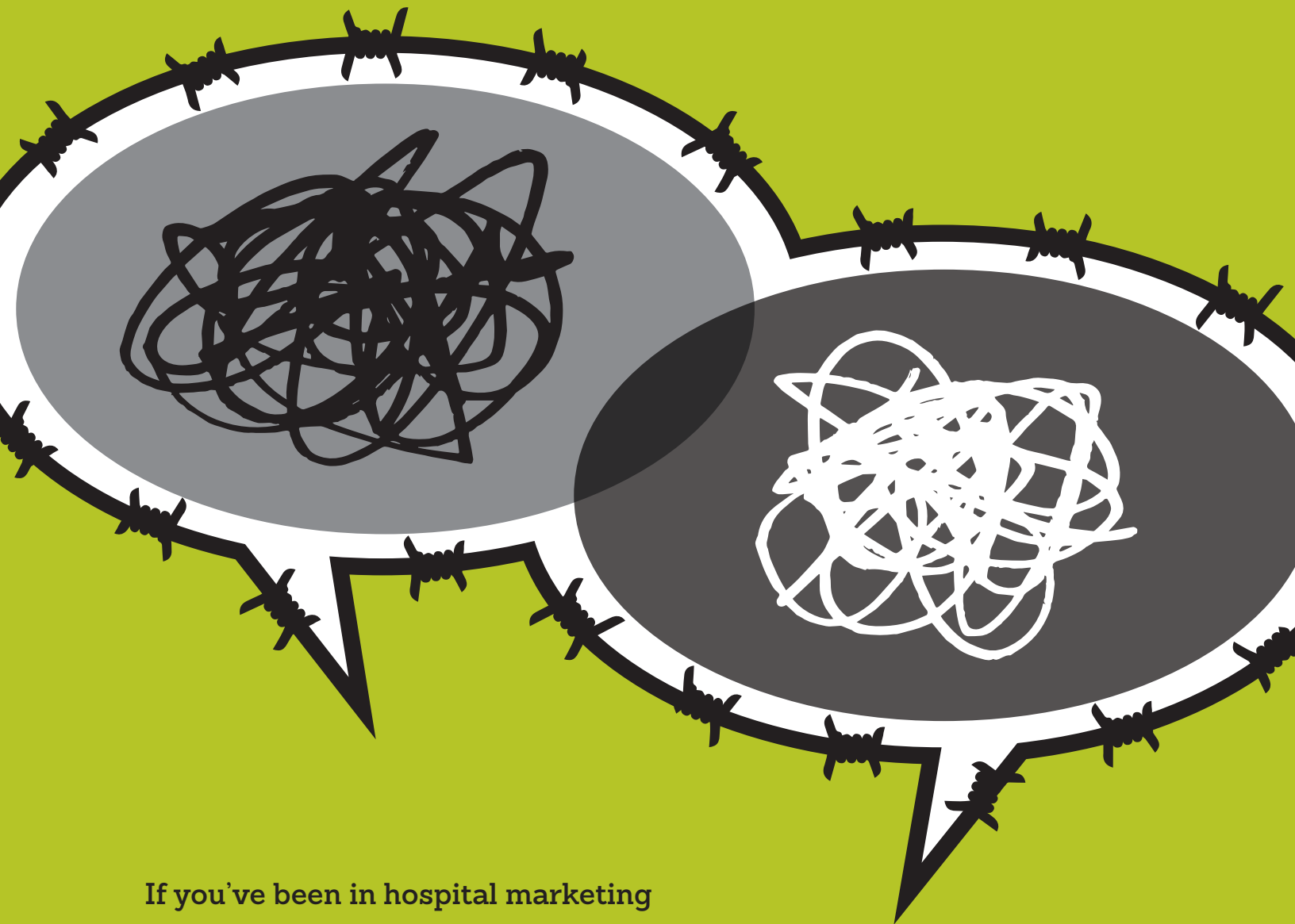


— *The complete* —
**HEALTHCARE MARKETER'S
GUIDE *to* BUILDING GREAT
PHYSICIAN RELATIONSHIPS**



SMITH  JONES



If you've been in hospital marketing for long, you've probably had some tough conversations with physicians. At best, these conversations help you identify who wields the real power in the relationship (hint: it's not you). At worst, they've made you wonder about your job security.

