

**“HELLO DOCTOR”**

**PHYSICIAN MARKETING FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONER**

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**LEARNER OUTCOMES**

1. After this course participants will be able to list ways to meet with physicians.
2. After this course participants will be able to identify what problems physicians are facing in their offices.
3. After this course participants will be able to describe how their services/skills can fill physician’s needs.

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**TODAY’S AGENDA**

- Changing Landscape of Hearing Healthcare
- Increasing Your Visibility to the Physician
- Understanding Needs, Providing Solutions
- Nurturing the Referral Process

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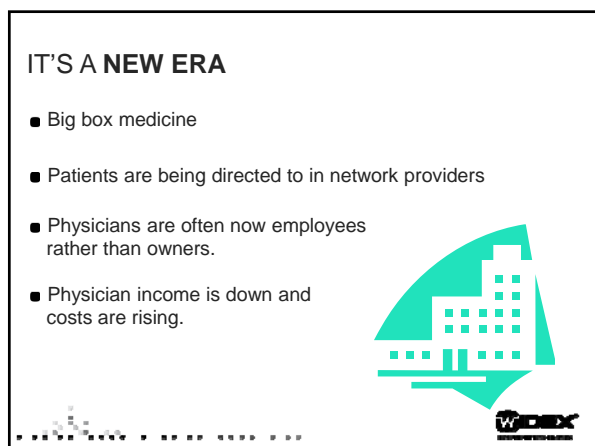
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## IT'S A NEW ERA

- Educational events have moved online.
- The number of specialists and subspecialists (medical community) has nearly doubled in the past 15 years.
- Less time per patient and less time for education.
- Patients are doing their own medical research.
- Some medical specialists are turning to medical marketing firms to secure referrals from PCPs.




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## WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

Underlying goals of most Physicians:

- To help people
- To do a good and worthwhile thing
- To provide quality of care including making good sensible referrals
- To make a lot of money?
  - Probably not the easiest route to riches!




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## SUMMARY: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE

- Patients will not simply appear at your door.
- Physician referrals can be an excellent source of new patients.
- Understand what makes your practice unique.
- Who are your existing and potential referral sources.
- A well thought out plan, executed consistently is the key to success.
- If you do not feel you can go it alone, there are resources available .




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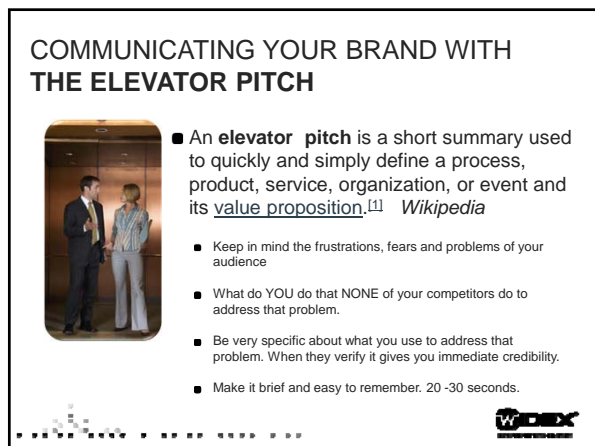
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## WHAT IS YOUR BRAND?

- A **brand** is a name, term, design, symbol or other feature that distinguishes one seller's product from those of others. - *Wikipedia*

- What are your services?
- What are your mission and vision?
- Who will benefit from your services?
- How are you unique?
- What are your core values?
- What awards or recognition have you received?
- How have you grown?
- What is your philosophy or other medical practice?




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## WHY BRANDING IS IMPORTANT

What is the advantage of defining your own practice brand?

- A clear brand will help the physician remember your practice above others in the area.
- You can position yourself as the **community expert** in a specific area, such as tinnitus, high frequency hearing loss or musicians.
- You can focus your energy on medical practices most likely to need your service




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## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- Who is your target audience?
  - ENTs?
  - Other specialists?
  - Primary Care Physicians?



- Proximity is important
- Will hearing be a top concern of their patients?
- Alliances and ownership status matter.




