

WINNING WALK 101

We've searched high and low (well, North and South anyways) to find a formula that makes for a winning walk every time. We haven't found it; after all, walks are kind of like toe prints, but we have found some themes that carry through our most successful walks. Here they are:

CORE The most successful walks have a walk champion that brings an enthusiastic spirit and an encouraging attitude to the walks, and to their time outside of the walks when sharing walk information. This person encourages people to come out, and their influence keeps people coming back.

SUPPORT Being the sole person responsible for every aspect of a walk can be challenging (food and drinks, registration, marketing, speaking, etc.). Some of the most successful walks have recruited a team of support from local YMCAs, senior centers, family members, medical partners, faith-based organizations, local businesses and nonprofit organizations, etc. to help with different pieces of the walk.

PLANNING Some walks have a dedicated doc that attends every walk, others have a new doc for each walk. We have found that if the doc is always changing then people tend to care more about the speaking topic. Send out a schedule in advance of what the doc will be talking about for each walk.

MARKETING This one is so important that we have a whole page for it! Visit our ["All Things Marketing"](#) page to see a plethora of marketing tips, sample flyers, and much more.

TIMING Find out when people in your area are most likely to come walk. Send out surveys, ask them at the clinic, or ask them at the walks. While most of our successful walks take place on Saturday mornings, many can still find success on weekday afternoons or evenings. This varies depending on your population and demographic.

Consistency is key! If you're able to commit to a regular schedule (i.e. the 1st Saturday of the month at 9AM at Central Park) it can be easier for people to remember when and where they need to be.

CAMARADERIE The success of walks is often determined by the level of camaraderie established between walkers. Facilitate relationships by encouraging different regulars to walk with each other. At each walk, ask if there are any new walkers and make sure they have a healthcare professional or other regulars to walk with. Make them feel welcome and be sure to share the details of your next walk.

MOST IMPORTANTLY Have fun! The walks are meant to be a fun break from the typical healthcare setting. After you've done all the hard work to market and plan, sit back (okay... stand up and walk) and smell the flowers. You and your team made this happen and it's time to celebrate that effort!

