

# All about Marketing Home Study Course

4 CE Hours

Text and Online Study Guide

Presented by the:

*Center for Massage Therapy Continuing Education*

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## **Instructions for the All about Marketing home study course**

Thank you for investing in the All about Marketing home study course, a 4 CE hour course designed to further your knowledge on the topic of marketing your massage practice. This guide will contain all of the instructions you will need to complete this course. This is a 4 CE hour course, so that means it should take you approximately 4 hours to read the text, and complete the examination and course evaluation.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF THIS COURSE.

### **The following are steps to follow in completing this course:**

- 1. Read the instructions and review the text and exam.**
- 2. Access the online examination in your account at [www.massagetherapyceu.com](http://www.massagetherapyceu.com).**
- 3. Complete your examination and print your certificate. The exam is open book and there is no time limit for completion.**

You must pass the exam with a 70% or better to pass this home study course. You are allowed to access and take the exam up to 3 times if needed. There is no time limit when taking the exam. Feel free to review the text while taking the exam. There are no trick questions on the exam. All of the answers are clearly found in the text. The exam is also included at the end of the text for review before taking the exam.

It is advised to answer the exam questions in the study guide before testing online. That way, when you are testing you do not have go back and forth through the online exam.

Good luck as you complete this course. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at 866-784-5940, 712-490-8245 or [info@massagetherapyceu.com](mailto:info@massagetherapyceu.com). Most state boards require that you keep your “certificate of achievement” for at least four years in case of audit. Thank you for taking our All about Marketing home study course.

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## Introduction

There are many different ways to market your practice and each different marketing channel requires different techniques and strategies. Understanding how to navigate through the marketing process and how to use these techniques is extremely important for small businesses. This course will go over how to establish strategies, implement them in your practice, and finally how to analyze whether or not you should continue your specific marketing strategy. You will not only learn different strategies for different types of marketing channels, but you will also learn the importance of marketing and how to control the future of your practice by controlling how you market.

## **Section 1: Understanding your Market**

### Section Objectives

At the end of this section, you should have the information necessary to:

- Describe different techniques to compile information for a market analysis
- Describe ways to differentiate your practice from the competition and be able to explain why differentiation is important
- Define a niche business and give examples of what marketing a niche practice might entail

### Introduction

Marketing whether it is done directly through you or in the form of your reputation will make or break your practice. You can implement strategy after strategy and pour more and more money into your marketing campaigns and still not have any effect on the bottom line of your business. The reason for this is simple. Marketing is like math, while there are thousands of different equations out there to use, unless you use the right one you will never find the right answer. This is what this section of the course is about. In this section you will learn to analyze your market, find who you need to be targeting as potential clients, and how to differentiate yourself from the competition. Once you have this information you will be able to choose which marketing strategies would be best for your unique practice.

### Who are your Clients?

Before you spend your first dollar on a marketing strategy, a plan needs to be established relating to the people you are targeting with these strategies. This pre strategy planning, or market analysis, will give you the information you need to make your strategies effective. By marketing your practice you are trying to accomplish two main things. The first and most obvious is to sell. The second is to create a reputation. The obstacle standing in your way when attempting to accomplish these goals is that of lack of information. If you are

unaware of who your target market is or who you should be marketing to then your efforts and money spent on unique marketing strategies are useless. As an extreme example imagine marketing dog food to a community of cat lovers. No matter how good your marketing campaign is, it will be useless if you are marketing to the wrong audience or marketing incorrectly to the right audience. The market analysis you perform for your practice gives you the information you need so that you do not make these mistakes.

Finding this market information is easier than you think. There are many organizations, such as the American Massage Therapy Association and the Bureau of Labor Statistics that publish yearly information such as the demographics of massage therapy clients which is important when it comes to targeting a specific group. This information will tell you who the clients are and how they are brought into massage therapists' practices. For example, if you know that the majority of national potential clients are under the age of 50 and use massage for non health related reasons then a spa type set up for your practice would be a better strategy then trying to spend a lot of time marketing in a retirement community. This assures that you are targeting the right audience and marketing the services that this target audience is interested in: no wasted time or money.