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## THE REFERRAL LIAISON

- Assign someone in your office
- Create and maintain an excel spreadsheet
  - Identify existing referral sources
  - Identify potential referral sources
  - Track all activity related to these physicians
- Goals
  - Create a list of physicians
  - Prioritize the list based on potential return on investment (ROI)




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## RESEARCH

### Where to Look

- Social Media
- Other medical practitioners
- Your colleagues
- Ask your patients about their own physicians

### What information may be important?

- Age, interests, hobbies
- Comfort level with technology
- Are they an owner or an employee? Independent or part of group?
- Do they have audiology in their practice?
- Look for commonalities and points for connection.




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## SUMMARY: INCREASING VISIBILITY

- Define a referral liaison
- Create a system to track referrals
- Identify existing and potential referral sources
- Prioritize list based on return on investment potential
- Record all referrals and "touches" initiated from your office



**TIP:** Always ask new patients how they heard about you either via intake questionnaire or informal conversation.




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**WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS**

Top reasons for choosing referral sources  
*(Annals of Family Medicine)*

- 87% Medical Skill
- 59% Access to Practice and Insurance Issues
- 59% Previous Experience with them
- 52% Quality of communication
- 33% Board Certification


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**BE SOMEONE THEY KNOW OR KNOW ABOUT**

- Credentials
- Patient outcomes
- Your philosophy about patient care
- Insurance plans in which you participate

**TIP:** Are you doing satisfaction surveys with your own patients?  
Publicize the outcomes!


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## PHYSICIAN NEEDS

- They want help managing their own patients: they appreciate education about hearing related issues that support this.
- They expect timely reports with clear recommendations
- They want to know they will not lose these patients
- They want to know their patients will receive good care and are treated with respect.




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## AMA CODE OF ETHICS



- Physicians should provide patients with relevant information about potential procedures when referring out.
- There are, however, no guidelines about what to tell them about the specialist they are sending them to. Another opportunity to educate the physician.




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## TAKE THE TIME TO TEACH

- PCPs in particular appreciate help in keeping current.
- Do it with respect and in the spirit of friendly consultation.
- Short letters are fine, no need for an elaborate newsletter.
- Be thoughtful about what the referral source needs to know – provide brief explanations.
- Make it a good tool to help them and their office staff.




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## CREATING EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

- Office brochure or information sheet
- Reprints of recent scholarly articles
- Fact sheets and summaries of recent research
  - Cognition and hearing
  - Medical diagnoses associated with hearing loss
- Articles on practical topics
  - How to read an audiogram
  - How wireless hearing aids benefit patients
  - How to talk to patients about hearing aids
  - What can be done for tinnitus sufferers
- Short PowerPoint presentation targeting physicians and staff
- Online and social media presence
  - PCPs often use online networking



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## SUMMARY – NEEDS BASED SOLUTIONS

- Understand the needs of your referral sources.
- Use an education based message
- Don't just tell them, show them – they expect evidence based information.
- Create your materials in advance
- Always provide true value for the physician.
- Be authentic




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## GETTING IN FRONT OF THE PHYSICIAN




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## THE GATEKEEPER




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## FIRST CONTACT MAILER

- Handwritten address
- Include single page educational material
- Information about you and your practice
- Business card.



- Repeat at least every two months to entire list of desired referral sources.
- Always ask your patients if they would like you to send a report to their physician. Can be the first step in establishing contact.




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## YOUR PRIORITY REFERRAL SOURCES

- Identify best potential referral sources
- In-person visit once a month
- Sample message when hand delivering information or a report:
  - "This is information I want to make sure the physician receives..."
- Introduce yourself to staff
  - office manager, referral coordinator and nurse.
  - Remember your elevator pitch!
- Invite staff to off-site educational events
- Request an appt. for a 5 minute meeting with physician
- Provide information on new services that will benefit patients
- Review physician satisfaction with current referral sources




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## OFF-SITE LUNCH & LEARN

- Be sensitive to their schedules
- Invitations
  - Clearly state the topic.
  - Provide a time ordered agenda.
  - Let them know it is okay to leave early if needed.
- Choose a nice restaurant with set menu options.
- Make sure to follow up!



