

TECHNOLOGY ROCKS

Shorr bets to boost efficiency and productivity.

BY JAY A. SHORR, BA, MBM-C, CAC I-VIII AND MARA SHORR, BS, CAC II-VIII

Time spent working in your practice as opposed to working on your practice will yield a more robust revenue stream, greater job satisfaction, and a better work-life balance, and there are a plethora of tools available today that will help you do just that.

Here are eight technologies to get you started on the path toward increased efficiency and productivity along with our favorite product picks in each category.

1. WHAT YOU NEED: PRACTICE MANAGEMENT/ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD (EMR) SOFTWARE

Why you need it: Approximately a decade ago, it was a luxury for the smaller practice to be totally electronic. The federal government even gave financial incentives to practices so they would start implementing certified EMR software. This was quickly adopted in the aesthetic industry, and has greatly improved charting, procedure quoting, inventory management control, employee time tracking, and much more. Choose and use a system that is designed for this industry in addition to having an insurance component for billing, if you will still be accepting third-party insurance plans. There are many free programs. (The catch: The software manufacturer will require you to use their billing company if you will be submitting claims. That's where they make their money.)

A Shorr Bet: MDWare (MDware.com)

2. WHAT YOU NEED: TELEPHONE TRACKING NUMBERS

Why you need it: Tracking numbers assigned to your marketing efforts will let you know what is working (and what isn't). The caller is immediately remote call forwarded to your desired assigned phone number. The transfer is totally blind, yet it gives you great information such as time of day, caller ID information, and even a digitized recording of

the call for future staff training.

A Shorr Bet: CallTrackingMetrics.com.

3. WHAT YOU NEED: PATIENT QUALIFICATION SOFTWARE

Why you need it: Many patient coordinators or practitioners spend an inordinate amount of time in consults only to find out a patient is not a suitable candidate for a given procedure or procedures. Online pre-consultation tools can allow you to determine and segregate a qualified, mid-qualified, and unqualified prospect prior to scheduling an appointment. (Read:

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this can be a major time saver, and time is money).

A Shorr Bet: Zwivel (Zwivel.com)

4. WHAT YOU NEED: APPOINTMENT REMINDER SOFTWARE

Why you need it: Do you know how much time is spent confirming appointments for the next one to two days? Your staff makes phone calls and leaves voice-mail messages that may or may not be heard ... ever. Appointment reminder software saves time and reduces no-shows. These reminders can be sent by telephone, e-mail, and/or text message.

A Shorr Bet: Solutionreach (www.solutionreach.com)

Bonus: Solutionreach also allows recall messages so you can segregate and contact patients who have not been in to see you in a predetermined period of time. This is a wonderful tool for additional retention purposes.

5. WHAT YOU NEED: E-BLAST PROMOTIONAL SOFTWARE

Why you need it: We all get e-mail specials delivered to our inbox 24-7, so yours needs to stand out if you want patients to notice. Some email marketing services offer free design templates, and are easy to use with your own database in an excel or Comma Separated Values (CSV) format.

A few Shorr Bets: Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com/), Vertical Response (www.verticalresponse.com/), Mail Chimp (www.mailchimp.com/) and Solutionreach (solutionreach.com)

6. WHAT YOU NEED: ONLINE APPOINTMENT SETTING

Why you need it: Some of the newer practice management programs integrate with technology to allow automated appointment setting by clicking a tab on your website. Patients can make an online appointment without ever having to call your office. The system also allows them to fill out, print, enter demographic data,

and send the important information back to the practice prior to the initial visit, reducing the amount of work to be done in-office.

A Shorr bet: ZocDoc (www.zocdoc.com)

Bonus: ZocDoc can also help you fill in available time slots, too.

7. WHAT YOU NEED: PATIENT SURVEY SOFTWARE

Why you need it: Nip any potential negative reviews in the bud with patient surveys. You have the availability to send a brief questionnaire with a requested response using various online survey programs. Some of these online portals are included with other packages, and many are free.

Some Shorr bets: Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) Solutionreach (www.solutionreach.com)

8. WHAT YOU NEED: TASK REMINDER SOFTWARE APPS

Why you need it: Do you remember ALL of the tasks you have to do each and every day? Do you have 82 sticky notes and scraps of paper scattered all over your desk? Sound about right? If so, you need a task reminder app. There are many software programs that allow for automated drip campaigns (campaigns that automatically assign tasks that follow one another) and task reminders.

Some Shorr bets: Simple free services may include Highrise (www.highrisehq.com/) and the app called Taskify and Listaway. Any free service has an expanded service for a fee, so read all of the details carefully. ■



Jay A. Shorr BA, MBM-C, CAC I-VIII is the founder and managing partner of The Best Medical Business Solutions, assisting medical practices with the operational, financial and administrative health of their business. He is also a professional motivational speaker, an advisor to the Certified Aesthetic Consultant program and a certified medical business manager from Florida Atlantic University. He can be reached at info@thebestmbs.com

Mara Shorr, BS, CAC II-VIII serves as the Vice President of Marketing and Business Development for The Best Medical Business Solutions. She is a Level II - VIII Certified Aesthetic Consultant utilizing knowledge and experience to help clients achieve their potential. A national speaker and writer, she can be contacted at marashorr@thebestmbs.com.