This book was written to help you, the healthcare marketer, build more productive relationships with physicians.

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BENEFITS

of **READING THIS BOOK**



Win more often

Improving your relationships with doctors can prevent derailed marketing initiatives, discouraged people and wasted money. This book helps you bring physicians onto a team that hits more home runs.



Gain influence

Great leaders are great relationship builders, even with the most difficult personalities. This book helps you gain the influence you need to be a more effective leader.



Stabilize your world

The last-minute dissent of a powerful physician can ruin the best laid plans. This book helps you start from a place of mutual trust and respect, and keeps things cooperative and steady.



Help people get healthier

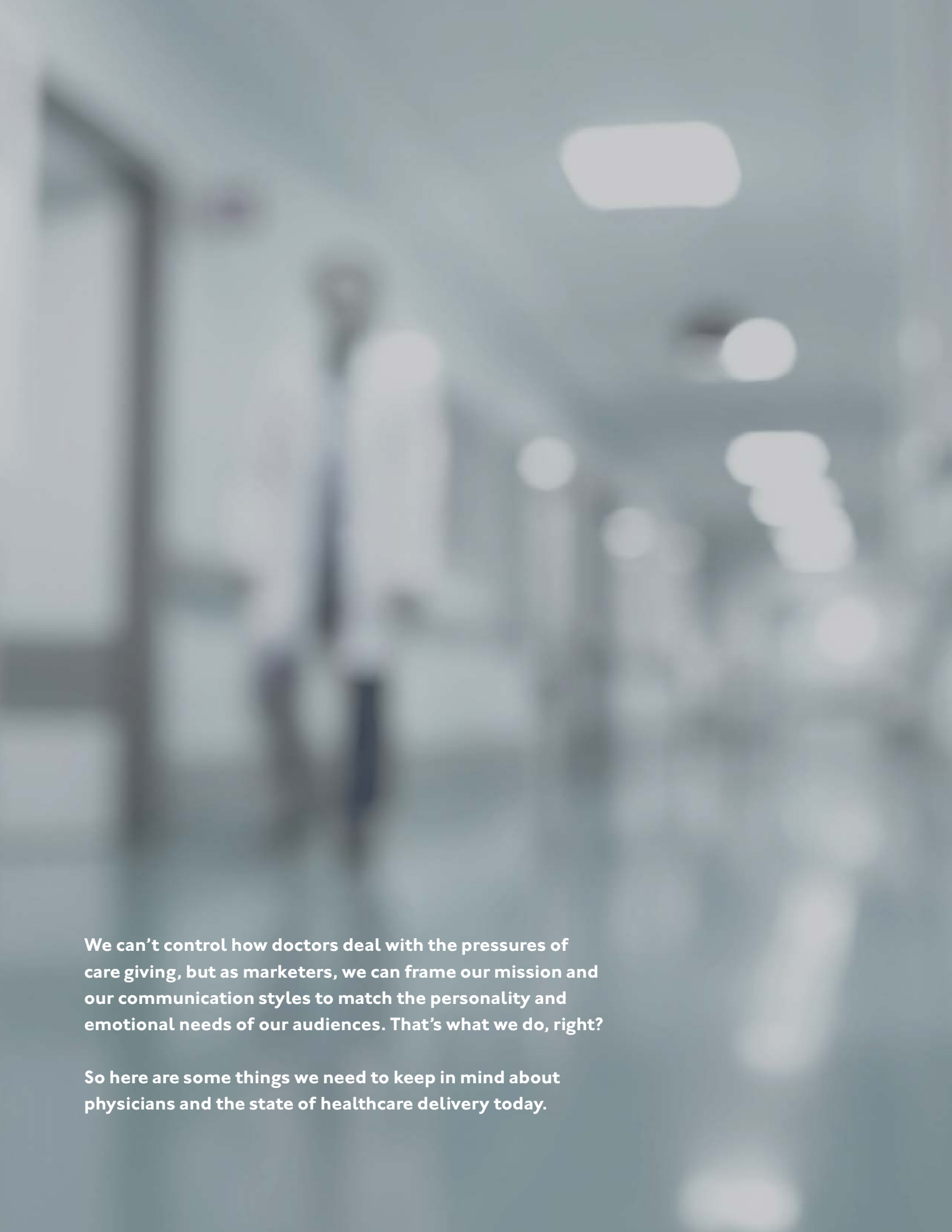
A healthcare marketer's job is to uncover health needs in the market and pair them with quality services. This book will help your organization promote service lines that can improve a patient's quality of life or even save their lives.

