

A Good Practice is No Hocus Pocus

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I love a good magic show! My son is a magician and I have always enjoyed watching good magician work. Sleight of hand has always amazed me.

It takes a lot of practice to become a great magician.

The same could be said for building a great practice. It is truly a work of art to get one up and running. It is also a lot of work to keep it up, but it takes a lot more than just some sleight of hand. It takes many hours of work along with one other very important ingredient - focus.

What does that focus really mean? I often look up words in the dictionary just to gain some additional insight into the true meaning of them. This word is very interesting. Webster's dictionary defines focus as "a center of activity, attention; to bring into focus, so as to produce a clear image."

If you think about that definition you can now see why some are successful in their endeavor to open an office and why some are not. To open an office you should make it the center of your activity and see in your own mind a very clear image of that office running successfully. It is almost like watching a pro golfer go through their routine before they make a shot. They stand behind the ball and look down the fairway and pick a spot where they want the ball to land. They actually see themselves hitting the shot and the ball flying true. They make allowances for the wind and then they step up and hit the ball. Now that's focus!

What do most new doctors do about opening an office? Do they go through a routine? Yes, they do but that routine is quite different. They run around looking for the best deals on equipment, stationery, business cards, and spend a great deal of time trying to make some major decisions. What color should my business cards be? What logo should I use? How many hours should I be open? Should I open a branch office now or wait a month or two? Should I hire one or two associate doctors? Where should I go on vacation? Last but not least, when I become successful, how many talks should I give and how many tapes should I produce each month? Would sleight of hand help this doctor? No, but good hands and some good patients would.

What is the most important thing to keep focused on when you decide to open your office? Here is a list of 10 items for you to choose from:

1. Negotiate a good lease.
2. Get the landlord to include the build-out.
3. Make sure utilities are included.
4. Get proper lighting.
5. Make sure there is a good flow in the floor plan.
6. Get a big sign.
7. Get a location on a major street.

8. Hire good acupuncture assistants.
9. Get a catchy phone number that is easy to remember.
10. None of the above

Now pick the top three that are a must for a successful office.

If you chose any three out of the above list from one to nine as the most important to focus on before opening an office and making it successful, good luck to you. You are really going to need a lot of luck or lots of money and lots of advice and hand-holding from many practice management groups to be successful with that type of focus. If you chose number 10, "none of the above," there is hope for you.

Consider this list of items to consider:

1. Spread the word and get patients
2. Spread the word and get patients
3. Repeat #1 & #2 and spread the word and get patients.

Now pick the top three out of this list of three. Good choices! You will be successful. That is the proper "pre-shot" routine for a doctor about to open an office. That is the "primary" focus. Everything else is secondary. Just like the golfer getting ready for a shot, that is their primary focus. Getting new shoes or head covers for their woods, checking out that new putter by Ping, new golf bag, writing that article for *Sports Illustrated*. Those are all secondary. Without the primary focus, the secondary will never be needed. The same holds true for you as well. No new patients, and no spreading the word that you are in town and your office are open? Without that you don't need to worry about business cards or stationery!

Sleight of hand is great on a stage for a magician but the hocus pocus just won't work for you. What works is focus.

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