



## Word of Mouth Campaigns

Solution

### What...

Engaging employees to help to promote the organization to their friends and family through awareness campaigns, or "word-of-mouth" campaigns, that are most often targeted at increasing the number of applicants for open jobs and/or increasing the volumes of people using the organization's services. Word-of-mouth campaigns are, in essence, an organized effort to "manage up" the organization as a trusted and preferred employer and/or healthcare provider.



Even given the usual "marketing" techniques of paid advertisements, social media and the like, there can be many people in the community that are unaware of the valuable employment opportunities and/or the high-quality services offered by their local healthcare organization. Therefore, jobs go unfilled and volumes and revenues for certain services are lower than they possibly need to be.

#### **CASE STUDY: CREATING AMBASSADORS TO PROMOTE SERVICES SOUTHWEST HEALTH, PLATTEVILLE, WI**

*When CEO Dan Rohrbach needed to get the word out that their organization had recruited a new surgeon, with hometown roots, to begin his orthopedic practice in Platteville, WI, Dan didn't want to simply run radio ads and create more billboards to announce the news. Dan visioned the idea of "walking, talking billboards" ... and turned to his employees with a request. Could they all learn about the new surgeon and the new services he would bring to the community, and then share this information with friends and family? And the employees jumped in to help.*

*The results were astonishing. Southwest Health experienced quick start up and growth of their new orthopedic service line. So much so, they used the same tactic to spread the word about their amazing Women's Health service line, and so on. This led to doubling the revenues of their organization in a few short years, and greatly increasing employment opportunities in their community.*

*At Southwest Health, it is now an ongoing practice to use "word-of-mouth" campaigns to create community "buzz" around a new building, a large project, a new physician in town, and so much more.*



# How...

## The Role of the Steering Team

As the organization's strategic priorities and goals are set for the upcoming year, and ongoingly throughout the year at Steering Team meetings, pinpoint which of these may benefit from being the focus of upcoming word-of mouth upcoming campaigns. Think beyond your typical marketing strategies and consider how employees can help through the power of "word-of-mouth."

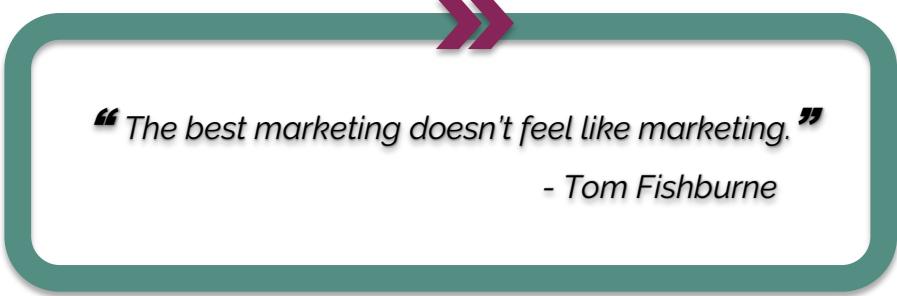
- ▶ Do you have a goal to decrease vacancy rates for open position or to fill open position quicker?
- ▶ Are there certain employee recruitment needs to grow or add a service line?
- ▶ Are certain new or existing services targeted for growth in the new year?
- ▶ Is there a poor reputation in the community about the organization as an employee or provider?
- ▶ Are there planned changes taking place that the community should know about?

## The Role of the Employee Training & Communication Team

- ▶ Name and "brand" the word-of-mouth campaign process so that employees become ongoingly familiar with this concept.
- ▶ Design the logistics of your approach to word-of-mouth campaigns, which are recommended quarterly, to inspire and equip employees to participate. Consider these questions:
  - How will employees learn about what is being promoted and have access to the information they need, and even marketing materials, to promote it knowledgeably, successfully, and simply?
  - Will employees track/report their efforts?
  - How will you know, and share, the impact the word-of-mouth campaigns with employees?
  - How will you show appreciation to employees for their participation?
- ▶ Consult the Steering Team as to the chosen focuses of each word-of-mouth campaigns.
- ▶ Coordinate with the organization's communication relations and/or marketing team as needed to develop the word-of-mouth campaigns and align them with any of their planned promotional activities also being developed.

NOTE: In some organizations, they have a separate employee-driven "Community" Team that organizes the efforts for word-of-mouth campaigns in place of the Employee Training & Community Team.





**“The best marketing doesn't feel like marketing.”**

- Tom Fishburne

### The Role of Leaders

The Steering Team and/or Employee Training and Communication Team may need input and/or assistance from the organization's leaders as they engage employees in word-of-mouth campaigns. This may include leaders talking with their employees during employee rounding, huddles, and/or staff meetings regarding word-of-mouth campaign efforts.

Specific department leaders may have specific goals, projects, or challenges that could be supported by a word-of-mouth campaign. If so, they should make a request of the Steering Team about the possibility of a word-of-mouth campaign to assist their efforts.

As well, leader who conduct Validation (Patient) Rounding could also incorporate "word-of-mouth" promotion during these interactions with patients, as deemed appropriate in the rounding interaction. In essence, the leader "managing up" some aspect of the organization to the patient.



**“The best marketing strategy ever: CARE.”**

- Gary Vaynerchuk

### The Role of Employees

To engage in the outlined word-of-mouth activities as one of the many helpful ways that they can contribute to their organization's success and participate as a member of a unified team, with a common mission and purpose.



## EXAMPLE Word-of-Mouth Employee Participation Log

**My WOM Log**

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Return this form to your supervisor when complete.*  
Supervisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**2020 Strategic Topics**

- RLMC's surgery expansion with Dr. Margo and Dr. Rudolph
- \$10,000 referral bonus to anyone who helps us find a physician that delivers babies
- Our exciting, top of the line, new EMR: Epic!

Date	Who did you share a RLMC story with?	How did you share our story? (face to face, Facebook share, etc.)	What story did you share?

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## EXAMPLE: Word-of-Mouth Marketing Materials

### Share the GREATness

Help spread the word of the great things happening  
at Vernon Memorial Healthcare



**Did you know Vernon Memorial Healthcare Clinics have SAME DAY appointments available?**

Contact one of our clinics for your same day needs.

Westby – 634-3126  
Viroqua – 637-3174  
La Farge – 625-2494  
Soldiers Grove – 624-5203

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Bring this card in the next time  
you have a SAME DAY appointment  
to be entered into our  
VMH apparel spring giveaway.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Vernon  
Memorial  
Healthcare**  
so much care, so close.

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