Sports vision practice management: Create an event – ‘Field’ marketing

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Are you having a difficult time getting athletes, their parents and/or their coaches to check out your sports vision clinic? Well, if you can’t lead the horse to water, I say bring the bucket to them.

Previously, I’ve stated that advertising sports vision services may not be the best application of your resources. Indeed, typically, it ends up as a waste of money because the awareness of sports vision is just not there – yet. Want to do something more appropriate, less expensive and more effective in generating awareness and business? Create a “sports vision event.”

Early on, as I worked to establish a sports vision clinic, I realized how important it was to get out in the field to showcase our services in the athlete’s backyard. And so, maybe once a month, I take my sports vision clinic out to the field of play.

I’m fortunate to have an RV that’s been modified into a sports vision facility on wheels – the “XTREMESIGHT Performance Mobile Clinic.” This allows me to transport the sports vision clinic to the field of play. It’s BIG. It’s branded. And it’s impressive. It also clearly represents the significant investment I’ve made in this unique niche. It’s an investment that’s recognized and appreciated by both coaches and prospective clients.

Of course, you don’t have to make this leap to have a presence at an event. An Easy-Up” with a table or two will do the trick. Just make sure to have some interesting things out and available for demonstration. Display some sports eyewear and/or sunglasses. Attach a Brock String to one of the Easy-Up’s posts. And balls – have lots of balls and other sports paraphernalia hanging about to convey the impression that your services are broader then just baseball (or soccer or lacrosse, etc.). A 3-D model of the eye (kids love eyeballs) is always intriguing. Narrate how it works and the importance of protective eyewear.

Additionally, you may want to offer a complimentary visual performance screening. Evaluate visual acuities, contrast sensitivity, stereopsis, phoria, eye-hand coordination, etc. You decide what to offer based on what you have available (and what’s portable). Provide a “visual performance scorecard” that rates their performance and gives recommendations for improvement, such as “comprehensive eye exam,” “consider contact lenses for vision correction” and “consider visual performance enhancement (sports vision) training.” Be ready to schedule an appointment for them if they show interest.

So – where can you set up your field event? Take it to the …

- Golf course – set up a pop-up just off the practice green and offer simple, short game advice during a tournament.
- Baseball stadium – offer sports vision screenings during one of the family days.
- Soccer or lacrosse field – provide screenings or run a sports vision competition during tournaments.
- Ice rink and tennis courts – give sports vision demonstrations during competitions.
Few things attract the attention of athletes more than watching other athletes doing something that looks fun. If you have sports vision equipment that’s portable and can be set up at an event (don’t forget electric!), do it. Offer a competition, i.e. best eye-hand score (by age bracket) wins a complimentary visual performance screening and/or training package. Indeed, athletes are so competitive that the chance to beat a teammate’s score is prize enough.

Here’s a checklist of items you may consider for your field event:

- Visual acuity chart
- Portable Maddox phoria-measuring device
- Randot Stereopsis (Stereo-Fly, etc.)
- Hart or Haynes Near-Far Rock charts
- Visual-motor task (i.e. Wayne’s Saccadic Fixator, Vision Coach, SVT, Dynavision2 or FitLight Trainer)
- Stopwatch, clipboard, brochures, etc.

So, when considering effective ways to create awareness of your sports vision services, and sports vision in general, create an event and take your services to the field of play.

Oh yeah, and have some fun while you’re at it.

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Dr. Edmunds established and runs a sports-vision-only practice, the XTREMESIGHT Performance Clinic, devoted to visual performance enhancement of athletes. Previously, he worked for Bausch + Lomb and was named Sports Vision Optometrist of the Year for his efforts to promote sports vision worldwide through the Olympic Vision Center. Additionally, he was involved in the development of a novel sport-tinted contact lens, Nike Maxsight, designed to enhance the visual performance of athletes. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry. He is also a member-at-large of the AOA’s Sports Vision Section.