While national data is great and can be a big help in your analysis, there is some information that will be specific to your geographic area and customer base that cannot be explained by national information. Using the example above, if you live in a town that has a population that is 80% over the age of 60, the national information doesn't help you much and marketing in retirement communities wouldn't be such a bad idea. Your local government agencies will have this type of demographic information along with other information that will be of benefit to your marketing campaign. Understanding your local market also gives you the advantage of comparative analysis. In a comparative analysis you can look at other similar markets to yours and see what services are popular and what price they are being offered.

Regardless of any published information, the best marketing insights will come from your current clients. When a client walks into your office or makes their first phone call, ask

them how they heard of you. This simple questions gives you all the information needed on which of your marketing channels are working. A running tally of this information can be used as the benefit of a cost benefit analysis to understand which of marketing strategies have been profitable.

Comment cards and questionnaires are also great ways to get information from your clients. Keep comment cards and questionnaires confidential and give discounts to customers who give you comment cards to put in your comment box. This discount gives the client an incentive to give you information. How you ask for this feedback and the incentive you provide clients will determine the quality and breadth of feedback you receive. Comment cards are short and to the point asking simple yes or no questions with a space for additional comments at the bottom. Not a lot of time is needed therefore the incentive does not need to be as high. Using these comment cards as raffle tickets for a free massage should suffice. However, in the event you are looking for much more detailed information, a questionnaire would be more appropriate. Opposed to having questionnaires available for anyone to fill out, pick the clients who you consider to be good representations of your market. These are the clients we want in depth information from. After an appointment ask the client if they would mind filling out a survey or questionnaire on your practice. Explain the importance of the information to your business and why you chose them to give you this information opposed to others. Finally, make it worth their while. Offer a juicy discount or promotion for the information, the bigger the promotion the more information you can feel comfortable asking. Questions about the pricing of massages, how much they would be willing to pay for your massage regardless of the current price, what they think of your scheduling process, how important social media is to their decision to purchase products/services, and what other massage modalities would interest them are all fair game. The process of using this type of information does not end at the collection. Use this information when you are choosing marketing strategies and deciding how and when to implement them.

From a broader point of view, your market analysis may have to be more in depth if you offer a specific type of massage or if your practice focuses on a certain niche. In these cases you



will have to focus your market analysis on where your niche or specific type of massage would be used the most and where the best location for your marketing campaigns would be.

By compiling all the information from your analysis and your list of marketing channels, you can create marketing strategies that will target a specific audience in an effective way.

### Competition and Differentiation

When you take all of the details of a marketing regime into account, differentiating yourself from the competition is key. You must give your clients a reason to come back to you opposed to going to someone else. Everything about your practice, location, attitude, the whole experience is being evaluated by clients and this evaluation will be immediately compared to other massage experiences. If their experience with you ranks higher than the others, then they will come back. If not, you will have lost a client. There are many ways to differentiate yourself and make it clear to your clients that there is no better choice than you.

While it may not be the first thing that is thought of when someone mentions marketing, the experience a client has in your practice is just as important as the marketing strategies you implemented to get them to visit you in the first place. Due to the owner/operator relationship many massage practices portray, you as the owner have full control over the experience your clients receive due to the attitude they are greeted with. You have the ability to make someone happy and personally give your clients a great experience. Giving them clear and concise information, caring about their well-being, being polite, and having a positive attitude are all ways that you can use your attitude and personality to manipulate the experience your clients are having. Smiles are contagious and making sure your client is happy when they are at your practice will leave them with a positive memory every time they think of their massage experience with you.

You also want to establish credibility during the experience. Show your client not only through your words, but your actions that you are a professional and have the education necessary to give them the experience they are paying for. Credibility is most easily created by becoming a source of information for your clients. When your clients have questions answer

them proficiently and if you don't know the answer be sure to research the information and contact them with the correct answer. This is the type of action that will set you apart from the competition and give the client a reason to come back to your practice for their next massage.

Another way to differentiate your practice from other massage therapy practices is to create a niche within your community. A niche fills a specific need within your market that is not met by anyone else. Your goal is to encompass your practice and focus your skills on this need. Because the need can be anything, it is impossible to give a list of niches to choose from. However, I will give some ideas of niche based practices so you have an idea of what to look for and what you can do. Try to train yourself to look for these needs within your market. The more you look for and analyze marketing strategies to meet these needs, the easier it will be to recognize a great opportunity.