### Sample Agenda

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| ■ 12:00 – 12:15 | Arrival and introductions                    |
| ■ 12:15 – 12:35 | Approaches to Tinnitus Management            |
| ■ 12:35 – 12:45 | Listening demonstration of Widex Zen Therapy |
| ■ 12:45 – 12:55 | Discussion and Questions                     |




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## OFF-SITE SUPPORT STAFF EVENT

- Send invitation to a 90 minute Spa evening at local salon
  - How hearing loss can impact relationships
  - How today's hearing aids are different
  - Questions and Answers
- Focus can be on Office Managers, Referral Coordinators, Nurses
- Goals
  - Educate
  - Develop Trust
  - Opens channels of communication




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## BECOME AN EXPERT

- Give talks to public.
- Be available to do stories and interviews in local media.
- Offer to present at organizations such as tinnitus groups, self help groups, professional specialties ie. Misophonia, CAPD
- When appropriate, invite a physician to co-present with you
- Use the internet and Social Media to raise your visibility




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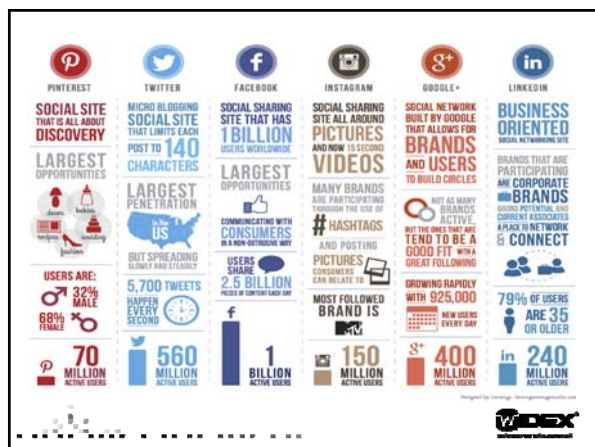
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## CONTENT IS CRUCIAL



- Content should be consistent with your brand
- Consumer focused and Professional focused content
- Spotlight yourself and your business with moderation

- Content needs to be of value to consumers and/or professionals:
  - Images
  - Videos
  - Infographics
  - Classic text-based content
  - Succinct and engaging

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## SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM

- Delegate tasks:
  - Technical operator
  - Content
  - Expert answers to questions on site
- Designate time for management
  - Daily/weekly focus
  - Re use your educational articles




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## DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL!

You know it's time to see a Doctor of Audiology when this happens to you!  
#hearingloss #widex



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## SUMMARY – GAINING ACCESS

- Be known. Create your brand
- Include a high value education piece along with information about your office
- Have a professional website and a blog
- Have education events for professionals and their staffs.
- Always ask patients how they heard of you.




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## NURTURING THE REFERRAL PROCESS




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## MEETING WITH THE PHYSICIAN

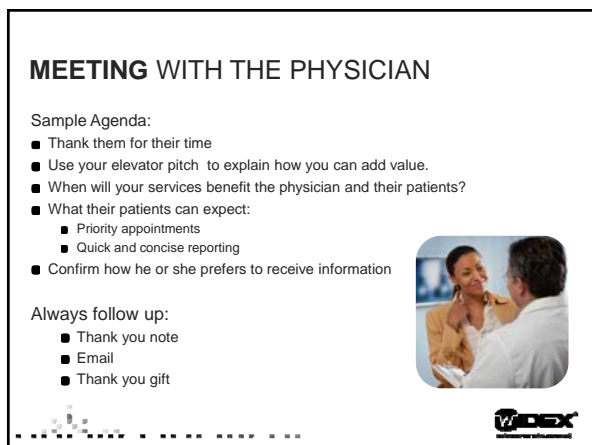
### Sample Agenda:

- Thank them for their time
- Use your elevator pitch to explain how you can add value.
- When will your services benefit the physician and their patients?
- What their patients can expect:
  - Priority appointments
  - Quick and concise reporting
- Confirm how he or she prefers to receive information



### Always follow up:

- Thank you note
- Email
- Thank you gift




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## SAMPLE MATERIALS TO BRING

### Tinnitus

- WIDEX ZEN THERAPY FACT SHEET
  - DFL 126
- When Suffering From Tinnitus CD
  - DVD 21
- AAO Clinical Guidelines for diagnosis and management of tinnitus
  - <http://www.entnet.org/content/aaof-hnsl-clinical-practice-guideline-tinnitus>



### Single-Sided Deafness

- Evaluation and treatment options
  - <http://www.audiologyonline.com/articles/understanding-single-sided-deafness-evaluation-6829>

