



Marketing Your Industrial Rehab Services



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DETERMINE YOUR SERVICE OFFERINGS

What services will you offer?

In the industrial rehabilitation practice niche, there are a variety of services that clinics can provide. In contrast to other practice niches, the opportunities for injury and disability prevention may exceed the opportunities for treatment and return to work services. On the prevention side, services include performing job analysis, ergonomic assessments, post-offer/pre-hire functional screens, stretching programs and employee education regarding injury prevention. The advantage of becoming involved in prevention is the payment source. Employers pay for prevention services directly either on a per-project basis, an hourly rate or a fee for service rate rather than billing through insurance.

On the post-injury side, the obvious opportunity includes providing treatment for patients with work-related injuries. Doing so, however, requires a different approach from that of treating other outpatient populations. Following a “worker/job matching” methodology allows the treating therapist to have more accurate and objective information when treating work-related injuries and when recommending return-to-work. This approach requires you to understand the patient’s job and its associated physical demands. Job requirement information should be obtained during the case set-up and initial evaluation process and involves interfacing with the employer. If patients know you understand their jobs, their respect for you will be enhanced. For many work-related

injuries, a case manager either employed or contracted by the insurance company or self-insured employer will be involved and close communication with the case manager is paramount. Most of the injuries you will encounter will be orthopedic in nature. Therefore, strong manual therapy and work-specific functional exercise skills are essential for success.

Other service offerings include performing return to work screens, developing temporary duty assignments, performing clinic or employer based work conditioning and work task simulation and offering full Functional Capacity Evaluations (FCEs) and disability/impairment ratings. These unique service offerings require additional training and skills. Functional testing and job analysis, ergonomic assessment, and impairment ratings are skills that are seldom, if ever, taught in physical therapy curricula. Therefore, seeking out continuing education in these areas will be essential in providing quality services. Offering these services in addition to outpatient therapy makes your clinic a

“one-stop shop” for all things industrial. This can be a strategic advantage for you in a market whose clinics may not have all of these offerings.

In addition, a clear understanding of your state’s workers’ compensation laws and regulations is extremely important. A thorough understanding of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the recent changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - now the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) - are also critical. Both have important implications for post-offer/pre-hire screening and return to work testing.



IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

To whom will you sell these services?

Large and medium size employers are typically the purchasers of prevention services while post-injury services are often primarily covered by workers

compensation insurance. The exception to this general rule of thumb is the employer who contracts directly with a clinic to provide onsite services. When selling into the employer market, the first point of contact is often human resources, risk management and/or safety or loss prevention professionals. These mid-level managers, however, seldom have the final decision-making authority. Therefore, they must be convinced to allow you to speak with the decision-makers or you will have to empower your contacts to sell the service “up the ladder.” If you convince them to allow you to speak to the corporate executives, you may be interfacing with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or company President. Selling into the “C-Suite” of a large organization requires a business targeted marketing strategy versus clinical



educational strategy. This strategy requires an additional level of professionalism and polish, depending on the company culture. Typically these individuals will want the 10,000 foot view of your offering and expect you to provide a concise, well-honed presentation, allowing them plenty of time to ask questions. Use your mid-level contacts within the company to provide some insight into the decision-makers before you present to them.

Post-injury marketing and sales is traditionally directed toward workers' compensation case managers, insurance adjusters and the physicians who treat patients with workers compensation injuries. Using a systematic marketing methodology, start by identifying key referral decision makers in your area. Find out as much as you can about these referral sources and their current referral patterns. Most physicians are similar to the C-Suite in the employer market. They have little time for casual conversation and appreciate communication in small concise but useful bites. Carefully plan your interactions and have a goal for each exchange.



UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

What are their needs and interests?

Each of these unique market targets will have different needs and wants. The employer wants to decrease injuries (frequency) and the costs (severity) associated with them. The true costs of an



injury for an employer include not only the medical treatment costs but also the “indemnity” or wage replacement costs as well. If the injured worker is delayed in returning to work or never returns to his/her previous job, then hiring and training costs will further impact the organization. If the employer is self-insured, the claim costs are paid out directly and go to the loss side of their profit and loss sheet. The prevention services create significant savings for employers. Return on investment (ROI) is their top issue so you will need to be prepared to deliver an estimate of the ROI that your service will create.

The case manager and insurance adjustor want fast effective return to work. If return to work is not possible, then case closure becomes the goal. They need therapists who objectively measure

patient progress in the treatment process utilizing objective information regarding patient's physical ability compared to job demand. This information needs to be communicated with all parties making the temporary or permanent return-to-work decisions.

Physicians can make more accurate return to work recommendations with therapists' objective information.