One example of a niche practice would be a massage therapy practice that focuses on massages for golfers. This type of practice may not have a concrete office, but rotates locations throughout the week, scheduling massage appointments at different golf courses throughout the community. Another type of niche would be focusing on a specific need for massage itself. For example, massage therapy can be used for pain management. If you were to create a niche practice that focuses on massage therapy for pain management, then you can target your market even further and focus future certifications and education on expanding your knowledge and strengthening your skills specifically in pain management. Once you have established yourself as a niche practice, you can focus your marketing efforts on the smaller niche market that you are targeting. You can use the same marketing strategies for a niche practice as you would a regular practice, but the way use these strategies is what changes. You are now no longer marketing to a general community, but to a specific group of people. Taking the golf example used previously. You can still use health fairs as a marketing channel, but because you are focusing on your niche of massage therapy to golfers, you would attend conferences and venues that a normal massage therapist wouldn't. You may go to golf conventions or attend local country club gatherings. The purpose of a niche is to focus on something specific opposed to being a "Jack of all trades". If you have the education and skills

to be the best in this niche market, then marketing yourself as a niche practice could be a great way to differentiate your practice from the competition and give you more unique ways to focus your marketing strategies.

Finally, we will talk about the main reason for differentiation, competition. The threat of competition is a major problem for small businesses, especially when there is very little established to differentiate one business from the next. Fortunately, this problem can be dealt with through techniques of differentiation and targeted promotion. The first step in dealing with any sort of competition is to follow the old adage, “Keep your friends close and your enemies closer”. Learn as much as you can about your competition. With your investigative skills you should be able to complete a full S.W.O.T analysis on your competition. A S.W.O.T. analysis breaks down the components of your competition. S.W.O.T. stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Take the time to understand what is included in each of these sections for your competition. This information is vital and relatively easy to attain. It will be hard to learn the internal aspects of their business, but the external factors are just sitting there waiting for you to dissect. Once you have this type of information, you will be better prepared to market your practice in a way that differentiates you from the competition opposed to marketing to compete.

As an example, if you know that your main competitor has more years of experience than you do, then that would be their strength. Because you are aware of this strength you wouldn't want to focus your marketing on your individual experience because it is too easy for your competition to win the battle. Alternatively, maybe you know your competition only performs one type of massage, but you perform multiple types of massage. This is a weakness that gives you an opportunity for differentiation. When giving reasons to potential clients of why they should choose you, whether it is through your marketing or a conversation, saying that you are educated in multiple types of massage would be more beneficial than trying to market based on your years of experience.

## Price and Differentiation

Why is differentiation so important? Why can't you just lower your price below the competition and schedule more clients. Unfortunately, many small business owners feel that there is nothing wrong with this and that pricing is a great way to differentiate. This is simply not the case and is actually a mistake that causes many small businesses to fail. Your price is a statement. When you set a price for a massage you tell clients and potential clients not only what you think your massage is worth, but also what you value your massage experience.

Think of a fast food restaurant. Most people can cook a better hamburger than those offered from a drive thru, so why do these places survive? The experience sets them apart, you may be able to cook a better hamburger, but they can get you a burger, fries and a drink in less than five minutes. Look at this idea from the other extreme. You go to a nice steak dinner and pay \$65 for a steak. Surely this steak is not worth \$65, but you are paying for the experience that goes with it. You are waited on hand and foot, your food is cooked to your definition of perfection; things that can only be valued as the experience not the receipt of an actual product.

People understand that you get what you pay for and by lowering your price you are saying that the quality of the massage is less than that of your competition. However, there are obviously limits and you must be realistic about what a massage is truly worth. Making each client feel like they are getting special treatment and creating a positive massage experience are key to raising the value of your massage. Regardless, pricing is important, but there are other techniques relating to cost such as first massage discounts, repeat customer discounts, package deals, referral discounts, etc. These techniques lower the price of your massage to bring clients in the door. Once you show them that the value of your massage is worth more than the discounted price, they will feel more comfortable paying the higher price for one of your massages in the future.

