

The term “Mass Media” can be intimidating, but as the owner of a business, learning to make the media work for you can only be beneficial. Media venues are all around. Everyday the general population is exposed to thousands of marketing messages. So how do you make your message stand out? What makes the difference? Timing and location.

**Tracking and  
budgeting**

Choices about where to advertise should logically follow where your patients and prospective patients can be found. Try capturing demographic and lifestyle data to determine the interest of your patients. You can target magazines, newspapers, radio and television programs you know your patients are interested in. *Always ask new patients where they heard about you* to monitor which form of media is bringing in the most new patients. Then assess your media plan at the end of each quarter to determine where you should focus your advertising dollars for the next quarter.

Budgeting is an important aspect of media planning. It’s important to remember there are other ways to get the word out than just running print ads or radio ads. Working in the community and sending press releases to local media outlets are great ways to gain recognition.

### **General newspaper guidelines**

A convenient way to research newspaper rates is via the web. Otherwise, contact your local newspaper for rates and specifications.

- Sunday dailies have the highest circulation and readership. The other day with high readership is the day food/store coupon inserts go into the newspapers. This may vary from market to market.
- “Main” and “Local” news sections have the highest readership, but ad placement in relevant sections such as health, lifestyles or another product/service section may apply.
- Women tend to read the lifestyles section more than men.
- Cost figures are based on column inches, frequency and market.

### **Ad Slicks**

Ad slicks are an easy way to modify an existing ad to incorporate your information. The Paragon CRT ad slicks contain different sizes of the ad, as well as, the fonts used within the ad. The ad slicks can be copied or scanned. Or a digital file can be obtained from the *Professional Information* CD-Rom for both the general and adolescent ad slicks.

When placing ads in newspapers, there are specifications on how they want your ad supplied. Some papers may have ad layout as a service. If you are using an agency to handle your advertising, they will request an ad slick for their art department to modify.

Press releases remain one of the most effective ways to get the message out about your business and are the best way to get your practice free publicity. A press release communicates a story to the general public through local or national newspapers and magazines. If you are handling communication efforts for your practice, familiarize yourself with the local media and what type of news they are likely to run. You may only get a line or two printed, or you may be contacted for a feature story.

The following are some guidelines to writing a press release:

- Submit your release to the editor of any variations of the following sections: Health and Well Being, Life, and Living. Large newspapers usually have many editors, whereas a small newspaper may only have one.
- When developing your press release remember the five W's: what, where, when, who and why. You are the expert, focus on the facts.
- Typically a press release is one page to three pages in length.
- Include contact information. Provide a contact person and phone number for inquires.

Create a template for your releases to save yourself time later. Keep in mind the following tips when creating your release:

- Include a release date if the news is time sensitive. "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" works well for most releases.
- Start the release with a catchy headline: DR. SMITH ANNOUNCES THE ARRIVAL OF PARAGON CRT®.
- The lead paragraph should summarize the story; limit this to three or four sentences.
- Use quotes from the doctor or patients in the next two paragraphs.
- Keep your language simple.
- Double-check the press release for punctuation and spelling before sending it out.
- Use some sort symbol to indicate the end of the release: -end- or ####.
- Include a black-and-white photo whenever possible.

Develop a fax, mail or e-mail list for the media where you'll be submitting. Update your media list on a regular basis.

A well-designed Web site can add value to your practice. A Web site is a tool you can offer to your patients for communication, information resource, and even on-line ordering. Web sites are either designed in-house or by an outside web designer. Either way, a project such as creating a Web site can benefit from a systematic approach.

- Give your site a purpose- What do you want your site to do? Sell? Promote? Provide information? Provide customer service? Identifying your purpose will make it easier for everyone involved in the creation of the site to move in the same direction.
- Organize your site for your patients-Evaluate the needs of your patients and design your site for them. Don't get caught up in making the site too fancy. If your patients aren't Internet savvy, keep the site simple.
- Make your site easy to navigate-Be sure it is clear how to get from one page to another and how to get back. Using navigation bars, a table of contents or a site map makes it easy for the user to see where they want to go.

### **Linking your site to [www.paragoncrt.com](http://www.paragoncrt.com)**

To link to the Paragon CRT Web site go to [www.paragoncrt.com](http://www.paragoncrt.com) and login to the "Eye Care Professional" section. If you don't have a login, create one at this time. For downloads and directions, click on "How to get your website link added to our doctor search engine".

To add all of the information and streaming videos from the "Consumer" section of [www.paragoncrt.com](http://www.paragoncrt.com), enroll in the ***Paragon CRT Patient Information Center*** program. Available through Rasmussen & Associates, the *Patient Information Center* makes it possible for you to take advantage of the value-added information on the Paragon CRT site such as streaming videos, frequently asked questions and patient testimonials all without the "Find a Doctor" database. Patients never click away from your site or see competitor information.

If you do not have a Web site, Rasmussen & Associates will establish a domain name for you and develop a home page with your practice information. Your new site will feature the *Patient Information Center* as content. The process is easy and requires minimal time on the part of you and your staff. By adding the ***Paragon CRT Patient Information Center*** to your Web site you'll be adding value for your existing patients and attracting new patients. For more information contact Rasmussen & Associates at 308-381-0593 or visit [www.paragon.net](http://www.paragon.net).



Most local communities are full of sponsorship opportunities. Schools in particular are always in need of support. Contact the PTA (Parent Teachers Association) at your local school to find out what type of fund-raising events they have planned for the coming school year. When agreeing to sponsor an event, be sure to evaluate what type of exposure you can anticipate for the cost. Take advantage of signage opportunities, as well as, giveaways. Most events will have a program with the agenda for the event. Find out how your information will appear and how many times. Don't be embarrassed to ask for a better position or more space. It may not have occurred to the event planner to do things in that way.

