

Marketing Matters



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It's amazing how many uses you can find for a Toolkit if only you set your mind to it. You know the hallway door that you have to keep pushing open when you have a few boxes of copier paper to move? You can use a Toolkit as a door stop—or just to jam the door long enough to finish the job. If you don't mind the large size you can use it as a paperweight for your desk, and with a little luck it could be what finally keeps your conference room table with the short leg from being wobbly. I'd tell you it could be used as a flotation device in the unlikely event of a water landing, but it's best to just drive carefully when you're near a lake. When it comes to *this* Toolkit, I can think of considerably better uses.

The *Strategic Marketing Toolkit: Success Strategies for Hospice* was created thanks to a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation to the HOPE of Wisconsin and Hospice Minnesota, and comes to fill a substantial void. It contains specific advice and helpful tools that it would take tens of thousands of dollars and many months to get from a consultant. Don't let "Professor" or "Ph.D." by my name fool you: I wrote the Toolkit in the tone of my columns and conference presentations, making sure that you won't need to know academic jargon or have a degree in cryptography to decipher what I'm saying. It's specifically designed to be user-friendly, exactly because I don't want it to collect dust on your shelf. And I know it won't, because even a quick look at its contents will show you the sheer number of ways in which this Toolkit can help your hospice organization become better, stronger, more competitive—and perhaps even find new ways to be compassionate for people in need.

You want to know what's likely wrong with the survey you currently use to measure patient and family satisfaction—and find out how to measure it better? You'll find some answers in the Toolkit. How big a difference does employee satisfaction make, what factors affect it, and how can you measure it effectively? The Toolkit will give you pointers on all of that. Just how important is your hospice brand, how can you build a stronger one, and who can help you do that in a way that's both original and effective? Check out Chapter 7 for that one. And I'm just getting warmed up!

Are there small extra things you can do to provide the kind of care that catches your patients and their families off guard and exceeds their expectations? What about expanding the role of volunteers in ways you may not have thought of before? Are you trying to come up with creative new ways to fundraise and wondering how to increase both the publicity and response your fundraising events receive? Have you given some thought to ways of using the internet more strategically without reinventing the wheel? How can you overcome the barriers to referrals, and are there really ways to build better, stronger, more long-lasting referral networks? Are there additional kinds of staff training that can affect your quality of care—and what kind? Why do you need a Strategic Marketing Plan, and what specifically would you include in it? How can you find and hire the most qualified Marketing staff—and outside Marketing experts you can trust and count on to help take your hospice to your next level? You want to see answers to these and several more questions? If you do, maybe this Toolkit won't see much action as a door stop after all!

With no less than thirteen chapters and a “Guided Tour of the Toolkit” as an introduction, several color illustrations, a user-friendly format that separates the sections and gives you a table of contents for each, this is a Toolkit that's easy to use rather than intimidating and confusing. I also don't believe that something useful and substantive ought to read in a way that's overly formal and stiff—so I hope you'll actually enjoy reading it in addition to learning from it. It's not a book, in the sense that you'll get to read it from cover to cover and never look at it again. It's a roadmap you'll consult time and again no matter what you're working on, so it will keep adding value to your hospice for years to come.

If I have one regret about the *Strategic Marketing Toolkit: Success Strategies for Hospice*, it's that I didn't write it ten years ago. In November 2008, on his Wisconsin Public Radio Program, Larry Meiller and his guests were discussing the challenges of raising awareness about hospice, the services it offers, and people's questions about eligibility and cost. I chimed in specifically to say that this Toolkit would make a clear and present difference in addressing some of these challenges, and many more. It's long overdue, but it's finally in your hands!

No, I'm not going to sell Toolkits to you; I only have a couple of copies of it myself, and I'm keeping them! You can get one directly from the HOPE of Wisconsin at wisconsinhospice.org, so you'll know that even your purchase will support the good work of hospice. But I *am* going to stand by the contents, because I know they can make a positive difference for your hospice. By now I've made presentations at hospice conferences, trained hospice staff, and been a consultant for hospices. I've read a lot, written a lot, but also listened and learned a lot along the way. I can honestly say that the more I've come to know about hospice care, the more I've come to admire and look up to everyone who makes it possible—every one of *you*. The fact that I can use my expertise and experience in Strategic Marketing to lend you a hand, to give you tools you can use to reach and care for more people, is something I consider a privilege.