UNDERSTANDING *the* PHYSICIAN MINDSET

It's not a great time to be a doctor

First and foremost, physicians care about healing their patients. That's hard work on its own, but today's climate of heated political rhetoric and out-of-control medical costs makes it that much harder to feel great about the work of healing. The stats are starting to show. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young physicians, and a whopping 28% of residents experience a major depressive episode during their training. That's 3.5 times more often than others in the same age group.



A blurred photograph of a hospital hallway. In the center, a doctor in a white coat is walking away from the camera. The hallway is brightly lit with recessed ceiling lights, and the walls are a light color. The overall image has a soft, out-of-focus quality.

We can't control how doctors deal with the pressures of care giving, but as marketers, we can frame our mission and our communication styles to match the personality and emotional needs of our audiences. That's what we do, right?

So here are some things we need to keep in mind about physicians and the state of healthcare delivery today.

The **EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE *of a* PHYSICIAN**



HERE COMES *the* MARKETING DEPARTMENT

And then there's you, the marketer.

You're trying to push more patients through this guy's door, and that means he has to further sacrifice quality.

You're talking about advertising, the same stuff that puts him in a bad situation with demanding patients who don't always know what's best for them.

You want to add yet another thing to his plate that he sees as completely unrelated to the practice of medicine.

It's no wonder physicians put up a wall between themselves and marketers.



Let's look at ways we can break down the barriers between marketers and physicians.

BUILDING *Great* RELATIONSHIPS with PHYSICIANS



Physicians have the same internal motivations that everyone has, but with a few important twists. We've found that there are three ways to connect with physicians and get them on board with the marketing goals of the organization. By appealing to their interests and goals, you can turn physicians from antagonists to advocates.

1

Create a brand they can be proud of

Great brands are bigger than the organizations they serve. Consider Nike, whose *Just Do It* has nothing to do with shoes. It's about accomplishment, hard work, and grit.

Similarly, the best healthcare brands are more about the goal of health than they are about the process of care. That's why CVS Pharmacy changed its name to CVS Health. That's why insurance companies don't sell insurance plans, they sell health plans.

A great brand can be at the heart of a shared purpose between doctors and their patients, and marketers and physicians.



Is your brand inspiring to physicians?

Knowing how your brand is perceived by your doctors is a critical piece of information for the marketing director. The best way to find out is to simply ask.

Do so in person, preferably in a safe, one-on-one environment. Ask physicians what they believe the brand stands for, and ask how they feel about it. Listen for patterns and themes. If you're looking for a broader picture, consider launching a short internal survey with other staff members and stakeholders.

Ask the same questions about your mission, vision and values. Ask physicians if they know what they are, and then ask them what they mean, in their own words.

Ask physicians what they believe the brand stands for and ask how they feel about it.

From blah to brand

If you're finding that the brand doesn't resonate with physicians, it's probably time for the brand to evolve. Rebranding is a golden opportunity to get buy-in and build relationships. By including physicians in the appropriate parts of the process, you can insure that many voices are heard and help them take ownership for the new brand.

If you're finding that the brand is healthy, your work changes. It becomes your job to work the brand deeper into the hearts and minds of the physicians. Ask them to consider ways they live out the brand's values, and ask them to share these stories with colleagues and co-workers.

Rebranding is a golden opportunity to get buy-in and build relationships.





The Mayo Clinic is famous for its culture.

Ask Stephen Swenson, Mayo's Medical Director in the Office of Leadership and Organization Development. His 2016 interview with Athena Health shed light on what makes Mayo's culture so exceptional.

Everyone knows the core value

At the Mayo Clinic, the needs of the patient come first. They call that the primary value. One simple statement that informs everything they do. It's become so ingrained that someone will bring it up in most every meeting. That's effective branding.

