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IMMUNIZATION INTELLIGENCE ©  NEWS

10 WAYS TO GIVE MORE VACCINATIONS And maybe have some fun doing it

By Dale Dauten, Syndicated Columnist

If you're reading this, you're a believer – you recognize the world-changing, life-saving power of immunizations. Even so, we all have to admit that getting vaccinations is a chore and a day spent giving them isn't exactly a car ride with James Corden. However, as we've researched vaccination programs and created one of our own (the All-American Flu Fighters™), we came across some pretty cool ideas for making the experience better all around.

A few months back we featured an article on the work of Jason Briscoe, the Director of Pharmacy Operations for Discount Drug Marts, a 73-location

chain in Ohio. It was then that we first started thinking about a "Top Ten." So, in addition to our own experience and an idea from the Nationwide Children's Hospital, we turned to Jason and his team for help, and thus was born our list of Ten Ways to Give More Vaccinations...



You didn't get it from me!

10. ENGAGE THE JOY OF COMPETITION: Jason has transformed the hard work of immunizations into a merry battle among pharmacists, including some zippy trash talking. Here's how he started off this year's competition:

From: Jason Briscoe
Subject: Flu Shot Tracker
Attn: All Pharmacy Personnel

Just a reminder that our Flu Shot Tracker is live. Also...we will, for a third year, run a PRE-Flu Shot Contest–Contest for which we will reward the first Pharmacist to immunize 150 patients with a choice of 2 Cleveland Cavs Tickets (2017-18) or 4 Tickets to Playhouse Square (2018 season).

Ground Control to Major Tom(ko)!!

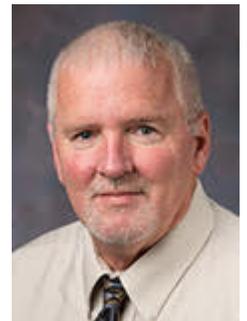
"This is Ground Control to Major Tom(ko). You've REALLY made the grade." -David Bowie

We are off and running to our best August as a group (up 76%) led by our Chief RPh at DDM #18, Jim Tomko. When asked about his fast start, JT pointed to his off-season training regimen. I assumed he was speaking of Continuing Education specific to immunizations, but instead he credits the use of ankle weights and the Thighmaster. Tomko stated, "I'm willing to do whatever it takes to protect as many of our Patients as possible all the while making a significant impact within the community of Independence."

When learning of Tomko's early charge, (Queen) Beth Minor was quoted as saying, "Really impressive work! But please remind JT that Winter Is Coming and he (just like John Snow) and all of the other Pharmacists across Discount Drug Mart will Bend the Knee by mid-November."

Thanks to JT for setting the proper tone as we enter the heart of Patient Protection Season...let's all follow his lead.

9. BEND AN ARM: Joe Quackenbush, the Vaccine Coordinator of the Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, passes along this tip for making the actual injection more palatable. He says, "Twenty years ago I learned a trick from a physician and I've been using it ever since: When I give injections to adolescents, I tell them to put their hand on their hip. That way that can't tighten up the deltoid and it doesn't hurt as much."



8. DON'T GIVE SHOTS, MAKE FRIENDS: When we wrote about the vaccination program at Discount Drug, we quoted one pharmacist as saying, "I love flu-shot season." That was Anastasiya Vornovitskaya, a star in doing offsite flu clinics. She says, "I welcome the chance to get away from the computer screen and interact with our patients." Anastasiya's love of flu-shot season must come through to the people she meets. She says, "It's a real opportunity to develop a more personal relationship with your patient so you have to feel out what their particular needs are. If someone is nervous I try to joke around with them— my go-to currently is 'I haven't lost anyone yet,' which might not seem like the most reassuring statement but it really does give everyone a chuckle (and) it distracts them for a moment—and in that moment—the immunization is done!"



