

# Urgent Care Marketing 101: Getting the Word Out in Area Businesses



*Check back throughout May to see marketing tips and strategies we're offering for Urgent Care Awareness Month!*

When it comes to literature drops in the community, think about the places that you and your employees frequent. High traffic service businesses—like restaurants, ice cream shops, dry cleaners, haircut shops, banks, and other retailers—are the ones where you want to display urgent care marketing promotional materials.

In addition to reaching customers, the information may spur word-of-mouth among store owners and managers, who are often involved in civic affairs and have their own family health needs.

Urgent care providers may have more success with local business, since the managers have discretion over what is displayed in the store. Banks, especially community banks, have a focus on grassroots marketing. And check cashing outlets provide an opportunity to reach the working uninsured.

Chain stores and restaurants are less likely to allow urgent care center materials to be displayed. (However, some of the larger employers could be occupational medicine leads.)

Here are a few Dos and Don'ts as you approach these businesses:

- Focus on businesses within a mile of your urgent care center, along major streets.

- Set aside a couple days to complete the literature drops and set a schedule for follow up.

- Keep a list of businesses visited, contacts, and materials left.

- Follow up on each drop within 30 days, evaluate materials distribution, and speak with the manager or staff about interest among customers and employees.

- Do not leave materials without permission, which likely will result in removal and could create bad word-of-mouth.

- Do not put too much stock in literature drops as a main spoke of your grassroots marketing plan. Spending too much time on this activity detracts from relationship building with schools, hotels, and community organizations that have ongoing needs.

- Do not place materials on car windows. In many places there are municipal rules against solicitation in parking lots, plus most consumers are turned off by this tactic.

A final literature drop tactic is to use **community bulletin boards**, and encourage staff to do the same, for posting informational flyers. Some such posting boards only allow nonprofit or community organization news, but engaging the store manager in a discussion about urgent care services could net placement and/or referrals.

**Retail information tables** are another tactic for getting literature and promotional materials into the hands of consumers. Focus on large retailers with steady traffic, and arrange to set up a table during peak hours on a Saturday. Position your table as a value-add to the store, offering free health screenings, athletic testing, or flu shots. Then, partner with the store on promotion with in-store and in-center displays along with community news pitches.

Shopping malls are always looking for ways to enhance the customer experience, and a display table from your urgent care center could be an easy sell—especially if there’s a tie-in for summer outdoors activity, back to school, or Christmas.

A few tips for display table materials:

3-D and/or color materials will grab attention.

Make items easy to “grab and go.”

Consider storage or other useful promotional giveaways.

Keep a consistent “message” for the audience.

Think “tall” with visual displays to help draw consumers.

*Send any specific marketing questions or topics you’d like to see addressed to [dwallheimer@practicevelocity.com](mailto:dwallheimer@practicevelocity.com).*

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