Individual financial incentives are all but eliminated

All physicians are salaried, which eliminates many distractions. Financial rewards earned by physicians, departments or individual hospitals within the Mayo system are passed to the central organization. It cuts competition to a minimum and drives a collegial, focused culture.

No white coats

Perhaps the most tangible aspect of the Mayo culture is the no white coats rule. Physicians, unless they are in surgical scrubs, dress in business attire. No white coats, no golf shirts. For the same reason airline passengers don't want to see their pilot in a polo shirt, patients don't want to see their doctors that way.

This tight, focused culture generates results that speak for themselves. The Mayo Clinic uses about 32 percent fewer Medicare resources than the average health system to deliver care, all the while maintaining superior quality.



2

Appeal to their self interests

The fastest way to convince your kid to go to the grocery store is to remind them that there are lollipops at the cash register. That's not deceptive – it's an ethical way to help your child remember what they gain from cooperative behavior. The same principle can be applied to physician relationships.

**Physicians are human, just like you and I.
If you tap into their self interest, you'll find
a much more willing partner.**

This is especially powerful if that self interest relates to achieving a shared purpose, such as better health for their patients.

What self interests can marketers fulfill for doctors?

Recognition

Highlight a doctor's accomplishments with news releases, videos, or local media placements. You could even help them develop presentations when they're asked to speak at conferences.

Authority

Making physicians the focus of your advertising usually backfires, but finding ways to feature physicians does lend credibility and weight to your message.

News coverage of unique skills or accomplishments work here, too.

Better Outcomes

Opportunities to affect someone's health outside of the one-on-one appointment.

There's massive demand for reliable, easy-to-digest health information.

Use marketing to educate the public and work with physicians to figure out what topics might make the biggest impact.





3

Engage them in a shared purpose

Healthcare marketers are in a unique position to help the people of their community, who often have little knowledge about their own health.

Some of the best, most ethical healthcare marketing is about educating patients and matchmaking with appropriate physicians.

Done well, marketing can help patients handle health issues in a medically sound way.

{ 5 PURPOSES *that both* MARKETERS & PHYSICIANS SHARE }



Dispel bad information: There's a ton of pseudo-science about health on the internet. Much of it is published by people with no medical training. If you and your physicians are willing to be bold for the sake of healthier people, you could do a series of articles or videos exploring the facts behind claims made by celebrity gurus.



Detail the value of expertise: Your talent for crafting messages and your physicians' expertise in health can be formed into content that helps potential patients understand the value of true medical expertise. Describing cases where physicians have used a specialized technique or new piece of equipment to help treat a condition can be both informative and encouraging for prospective patients.



Introduce doctors to the community: Once a patient has determined a few key details about a physician, they start to think about the softer side of care - personality, bedside manner, etc. Finding ways to introduce your physicians to the community, either in person or digitally, can be very effective at converting consumers into patients.



Educate the public: Great doctors stay up to date on new advances in their field. Using your marketing and communications savvy to turn dry medical news into easily digestible content that educates patients about options is a great way to help current information disseminate to the people who need it most.



Share patient success stories: Recommendations from trusted sources have been the best form of marketing since Grok told Grak which part of the cave stays warmest in the winter. Capturing patient stories that detail care approaches and outcomes is a great way to reach potential patients emotionally, in the place where they make their purchase decisions.

ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY & MUTUAL RESPECT

If you want to build positive working relationships with doctors, they must start from a place of mutual respect. Mutual is the operative word here. A doctor may presume that you respect him or her, but won't necessarily presume that you are respectable. You may have to earn it in a way that doesn't challenge their sense of self. It must be win-win.



So how do you gain their respect in a way that's not over-eager or desperate? Here are some tips to get you started...

11 WAYS *to* BUILD CREDIBILITY & EARN RESPECT *from* DOCTORS

- 1 Listen:** Doctors are smart and often opinionated. Your first order of business is to listen with the sole intention of understanding their perspective. Ask to visit committee meetings where business topics are being discussed.

- 2 Be flexible:** Docs are notoriously late for meetings. It's not personal, it's usually because they're overbooked or had to deal with an emergency. Docs will always prioritize patient needs over marketing needs and, frankly, that's what's best for your brand. Try to meet at typically quiet times for doctors, which may mean evenings or early mornings.