### Cognition

- Hearing Loss and Dementia Linked Study (Lin, 2014)
  - [http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing\\_loss\\_and\\_dementia\\_linked\\_in\\_study](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_and_dementia_linked_in_study)
- The Contributions of Audibility and Cognitive Factors to the Benefit Provided by Amplified Speech to Older Adults
  - Humes, "JAAA Am Acad Audiol 18:590-603 (2007)"
  - [http://www.indiana.edu/~audres/Publications/humes/papers/138\\_Humes.pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~audres/Publications/humes/papers/138_Humes.pdf)




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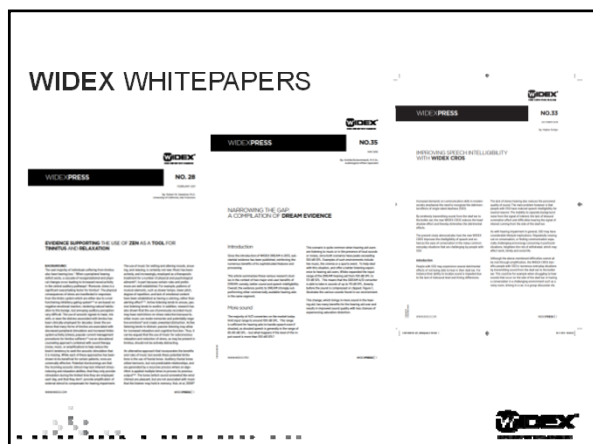
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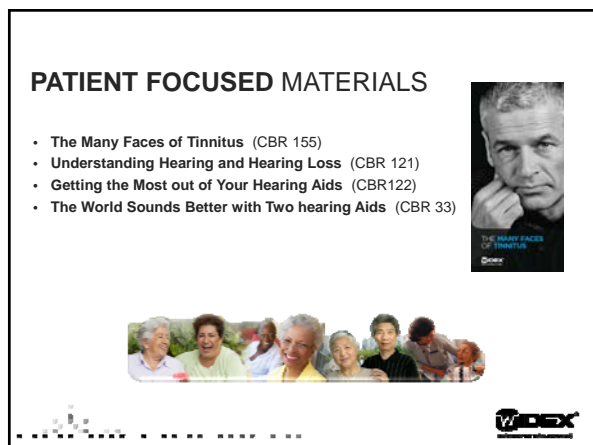
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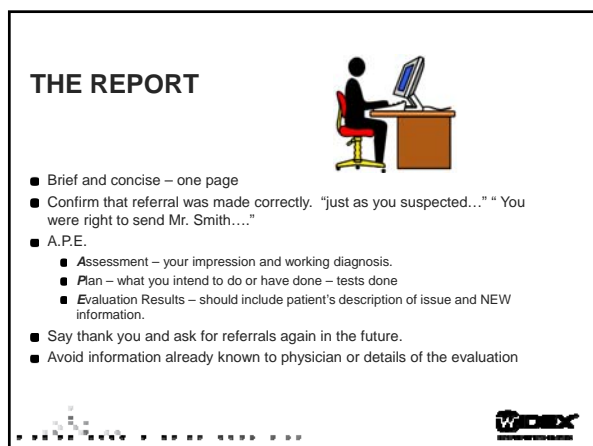
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## SUMMARY – NURTURING REFERRALS

- Have a plan for communicating
  - If you cannot manage this alone, partner with an organization to assist you.
- Be someone they know or know about (especially patient outcomes and your qualifications.)
- Quality patient care
  - Patient feedback matters!
  - Your level of service matters.
- Always see patients ASAP
  - referral sources notice delays.
- Report Back promptly
  - report must reach them before the patient.
- Focus always needs to be what you can do for the physician.




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## WHEN YOU NEED HELP

- Hearing Aid Buying Groups
  - Audiology Management Group
  - AHAA
  - Elite
  - AuDConnex
- Manufacturer's Assistance Programs
  - HEARCARE 360
- National & State Organizations
  - AAA
  - ADA




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## SUMMARY

- Know your brand
- Know the Physicians in your community
- Be focused, be brief, be concise
- Send reports promptly
- Consistency is Key



FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS / INFORMATION:  
PLEASE CONTACT [AQINQUIRY@WIDEX.COM](mailto:AQINQUIRY@WIDEX.COM)  
CALL WIDEX AT 1-800-221-0188  
[www.widexpro.com](http://www.widexpro.com)




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