

# BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS

## The practice newsletter

Communication, marketing tool can be win-win for docs, patients

### Quick Read

Done right, the practice newsletter can enhance dermatologist and practice credibility, cross-sell services and products, and more.

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**Sacramento, Calif.** — Dermatologist Emil A. Tanghetti, M.D., avoids in-your-face advertising and marketing techniques, but favors the practice newsletter to get his message out.

He says many established medical dermatology patients at his Sacramento, Calif., practice do not know

that he does cosmetic procedures. Rather than tell them, his staff hands patients the latest practice newsletter,

filled with the dermatologist's research work and expertise in the cosmetic area. The educational nudge can propel many medical patients to convert to cosmetic clients.

Dr. Tanghetti, who is a clinical professor of dermatology at the University of California, Davis, says the practice newsletter offers an opportunity for dermatologists to showcase their experience with specific procedures, inform patients of the pros and cons of cosmetic procedures, build



Dr. Tanghetti

practice credibility, and cross-sell products and services, as well as keep patients generally informed.

The dermatologist uses the newsletter as an internal marketing tool, giving it free of charge to existing patients; the doctor's staff asks patients, as they sign in, if they would like a copy of the latest issue. Dr. Tanghetti writes a new version of the professionally printed four- to six-page newsletter once or twice a year.

"Most everyone is happy to get a copy," he tells *Dermatology Times*.

### Educate, don't sell

Dr. Tanghetti says he publishes hot-off-the-press data about research he does at his practice.

The fact that he does the research adds credibility to his practice, according to the dermatologist. But, he adds, if not for the newsletter, patients might not otherwise know of his research work.

Dermatologists who do not publish or do clinical trials can also use newsletters to credibly tout their horns while educating their patients.

"If you do not do the studies, you could talk about the studies of others, explaining the findings in easy-to-understand language," he says. "Indicate your experience with the specific procedure or technology."

Credibility is a big issue with an educational newsletter. Dermatologists who are associated with newsletters are trusted resources, Dr. Tanghetti says, and should not over-promise.

"You want to give a credible view with pros and cons," he says.

### Newsletter nuances

Dr. Tanghetti offers these practice newsletter tips:

► Promote the area of your practice to which you want to draw business. A new dermatologist might feature articles on medical and cosmetic dermatology. An established dermatologist who has a thriving medical practice might promote the cosmetic side to build clientele.



► Use the newsletter to make timely announcements. These announcements include upcoming seminars, product specials and so forth.

► Pay attention to how it looks. A newsletter touting your cosmetic expertise should be professional-looking, attractive and clean. Dr. Tanghetti has a professional printer prepare his newsletter, so the print and "before" and "after" photos are crisp and clear.

► Keep costs down without sacrificing quality. Dr. Tanghetti says the cost to produce his newsletter (he writes it) is negligible to the practice's bottom line because he does not do mass mailings. Mailing costs can run high, he says. Rather, he focuses on

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giving the newsletters to his current patients because they are more likely to read the newsletter than are people who are not patients.

► E-mail is a potential way to distribute the newsletter. Dr. Tanghetti says dermatologists who want to reach patients with their news by e-mail should have a standardized way of capturing e-mail addresses when people become patients.

► Make the newsletter an interesting read. While it is important to include information about the dermatologist and staff, readers are most interested in what the newsletter can offer them, in terms of credible information and news.

### Subtle communication

Dr. Tanghetti says that while he finds physician advertising distasteful, he sees practice newsletters as a win-win for dermatologists and patients.

"This way, you communicate on a higher level," he says.

"The bottom line is that educational communication is the best form of marketing that you can do." DT

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REFERENCES: 1. Del Riozo JO, Bakewell J, Hawkins S, Sangley L. Use of a palmitylthiolamide-containing non-steroidal cream for the treatment of atopic dermatitis: impact on the duration of and time between flares. Presented at 2006 Meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology, July 2006, San Diego, Calif. Poster 305. 2. Data on file. (TF1 clinical results and protocol), August G. Sterel Research Institute, Inc.

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