- 3 Prepare:** Don't meet with a doc if you can't clearly articulate what the goal of the meeting is, how long you expect it to take, and what you need from them. Keep meetings as short as possible without sacrificing the goal of the meeting.

- 4 Look to other influencers:** Look around the hospital for people who have earned the respect of the physicians and learn from them. If you've earned the respect of the same people, you might even ask for an introduction, or drop the doctor a note suggesting that the three of you meet together.

- 5 Take notes:** Taking a few notes during a conversation is a sign of respect. Doctors are obligated to take notes during every patient visit, but aren't used to having the favor returned. You could even email a cleaned up version of your notes to ensure you interpreted the conversation well. It establishes you as a good listener and shows that you value their opinions.

- 6 Keep tabs on their world:** Every service line has different concerns, politics and challenges. Stay current on these topics, and know enough to be conversant. You want to hit the sweet spot: a level of knowledge where you can ask an intelligent question and the physician can deliver an informed perspective.

- 7 Bring data:** Physicians are used to measuring performance, both in hard facts (like readmissions) and softer things (like patient satisfaction). The right data point, properly delivered, puts you on the same side of the table, and helps build a spirit of collaboration.

- 8 Bring stories:** Doctors, like everyone else, make decisions from the emotional part of their brain. A good, emotional story can be the difference between head-to-head challenge and a mutual connection.

- 9 Simplify:** Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers. As a professional message maker, use simile and metaphor to help physicians see your perspective.

- 10 Connect emotionally:** One of the most important phrases in building relationships is "I've felt that way, too." Taking the time to understand the feelings behind a physician's actions can unlock very productive conversations.

- 11 Show some passion:** If you're not emotionally invested in your work, no one else will be. The right balance is critical. Show too much enthusiasm and you seem naive, show too little and you seem cold. If you're not enthused about your project, find ways to change the project so you can be.

TAKE *the* FIRST STEP

There's a reason why Dale Carnegie's relationship-building masterwork *How to Win Friends & Influence People* is the best-selling business book of all time.

In his introduction, Carnegie tells us just what it takes to be a master relationship builder. It's not raw talent, natural gregariousness or some magic formula he discovered.

In his words, it's "a vigorous determination to increase your ability to deal with people."

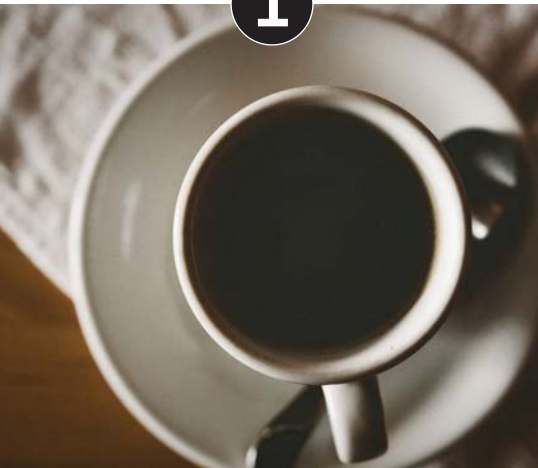
In other words, if you're determined to build successful relationships, they're yours for the taking. You just need to get out and do it.

3

—WAYS *to*— IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS —TODAY—

Don't wait until a campaign is on life support to try to build great relationships. Start today with something simple, and keep at it. Here are three simple ways to get started on the path to greater influence, better relationships, and just maybe a healthier community.

1



Ask a doctor to coffee

He picks the time,
you buy the joe.
Your agenda is to listen.

2



Attend a committee meeting

Same agenda as the previous
– listen.

3



Shadow a doctor

Pick someone who seems
interesting and friendly, or
someone whose service line
you know the least about.
Trail along, ask questions
and learn all you can.

*If you still need some help
bringing physicians over to your side,
please feel free to give us a call.
It's part of our mission to help make
healthcare brands better.*



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About Smith & Jones

Smith & Jones is where healthcare brands come to get better.

We imagine an America where healthcare is truly personal, where everyone has local access to a superior customer and clinical experience, and as a result, people live healthier lives. We contribute to that vision by helping our clients create meaningful and desirable healthcare brands, align their internal teams, engage new and existing patients, and drive downstream revenue.

Together, we change the outcomes.



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