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IS YOUR PATIENT REFERRAL PROGRAM WORKING?

How do you know?





Determine Your **Ideal Patients**

Without knowing who you want to attract, it's almost impossible to ask for the right referrals... and it will be a huge waste of time!



STEP 2

Determine Your **Best** Referral Sources



Local Physicians

Not just other eye doctors

Consider primary care physicians, pediatricians, podiatrists, surgeons, and more. Think about your specialty and who makes sense (eg. Teachers for vision therapy).



Current Patients

Ideal patients are best

Take some time alone or with your staff to brainstorm who your favorite patients are and keep a list of them near the front desk for future reference.



Other Sources

Get creative

This is where your competitors typically fall short - they don't consider ALL the other possible referral sources (eg. Gym for a sports vision specialty).



PROMOTION

Promote Your Referral Program

Don't Depend on **Your Patients**

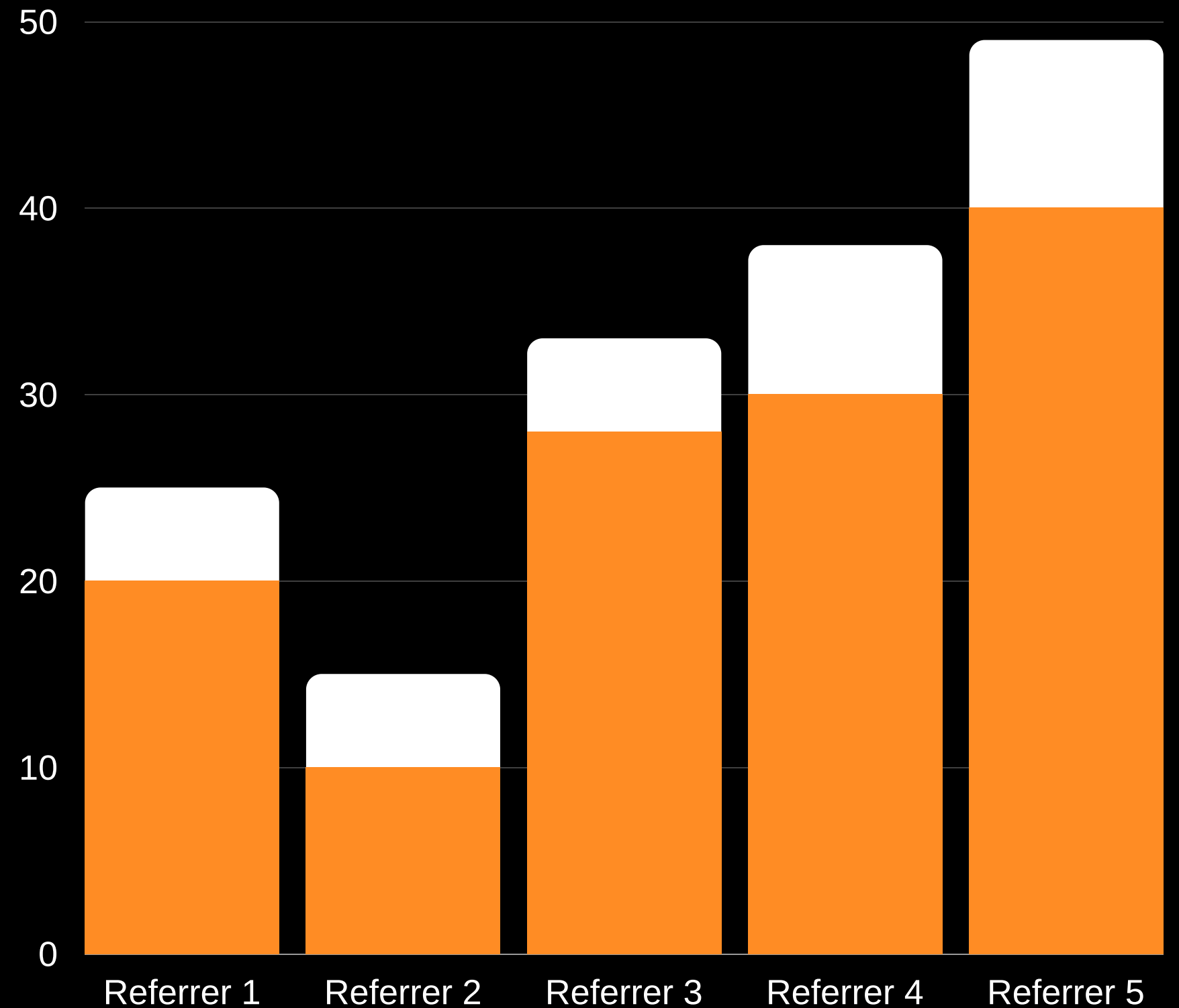
It's no longer enough to expect patients to passively refer others to your practice. You'll achieve a much higher level of success by actively promoting your referral program through a routine system of outreach and marketing/advertising.



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Track Your Referred Patients

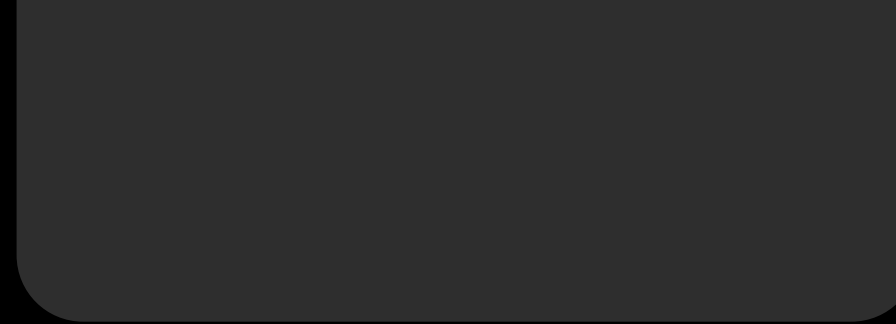
It's important to track where your patients are coming from every time a (prospective) new patient calls your office, even if an appointment is not generated. This can typically be done inside your EMR software program. A weekly or monthly report can then be generated and evaluated for outcomes and improvements.



STEPS
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Reward Your Referral Sources

Sometimes a simple “thank you” card sent to the referral source is all that’s needed. However, to elevate your referral program to expert level, consider sending a gift card for the referral every time one is made (check to make sure this practice does not violate state optometric laws or HIPAA rules). This is where the tracking system becomes imperative.



Treat Your Patients Well

Of course, this should be a given. It's ALWAYS the practice owners and staff who treat their patients exceptionally well that receive 5-star recommendations online (I'll give you tips on getting those 5-star recommendations on a later post!) and who tend to get the most referrals. Never underestimate the value of word-of-mouth referrals... and the 5-star online reviews





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