Case managers and adjusters need to know your prognosis for patients. Are patients progressing as planned or are



complications arising? They don't like surprises at the end of treatment. They also need therapists who will respectfully confront non-compliant patients. Therapists typically don't like this aspect of treating patients with work-related injuries. As a group, we are "confrontation averse." Having a systematic process for dealing with self-limiting and inconsistent behavior with specific objective boundaries is essential for success. When patients fail to meet up to program requirements of full effort and consistency, then communicating this to the case manager with specific documented examples will help bring the case to closure.

Physicians want patients who improve and return to work with minimal intervention on their part. Success and good outcomes on your part, requires less stress and involvement is on their part. Demonstrating your success on a case by case basis or on the aggregate influences their referral patterns. Most physicians don't have time to go to the worksite and understand the work performed by their patients. Most physicians do not perform functional testing on the patient. If the therapist can provide concise information about the most demanding aspects of the patient's job and a brief functional return to work screen, it makes the physician's return to work decision much easier and more defensible.

REACHING OUT



How will you reach them?

The most immediate opportunity for providing prevention services lies with self-insured companies. Most states have organizations for these employers and these organizations have conferences. Attending, presenting and exhibiting at these conferences will expose you to self-insured employers and the case managers and physicians that serve them. Writing for their newsletter will also create exposure. Many companies are also involved in industry-specific organizations that you can attend and for which you can provide presentations. Both presenting and writing allows you to be perceived as the local expert in your field and the go-to person for

providing services. Since you are typically selling to human resources, risk management, loss prevention and safety professionals attending and presenting at their meetings may have some benefit as well.

With case managers and physicians most of this marketing and sales occurs through relationship building and communication. If you have referrals from workers' compensation case managers and physicians, leverage the success you've had with existing patients to increase your referrals. Sharing patient information and asking for more business on a regular basis is essential. In addition, each state typically has a workers' compensation organization. Attending, presenting and exhibiting at those meetings will put you in front of attorneys, physicians, case managers and insurance adjustors.

What will you say when you get there?

The most common mistake most clinicians make when selling their services is immediately describing the features and benefits of their service to whomever they are speaking. In reality, successful consultative selling begins with asking good questions. Regardless of the person you are addressing, find out their most pressing issues, needs and desires. This information allows you better understand your client's issues and to determine if you can meet their expectations and deliver what they will perceive as quality service. You'll learn how to best serve them.

Sharing case examples of success or aggregate outcome numbers will get the attention of your audience. Simply saying you provide the "highest quality of care/prevention services" does not differentiate your clinic because your competitors are all saying the same thing. Employers are more focused on the financial benefit that your prevention services will bring to them. Case managers, insurance adjustors and physicians will be more interested in treatment outcomes.

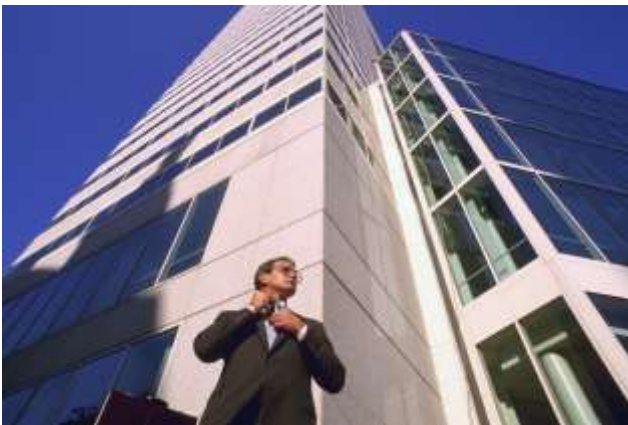
JUDGING SUCCESS

How will you judge success?



All of us have precious little time to spend marketing and selling. Our primary business is that of providing services. So how do we assess whether our marketing and sales activities are effective and which activities yield the highest result for the minimum time requirement? Even if our practice is large enough to hire a marketing and sales consultant, we want to know whether that individual is effective.

In marketing and sales it is especially true that we achieve what we track. Set realistic goals for marketing and sales in light of your patient load. Document the number of face to face meetings held, the number of conferences attended,



presentations provided, etc. Tracking these numbers will provide an objective measure of your marketing and sales activity. If you don't track these numbers, it's too easy for the month to slip by without dedicating time for marketing and sales.

Tracking the number of new patients and the number of new referrals sources each month will allow you to see if you are realizing the fruits of your labor and which activities seem to have the greatest yield. If you are successful in marketing, your patient and referral source numbers should



increase over time as an indication of your success. If you listen carefully, you will learn how to better serve the employers, case managers, physicians and adjustors who will ultimately influence the growth of your industrial service line.

The key to successfully marketing all segments of the marketplace is to distinguish yourself as an industrial therapy expert. The more sophisticated your protocols and systems, the easier it will be to “sell” your industrial therapy program and services.

Want more information?

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