

THE OFFICE

Organize Your Samples—and Your Reps

Everybody, it seems, thinks they have too many samples, but you really don't. What you have is too much packaging.

If you doubt this, take a good look at the next set of samples that comes into your office. Each unit will probably consist of a big box or card, and somewhere within its depths, amid all the wasted space, will be a single tablet or 3-g tube.

All that space-wasting packaging is purposeful, of course. Bigger is better, after all, from a promotional standpoint. Bigger packages are more likely to be noticed, and there's more room for advertising. The marketing people figure that if they use up all of your available sample space, you won't have room for their competition.

As a result, you probably have sample packages taking up two or three closets' worth of expensive square footage—with the samples themselves occupying perhaps 5% of that space or less.

Not only that, but each time you need a particular sample, somebody has to go hunting for it. Sometimes you find it, sometimes you don't. And when you do, there's a fair chance it's expired. It's a waste of time, space, and energy, and it's not necessary.

Here's what you do: Create a "parts-bin system" for your samples.

Have a carpenter build some shelving in a central area of the office. Stock those

shelves with cardboard or plastic parts bins, which are available in a variety of lengths, widths, shapes, and colors from many different sources. Three online examples are www.anytimeproducts.com, www.papermart.com, and www.lkgoodwin.com. (As always, I have no financial interest in any product or service mentioned in this column.)

As samples come in, ask the representative who brings them to strip off all the space-wasting packaging, leaving only the tablet bubble-pack cards or the 3-g tubes. You'll be amazed at how much less space they take up. Store them in the bins, and arrange the bins on your shelving by whatever organizational system you fancy. We do it alphabetically.

You'll always know what samples you have, what you're out of, and what's close to its expiration date. You and your staff will waste far less time searching for the samples you want, and you can use all that freed-up sample space for something far more likely to generate revenue for your office.

A parts-bin system could be an even bigger boon to your office if the Food and Drug Administration ever makes good on its recurrent promise to require written paper trails

for all samples entering and leaving a facility. Periodic inventories, as well as logging samples in and out, will be far easier with my system.

While you're organizing your samples, organize your pharmaceutical reps too. Many offices allow representatives to come and go as they please, and too many physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners are all too willing to stop and chat with them, which disrupts efficient office flow. And if multiple reps show up in a single day, the chaos just multiplies.

Have your reps make appointments, just as your patients do. We allow only one rep appointment per day—during the lunch break, 10 minutes before the start of afternoon hours. That prevents disruption of the schedule, and it prevents me from chatting too long (which I have a tendency to do).

We also encourage reps not to make appointments at all unless they have some-

thing of significance to communicate. I'm happy to speak with reps, but not when all they have to offer is small talk. ■

DR. EASTERN practices dermatology and dermatologic surgery in Belleville, N.J. To respond to this column, write Dr. Eastern at our editorial offices or e-mail him at fpnews@elsevier.com.



BY JOSEPH S. EASTERN, M.D.

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Astellas Pharma US, Inc. Adenoscan	37
AstraZeneca LP. Crestor	14a-14b
Forest Laboratories, Inc. Lexapro Bystolic Namenda	10a-10b, 11 17-24 44a-44b
King Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Skelaxin	13-14
Eli Lilly and Company Cymbalta	33-36
Merck & Co., Inc. Zostavax Janumet	26a-26d 30a-30b, 31
Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation Exelon Exforge	8a-8b 51-52
Novo Nordisk Inc. Levemir	41-42
Ortho-McNeil Neurologics, Inc. Topamax	38a-38d
Pfizer Inc. Lyrica	4-8
Sanofi Pasteur Inc. ADACEL	29-30
UCB, Inc. Tussionex	42a-42b



CLASSIFIEDS

Also Available at www.familypracticenews.com

CONTINUING EDUCATION

No Billing or Receivables High Demand CASH Procedures

- Stop going to SALES "seminars"
- START learning one-one from Aesthetic Medicine Professionals
- No Franchise Fees Involved

Free Introductory Preceptorship Learn:

- Laser Hair and Spider Vein Removal Treatments
- Laser Collagen Remodeling
- Laser Skin Resurfacing
- BOTOX
- Microdermabrasion
- Sunless Tanning
- Business and Marketing Training

Visit www.aesthticclinic.net
AESTHETICS, INC.
888-550-4113

The American Academy of Urgent Care Medicine introduces the

2008 Urgent Care Medicine Conference

Building Bridges

May 27-30, 2008 • Hyatt Regency • Baltimore, Maryland

- **Education**
Earn Category 1 Continuing Medical Education
- **Networking**
Network with Fellow Urgent Care Professionals
- **Discovery**
Discover World-Class Products, Services & Technology

Register at www.aaucm.org

For more information please call 407-521-5789 or visit www.aaucm.org and click "2008 Urgent Care Medicine Conference"

AAUCM
American Academy of Urgent Care Medicine

Moving?

Look to Classified Notices for practices available in your area.

PRODUCTS

EKG Machines for LESS!!

Medical Device Depot sells the best name brands at the lowest prices!

Our machines come with a long-term warranty and in-office training. **See before you buy!!**

Choose from the following special deals:

- AT-1i:** Multi-channel EKG w/interpretation **\$1,398**
- AT-2i:** Multi-channel EKG w/interpretation & full page printout **\$1,856**
- AT-2 light:** Multi-channel EKG w/interpretation, full page printout & alphanumeric keyboard **\$2,275**
- AT-2 plus:** Multi-channel EKG w/interpretation, full page printout, alphanumeric keyboard & EKG waveform display **\$2,677**
Add spirometry for **\$1,000**

3 YEAR WARRANTY
AT-2 plus combo, EKG w/Spirometry pictured

Refurbished Ultrasounds—Pulse Oximeters—Spirometers
PC Based EKGs—Stress Test Systems—PC Based Holter Systems
Ambulatory BP Monitors—Vital Signs Monitors—Dopplers

Call for on-site demonstration or more info!
Toll Free 877-646-3300
www.medicaldeposdepot.com

Medical Device Depot Inc.