## Conclusion

Differentiation is a key component of the marketing strategy. If someone wants a massage and has the choice of three massage therapists in their area, why should they pick you? This is where credibility, your attitude, and the strategies you choose all come together. The goal is to have your name associated with your profession. When someone wants or even talks about wanting a massage your name needs to be brought up immediately by someone in the conversation. Most of your clients will know very little of how to evaluate a massage therapist before deciding who would be the better pick. What your future clients will rely on is how often they have seen or heard of you and once they are in your practice, the quality of the experience they had. Use the information you have gathered from your market analysis to choose quality marketing and differentiation strategies that your current and potential clients will respond to. Remember, your marketing efforts will bring clients into your practice; your job is to keep them coming back.

At the end of each section there will be three review questions. These questions will go over some of the concepts discussed in the corresponding section and will give you some guidance as to what the final course assessment is going to be like. Along with answering the review questions for each section, you should make sure you can complete the section objectives with the detail and organization shown in your reading.

## Review Questions

1. True or False. Lowering your price for a massage below the prices of your competitors is a great way to differentiate your practice.
2. How is credibility most easily created?
  - a. Billboards and name recognition
  - b. Becoming a source of information for clients
  - c. More education
  - d. All of the above
3. What does S.W.O.T. stand for?
  - a. Strengths Weaknesses Options Treatments
  - b. Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
  - c. Stress Work Options Treatments
  - d. Strengths Weaknesses Options Threats

\*Answers to all review questions are compiled at the end of the course. Take the time to review your answers and go back into the text if you find any discrepancies between your answers and the answer key.

## **Section 2: Personal and Location Marketing**

### Section Objectives

At the end of this section, you should have the information necessary to:

- List the techniques to give a good in person first impression
- Describe the components of an effective introduction and “elevator speech”
- Describe how to conduct and follow up on a business conversation in a networking setting
- Identify the steps and goals of a knock and drop strategy
- Describe the procedure and tools needed to be successful at a health fair
- List different marketing products and describe what information each should include and how they should be organized

### Introduction

Personal marketing is the easiest marketing channel to control because you are directly responsible for the effort and time put into its effectiveness. While actual networking techniques will be discussed in this section of this course, it is important to understand that you are a direct reflection of your business and you need to keep this in mind regardless of what marketing strategy you are implementing. How you present yourself should be how you want your business to be perceived and in business, perception goes a long way.

### Networking

All types of personal marketing have one thing in common, networking. Personal marketing is networking. It is promoting yourself and your practice throughout the community by building relationships and growing upon them.

Networking is an art and the art of networking is all about perception and reputation. The more open you are to practicing your communication skills, the more opportunities for your career will start to appear. Business is all about relationships whether they are with other

business owners or clients. Exercising impression management by making sure that the way you carry yourself and the way you operate your practice is a direct representation of how you want you and your business to be perceived by the community is an important skill to develop. Good communication skills, a comfort with public speaking, and strong networking abilities will lead to positive impressions and a successful future for you and your business.

There are three main tools in your networking toolbox that must be completely polished and ready for business. These tools are your introduction, elevator speech, and your business card or brochure. These three tools, in most cases, form most of your first impression in the business world.

The introduction and the elevator speech work together. Imagine an elevator speech as more of an introduction for you and your business. Both of these when used in a networking scenario need to exemplify confidence and competence in your field. For this reason the basic introductions for you and your business should be near perfect. Self promotion is going to be your biggest marketing technique and if used correctly the most productive. Because of this, why wouldn't you want to be amazing at promoting yourself? The first step to self promotion is the introduction. The first impressions of you when talking to potential clients will be made within the first 30 seconds. The last thing you want is you to spend this time stuttering or searching for the words to give a proper introduction. Not only is this a minor embarrassment, but also a lost opportunity to make a great impression and potentially gain another client.

