

NURTURE over nature

A co-ordinated lead generation campaign helped a medical billing service change its ways

Competition drives commerce... and the need for better marketing. That was the realization that 25-year-old, Ohio-based HealthPro Medical Billing Service came to when “the big boys” started courting its clients.

The changing competitive landscape

For a quarter of a century, HealthPro relied on word-of-mouth referrals to attract small radiology and pathology practices — medical groups with between four and twenty-five physicians. Yet mergers among those groups were reducing the number of available clients, national billing companies were pouring money and effort into winning the merged practices’ business, and the family owned and operated firm decided it was time to fight back.

They began by hiring Denise McDaniel as their marketing director — a woman with years of experience in B2B campaigns — and she was empowered to assemble the outside resources that HealthPro would need to retain the accounts they had (worth about \$100,000 a year apiece) and gain new ones. She quickly realized that past efforts were haphazard at best — rooms full of, by then, outdated literature for mass mailings that never occurred; freelance copy with no consistent messaging; no useful content; and no program for persuading prospects over the long, 18-month sales cycle.

A not-so-obvious choice

After inviting four agencies to vie for the business, HealthPro's owners chose a local firm with first-hand experience in healthcare marketing. The owners, who weren't at all familiar with marketing strategies and tactics, made their choice because the agency was nearby and had the background they were looking for... they thought.

Instead of a focus on business marketing, the agency turned out to be exclusively familiar with consumer techniques. "After spending quite a bit of money and time over nine months," McDaniel said, she persuaded her bosses "not to continue to waste money" on work that wasn't working. She also persuaded them to take another look at AcquireB2B, which took over the account almost immediately.

Working from the East Coast through conference calls, email communications, and online collaboration, "AcquireB2B quickly assessed HealthPro's short and long-term needs," McDaniel recalled, "and they developed a lead generation and nurturing program that was designed for getting in the door with prospects." Since the medical billing company had already spent — for them — a considerable sum with the local B2C agency, the choice was made to focus on email campaigns.

Informed is effective

Each mailing would maintain a core, benefits-oriented approach. Each would offer specific content about the company's decades of experience in medical billing or the accuracy of its coding (the information insurers rely on to process claims) or its success in obtaining the maximum payment allowed. Though the goal seemed modest — gaining 3-4 new clients — that number could represent close to half a million dollars a year in revenue.

"The B2C agency had struggled to get its email messages opened," McDaniel recounted, "but AcquireB2B's campaign was persuading decision makers at our targeted radiology and pathology practices to click through to landing pages and download information." Most importantly, it was resulting in leads in the pipeline.

The next step is to maintain those leads' interest over the long sales cycle with content that addresses their challenges... and convinces them that HealthPro can meet those challenges in the most cost-effective way. The "big boys" won't go away, of course, but AcquireB2B's targeted slingshots may very well knock them down.