

Graham Adams
SC SORH

Graham Adams is the CEO of the South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SC SORH). He has been with the SC SORH since 1995.

You've said that SORHs should do all they can to improve their "brand." Why is it important that you market your Office?

I have a different perspective as a not-for-profit State Office. I am a small employer, with 42 employees, but no state appropriation. Every dime we have, we bring in--we always have to work for that next dime. We've grown the office over the years through trying to be a good partner. I think every SORH director can work to carve out a position of respect and power within their states regardless of whether their SORH is nonprofit, university or state government-based. We all should be striving to provide great value--it maximizes the influence of the office.

You may be an office of only three people, but if you brand the office, and position yourself to be an advocate for rural health issues in your state, it brings more value to those you serve. It can be more than just administering the Flex and SORH grants. You're a resource and a player at the table at the state-level discussions. We work hard to show that we're an organization that is advocating on behalf of rural providers and for rural providers.

How you market the office, the things you produce, how you talk about it--all can have a big impact. If you perceive yourself as being a small fish in a big pond, that's how others will perceive you. Positioning the office as an advocate for rural providers in state level discussions eventually makes you a bigger fish. Look at other SORHs and what they're doing to increase their brand... a lot of what we do in South Carolina we've learned from fellow State Offices.

What are the best ways to market a SORH?

Being a good partner, and doing what you say you'll do. Being knowledgeable. Not saying 'I can't help you with that,' and that being the end of the discussion--successful offices will help you find the solution. Our office tries to do a lot of social media marketing, with Twitter, Facebook, Hubspot, Salesforce and a blog. We're also trying to ensure the consistency of the brand. Making sure that every piece of printed material, every PowerPoint, portrays the office in a consistent manner. We've worked very hard at this.