**Sponsor a  
high school  
team**

High schools offer excellent opportunities when you choose to get involved with their sports programs. This group is especially appealing because of the target audience. Paragon CRT has no age restrictions and is the perfect solution for many high school athletes. With this type of sponsoring, find out how your message is presented to the competing teams as well. Most likely the competing school will be from the surrounding area and now becomes part of your potential patient base.

Other community groups such as boys and girls clubs, Lions clubs and church groups offer different opportunities at various times of year. Find one that you can relate to and have an interest in.

**Community  
events**

City and town events are also a good way to introduce your practice to the community. Most communities have yearly festivals, concerts and fairs that welcome sponsors. Contact your local Park and Recreation Department to find out what events are coming up and what kind of sponsorships are available. Many events have booths or exhibit areas. This allows you to be present, interacting with the community directly. Handing out information and small giveaways such as magnets is one way to gain recognition and new patients.

Checking with your local convention center can put you in touch with events such as Health Fairs and other conventions that may be applicable. Be sure to evaluate the cost and have clear goals when attending such events. Providing a discount to only those patients who saw you at the convention is one way to use this venue as a promotional tool.

You may consider contacting the Human Resources Manager of the companies in your area. Many times companies will hold "Employee Benefits" Fairs, where employees enroll for different insurances, etc. Request time to speak with the employees about your practice and the services you offer. If allotted enough time, present the Paragon CRT Patient Seminar.

## Radio Advertising

When you place a radio ad, you're speaking to a captive audience - the listener has to take an action (actively change the station) to pass by your ad. Because listeners are often sitting alone (frequently in their cars), speak to them like you're having a one-on-one conversation. Address them directly, and your message will get across.

### Tips

- A good radio ad doesn't differ greatly in structure from any other type of ad. Begin with a strong opening line (You just woke up from a restful night's sleep-as you open your eyes you can see clearly and you're not wearing your glasses or contacts...) that tells the listener what you're going to tell them. Then tell them. End your ad with a call to action – call Dr. Smith at 123-4567 or visit our web site at [www.drsmith.com](http://www.drsmith.com) or a special offer if an evaluative appointment is made.
- On radio, you need to keep your message simple and focused. The average 30-second radio spot contains only about 70 words. Mention your company name at least three times in those 30 seconds.
- Repetition is very important in radio, because it takes several airings for the listener to become familiar with your name and product or service. Frequency helps you break through the clutter. Consider running your spots at the same time every day for a week. Take a week off and then run it for another week. There are usually discounts when buying ad space in large blocks.

Popular radio personalities can be an asset to your practice. Contact the station to find out if the personality does spokesperson work. Fitting a radio personality successfully and using them as a spokesperson will open your practice up to all of their loyal listeners.

## Television Advertising

You might think of television as the exclusive domain of corporate advertising. But with the growth of cable and the ability to broadcast to a specific region, television can be used effectively by small businesses too. This medium must be utilized carefully, because it can be easily misused - a bad ad not only makes you look silly, but also it can actually decrease your customer base.

### Tips

- Keep your message simple. Stress your benefits- “no hassles of daytime contacts or glasses” “non-surgical, safe and effective”. And remember to stress them visually. You can do this by "showing" what they are, rather than just "telling" what they are.
- Be sure to tell the viewer your name visually. Put it right up there on the screen, along with your logo, and your address and phone number. Better yet, hit them twice by having the voice-over announcer read it aloud at the same time.
- Don't forget your call to action. Tell the viewer what to do - Call now!!! Visit our website at [www.drsmith.com](http://www.drsmith.com).

If your budget is such that television advertising is an option for your practice do not hesitate to include it into your advertising strategy.

Design ads for simplicity. Get the MAIN message across in approximately six words. Use color or some design to get attention. Pick ONE message you want to get across. (Enjoy Visual Freedom, Sleep Your Way to Great Vision!®, Let Your Eyes Breathe During The Day)

### Movie Theaters

Be sure to compare price and times ad will be viewed. How long it will run. (months, weeks...) Pick locations in demographics suitable to the product.

#### **Movie Theater**

- Check your local theaters
  - Local managers may be able to assist for their specific location
  - Check on screen ads at your favorite theater. (These ads usually advertise their own service and have contact information.)
- On-line [www.ncninc.com](http://www.ncninc.com) or phone at 800 SCREEN 1
  - NCN represents more than 10,000 screens
  - NCN offers pre-show, lobby signs and popcorn containers

### Billboards

#### **Billboards**

Again, pick suitable locations. Drive-by billboards near your office. At the bottom of the billboard there will be a company name and/or phone number for information. Make sure of the billboard is visible. You don't want an ad hidden by trees, buildings or facing the wrong direction. Request specific locations and stick to them. Often companies may try to sell a spot no one else wants.

With many patients commuting, signs get read and remembered. Keep it simple; if it isn't rush hour, drivers only have three seconds for reading. Color gets them to look, less words gets them to read. If you don't have a simple, catchy phone number don't list it, they can't write it down. Put your name in big letters, this they can remember and look up in the phone book.

- [www.adsmartoutdoor.com/billboards.htm](http://www.adsmartoutdoor.com/billboards.htm)
- [www.lamar.com](http://www.lamar.com) This company also offers in-transit ads.

### In-Transit

#### **Buses Subways Taxis**

Many In-Transit options are available. Check your local options and directories.

- Buses – Inside and out
  - If you do an inside ad, list your phone number and more information. People have the time to read and write down information.
- Commuting automobiles (side door removable signs)
- School buses (in some locations)

*Check SRDS ([www.srds.com](http://www.srds.com)) or call them at 847-375-5000. Public Libraries also have many professional guides for advertising.*