, PMMC, their data partner, and Insights Direct identified the key drivers of profitable patient relationships and developed direct marketing and consumer engagement/retention strategies that maximized the impact of the PMMC marketing budget.

### **Exploration:**

A review of PMMC's internal resources, market research, satisfaction scores, referral patterns and the population trends in the Jackson County area revealed that the competitor's mass media spend was enhancing its image as the "superior" choice for healthcare in the Rogue Valley. Yet key consumer-focused PMMC services and the affiliated Providence Medical Group (PMG) enjoyed patient satisfaction scores above the 90th percentile. PMG also had a high rate of referral from its primary care practices into the hospital specialists.

The local demographic was impacted by a strong economy and favorable climate made Jackson County an attractive place for families and retirees alike and the identification of a few local utilization quirks enabled the team to identify niche patient acquisition and retention opportunities.

By filling the patient pipeline at PMG Primary Care and OB/GYN practices, and by driving traffic to the Leila J. Eisenstein Breast Center we would move the revenue needle for PMMC in both the short and longer terms.

### **Approach:**

#### *Message:*

With the competitor promoting its technology in mass media outlets, our strategy focused on the establishment of a relationship with individuals.

The tone was friendly and understanding, and created a triangular relationship between consumers, PMG physicians, and living life to the fullest. We demonstrated that PMMC employs great doctors, and ensures that patients will receive time with doctors, not waiting around filling out forms. We highlighted and encouraged the trial of consumer-centric time saving features like online appointment requests, geographic accessibility and electronic medical records.

## Case Study

Our imagery was bright, featuring healthy people living the lifestyles the area is known for, and was segmented to maximize relevance with the target audience.

### *Targets:*

Whether it's the power of a physician's referral or the maze of insurance issues, there are fairly few points when consumers actually exercise choice. Our targeting focuses on those points where marketing can impact decisions and generate trackable results.

- **New Movers** – Those new to an area will actively research new primary care physicians, OB/GYNs, pediatricians, emergency departments to be their partners in health. New movers are a key audience for building lifetime value. In addition to the population growth that accompanied its strong economy, Jackson County also experienced growth from the Northern California retiree population, a key target for near-term growth.

We mailed two four-color pieces within a month of a household moving that introduced the capabilities and philosophies of PMMC, and then PMG, with the message that a relationship with the organization freed them to “live life.” Here we also tested two premium items' effectiveness with an A/B split on the first touch with offers for a free digital thermometer against a free pedometer.

- **Women** – In this market a woman's primary care physician generally handled all her health needs, including childbirth. We viewed this as an opportunity to educate women in the market about the value of having an OB/GYN in their corner. To maximize the impact of the marketing spend we targeted the portions of the female population most likely to need OB services – married women aged 18-35 without children; or Gyn services – women aged 35-62.

We mailed to these groups two four-color pieces one month apart. The first touch was to the entire data set explaining the benefits of having a relationship with an OB/GYN. The second touch segmented the target and addressed the specific benefits each age group could tap into–

- Potential first-time mothers were presented the comfort of having fertility and OB specialists, rather than a generalist, in their corner
  - Those likely to be dealing with incontinence, menopause and other issues were introduced to specialists who knew what these women were going through and could clearly explain why and what is next.
- **Lapsed Patients** – Retaining the relationships already in existence is an essential component of any plan, so we targeted patients who had not visited their PMG primary care physician in two years or more.

This group received a personalized letter and screening schedule from the head of PMG. The letter encouraged the reader to reconnect and get screened for the ailments that can affect us as we age.

### *Leila J. Eisenstein Breast Center:*

- **Prospects** – With events that only happen once a year like a physical, or in this case a mammogram, people tend to be creatures of habit. If it was an unpleasant enough experience they will shop around for a better alternative, but there is a fairly narrow window in which marketers can impact that decision. We targeted women aged 38-42 who had had mammograms at PMMC.

We maximized the likelihood that the target audience received our message at the right time by mailing quarterly four-color postcards that highlighted the caring staff, the duration of the exam (15 minutes) and focused on early detection as the key to successful treatment.

## Case Study

By comparing the size of a lump one is likely to find with a digital mammogram (a pea or smaller) vs. self exam (roughly a grape), and the time that can elapse between those sizes (up to two years), we drove home the message that getting an annual mammogram is imperative.

- As an incentive to start a relationship with PMMC, and to encourage “healthy habits,” we offered this group of prospects a free Camelbak water bottle.
- Lapsed Patients – Again focusing on retaining the relationships PMMC has, we targeted women who had had a mammogram in two years or more.

This group received a personal letter from the Breast Center’s nurse navigator (also featured in magazine advertising) reestablishing the importance of early detection and the efficacy of digital mammography, by drawing parallels to other common examples of growth in a two-year time frame.

This group was also offered a Camelbak water bottle as an incentive to make an appointment.

### Conversion Strategy:

In staying true to the brand’s promise of convenience, the program enabled consumers to respond through a variety of channels:

- Phone numbers and addresses to all practices were provided
- Business Reply Cards (BRC) were provided
- Electronic “Reply Cards” (eBRC) and online appointment requests

And supporting the promise of individual relationships, hard yet passive responses via BRC/eBRC prompted outbound calls to schedule appointments with PMG physicians. Direct traffic from the program was tracked downstream through PMMC’s data partner.

### Results:

OB/GYN, Breast Center and PMG campaigns are not yet mature and in the case of the Breast Center and PMG, campaigns are ongoing. Mature data exists for the first three months of the New Mover data set, and indicates that in that small window the program generated the following:

- 24 new patients with 64 encounters
- Nearly \$400K in new patient charges
- The program so far generates nearly 100 new PMG patient relationships.
- Using the calculation (Revenue – Marketing Cost)/Marketing Cost, in the three months of mature mover data PMMC experienced a 2 to 1 return on its overall investment, and 3:1 on its New Mover investment alone.

As the programs and data continue to mature, these results will continue to grow. PMMC, the data partner and Insights Direct are working together to better understand whether there are sub-segments within these niches that may be even more responsive and to create the next generation of campaigns that are even more impactful.

**Call Patrick Stach at 610.995.0860, ext. 4110, to discuss how Insights Direct can help you make more of an impact with fewer marketing dollars.**