



Consider Alternative Referral Sources to Build Your Business

Physical therapy practice owners naturally target physicians and other medical professionals to produce referrals. While that method develops sustainability for many, alternative prospecting can elevate a practice to greater profitability.

A bigger-picture approach to building referral network actually starts with smaller focus on a business' immediate surroundings. Yoav Suprun took a look at local assets to rev up referrals for his Miami Beach, Florida, practice.

“In Miami Beach, there are many hotels as it’s a resort town,” Suprun says. “Tourists may start a vacation with back or neck pain due to long travels with prolonged sitting on planes.”

Suprun also reasoned that the McKenzie Method® of Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy® (MDT) that he practices not only reliably relieves back, neck and extremity pain quickly, but also adds patient education to understand their problem. That makes the method a viable alternative to the passive massages that a concierge might typically recommend.

Those factors on their own made lodging a resource ripe for referrals. But, travelers comprised only a piece of Suprun’s plan to take advantage of these venues.

“The hotel employees often feel mechanical pain while on and off the job,” he says. “I figured that if I could help those employees they might, in turn, mention my name to hotel guests experiencing similar pain.”

So, Suprun started with the human resource managers, offering to come in for a presentation to staff about the McKenzie Method.

The evidence-based MDT process begins with a thorough mechanical assessment to establish a "cause-and-effect" relationship between historical pain behavior as well as the response to repeated test movements, positions and activities.

A systematic progression of applied mechanical forces utilizes pain response to monitor changes in motion and function to classify the disorder. The assessment typically produces results quickly, but the method also instills self-treatment that combats new and recurring pain long term.

Suprun has successfully communicated that message to hotel employees and, by extension, guests as many referrals come via word of mouth. Concierges became a great resource as he established his SoBe Spine PA as a “go to” they could recommend for mechanical pain.

“Word of mouth is definitely an important factor,” Suprun says. “By targeting non-conventional markets, I’m able to market my services to a variety of referral sources.”

The not-just-physicians strategy applies to many lines of work.

“Any business that has interaction with customers is a good target,” he says, naming veterinarians, dentists and retailers as a few non-traditional examples.

“Mechanical pain affects everybody and if you show that MDT works, the patients will continue to flow to your practice,” says Suprun, a faculty member at The McKenzie Institute® USA and frequent physical therapy resource in national media. “My motto is ‘Do what’s right by the public and they will come.’”

Suprun recommends anyone new to this referral strategy start with businesses in proximity to their practice and then:

- 1) Research who the human resources contact or general manager is.
- 2) Ask to have an introductory meeting to explain your practice and purpose.
- 3) Ask to do a free educational talk once or twice a year for the staff.
- 4) Outline potential topics like “Understanding Lower Back Pain and Sciatica” or “Key Points in Prevention of Lower Back Pain and Neck Pain While on the Job.”
- 5) Create a PowerPoint presentation that clearly explains and illustrates mechanical pain and solutions. Consider bringing spine models if available.
- 6) Be sure to leave time for Q & A at the end of the presentation.
- 7) Leave plenty of business cards and remember to visit every few months with more.

To learn more about the McKenzie Method and how it can improve your practice, visit www.mckenzieinstituteusa.org.