How good is she at making friends? Listen to this:

“We work to make it a great experience for the schools and businesses we visit. I was doing an offsite clinic at a school and an alarm went off, so I had some extra time to interact with the staff. They told me how much they appreciated me, and when I went to leave, they sang to me. Everyone knows the Drug Mart jingle, and they sang it to me as I left.”

7. MAKE IT FUN: Azure Spanier, the head of HR for STC and leader of the company’s All-American Flu Fighters™ onsite shot campaign, says this: “Make flu shots fun? Okay, maybe not the actual shot, but we figured out how to make the process fun and lively. We had a potluck breakfast on shot day, had

a raffle for those who got shots, had lunch brought in and a wellness speaker. This year we also invited employees to have their families come in for shots. Having kids around always creates a special joyful energy.”



6. MAKE IT QUICK: We also wrote earlier about Beth Minor, the DDM pharmacist Jason describes as “leading the league, year after year.” She’s also the one mentioned in his email in #10 as Queen Beth, the queen of the flu shot competition. She’s here at #6 and you’ll see her again on this list.

She’s proud of her customer/patient loyalty for vaccinations. She earns that loyalty by “creating a positive experience – our thing is to make them happy.” A big part of that positive experience is speed and efficiency: “We show our patients that they can get in and out faster than a doctor’s office or a clinic.” Having built a strong base of regulars, she can find their records and have their flu shot ready in the time it takes them to fill out the paperwork.

5. DON’T ANNOUNCE IT; SELL IT: Azure Spanier of STC and The All-American Flu Fighters™ added this principle: “Instead of just announcing that shots would be available, we did a promotional program. We did a series of three emails, posters, a flier on every desk and stickers for those who got their shots. It was impossible for anyone to ignore the campaign.”

4. YOU’RE PROTECTING, NOT SHOOTING: Lauren Rahe of Discount Drug has noticed that offering “vaccines” seems to work better than “shots,” so her team has learned to use the former term. Plus, she adds, “I thank them for getting a flu shot to help protect themselves and protect their community. (It might seem cheesy, but people like to be told they are doing something good!)”

3. MAKE IT THE PERFECT TIME: If you visit the DDM pharmacy run by Jeffery Mau and his team, then it’s the perfect time to get vaccinated. It’s always the perfect time. If the pharmacy isn’t busy, they say, “Did you get your flu shot yet? There’s no one ahead of you, or there’s no one waiting right now.” If they are busy with flu shots it goes, “Did you get your flu shot yet? Everyone else is getting one, you should too!”

2. EMBRACE POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE: One more insight from the experiments with onsite clinics done by the All-American Flu Fighters™: “We went around the offices and asked those who had NOT signed up for flu shots if they’d like to join in. This allowed us to get into conversations where we could take on excuses and misconceptions.

“Then, on flu shot day, we put a balloon on every office door or cubicle to signify those who had gotten their shots. I know there are those who think this is applying excess peer pressure, but then again, we are fighting a vicious illness that affects everyone in the office. Many hospitals and other medical facilities are now requiring flu shots and if employees refuse, they are required to wear masks at work throughout flu season. Compared to that, we think balloons were subtle.”

1. MAKE THE BAD PART (THE SHOT) DISAPPEAR: This is another idea from Queen Beth – that’s Beth Minor, the star of the Discount Drug vax contests – and we love this one because the best vax is the one you didn’t even realize you just got. (Combine this with Idea #6 and it’s no wonder Beth has built a loyal following.)

She says,

“A lot of people hate shots and so I have learned to distract them. My favorite way involves cell phones, which just about everybody has in their hand. I ask them to bring up a photo and while they do I give them the shot and they can’t believe that they didn’t feel a thing. And they come back every year.”



And there you have our Top Ten. Our hope is that some of you are reading this and thinking, “I’ve got something that should be on that list.” Please send up a note and let us know—our dream is to do another list, maybe with a title that starts, “Five More Ways...”

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