

Top 5 Things That Helped Me Launch My Practice

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The AAPP (American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management)...The AAPP can 'be' the top five for me as it was the launching pad for great practice benchmarking, marketing/advertising ideas, mentors, vendors, and ancillary services.

1. Know Thy Benchmarks – as a new practitioner, EVERY new patient is exciting. Taking the time to understand insurance companies, what contracts allow/disallow, and how to approach that as a **business owner** is key to a successful first year. Know WHERE you want to go with the practice (income levels, reimbursement rates, etc) and strive to achieve those goals on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis.
2. Market your “Feet” Off – I advertise. As a new doctor, simply putting up a shingle *will not work*. So I place ads in our local newspaper, magazines, radio, etc. But more importantly, I **market**. I (and now a dedicated TEAM member) have joined local networking groups, eat lunch at the hospitals, speak at local nursing homes, sponsor local charities, etc. We are in the midst of expanding our patient referral base from local physicians, and are actively marketing my practice to feature *what I can do for THEM*. (Convenient Saturday Hours, Evening Appointments, Different Treatment Options)
3. Mentors – Finding a great mentor can be all about luck (or joining the AAPP!) All of my ‘launching pad’ ideas revolve around one simple thing – organizing YOUR time so that it is most effective for you. Quite often we forget to connect with people (valuable resources!) because we are too busy. One of the best things I ever did was VISIT a successful DPM’s practice as I was opening my own. Took ideas and made them work for me.
4. Who should I buy what from and WHEN – Again, asking your mentor, fellow DPM’s and other healthcare professionals what vendors they use is KEY in launching a successful OTC product dispensing business in your new practice. It’s just like buying a car – you ask your friends and family which dealership they used, right? So why partner with a company you know nothing about? Dispensing of OTC items in your office gives your patients a valuable convenient option and is a great practice builder. We have lotions, potions, socks and shoes (from Aetrex!) The most important part about dispensing products is to **believe in what you sell**. Try out different items. Have your staff use them. And partner with companies who have great referrals from fellow docs and who support our profession.
5. Xrays, Ultrasound, DME, PT, Wound Care, oh my! Ancillary services help both you and your patients. They are a lucrative practice builder while allowing your patients a convenience that other offices may not provide (you are saving them TIME – doing something for them!) Start slowly, add one service at a time, and master that FIRST.

As I finish year two and look ahead at our goals for the upcoming quarter, I am excited to see where my practice has grown and where I can continue to improve. Looking forward to learning more as we roll into year #3!