Your personal introduction should be short and to the point. It should obviously include your name and depending on the event how you are associated with the event or some sort of transition to start a conversation. For example, if you are at a health fair your personal introduction would be, "Hello, my name is Jane Smith. Have you ever received a massage?" Now these are just two sentences and many would wonder why bother explaining how to say your own name. The reason lies in the fact that these two sentences are the least important part of an introduction. The phrase, "Actions speak louder than words" explains this perfectly. There is a difference between walking up to someone without eye contact, a straight face,



introducing yourself and looking disinterested opposed to giving a firm handshake, a smile and looking confident. No person, much less a potential client, is going to hang around long enough to even hear what your business is about, especially if you don't even look interested in what you are saying.

Eye contact is the most important part of an introduction. Look the person you plan on introducing yourself to in the eye as you are approaching them. Doing this allows them time, no matter how short, to mentally prepare for you to talk to them. Holding eye contact and smiling during the conversation lets the other person know that you are paying attention and shows interest in what they are saying. Keep in mind that eye contact is not staring; you want to look interested, not make person you are talking with feel uncomfortable. For this reason it is alright to break eye contact briefly when in a conversation, just make sure you are still actively listening to the person speaking.

Active listening is an important habit to learn. When you are in a conversation, there is a difference between just hearing someone talk and actively listening. Actively listening in a conversation entails being engaged, add to the conversation not with random words, but with the purpose of adding to the knowledge gained from the conversation. Also, don't let the conversation become one sided, this leads to that dreaded awkward feeling or worse the feeling that one needs to talk even more. This never ends well. Lastly, when engaging in a conversation truly think about what the person is saying. This will enable you to understand where the conversation is going and will give you more relevant points to add to the conversation.

The other two aspects of the "action" of an introduction deal with confidence more so than technique. These are the handshake and posture. Now there is no need to break someone's hand when giving a handshake, but you should give a firm handshake that shows you are confident in introducing yourself. The second action item is posture. When you are walking toward someone or around a room, you can automatically show confidence by putting your chin up and rolling your shoulders back. Demonstrating a confident posture is difficult to

do when encountering uncomfortable environments. For most people these uncomfortable environments include times when they have to speak publically, speak to people directly that they do not know, or are surrounded by strangers. In these types of situations we tend to slouch and put our heads down because it gives us a hiding place. When you do these things, less of you is exposed therefore you are protecting yourself from a possibly unsafe environment. Forcing yourself to show a confident posture is important. At first this will be uncomfortable and in some cases you will feel like everyone is watching you. But, eventually you will build up the strength and bravery against the possibility of people looking at you. After this is overcome you will enjoy the fact that you have the confidence to walk up to strangers, introduce yourself, and possibly add a client to your practice.

The last topic of first impressions is attire. Like everything in a first impression or any impression, the way you are personally perceived is the way your business is perceived. This is important to remember as a business owner. When you are going to an event or going to a business meeting think about what you want people to think about you. If you want to be taken like a serious business person, you need to dress like one. Someone introducing themselves in a business suit is going to come across as more competent and professional than someone in jeans and a t-shirt. Now this may not be the case, but perception wins in impressions and you need to make sure that the way you dress and carry yourself is the way you want to be perceived.

In summation, eye contact, confident posture, a commendable handshake, appropriate dress and of course a smile when you are meeting new people will do wonders. This positive impression will not only benefit your practice, but more importantly will benefit the reputation of you personally and the Massage Therapy field as a whole.

The next topic is the elevator speech. The elevator speech gets its name from the idea that if you meet someone in the elevator you have about thirty seconds to introduce yourself, make a good impression, tell them the purpose of you talking to them, and explain how to contact you after the elevator door opens. This idea is mainly used by salespeople because their

elevator speech has to be good enough to get anyone interested in their product before they are brushed off, ignored, or hung up on. Elevator speeches for massage therapists are not nearly as rushed or structured as a sales pitch. However, it should house the same type of goals.

Your main goal after any introduction or elevator speech is to spark a conversation. People are more likely to remember you if they can associate you with a conversation opposed to only a name. The introduction and impression sections of the elevator speech were already discussed, but the contact information and purpose of why they should be listening to you are the parts that take some finesse. The easiest way to take care of the contact information goal is to hand your potential client or fellow businessperson a business card or brochure right after the handshake while you are finishing your elevator speech. The bulk of the speech is the reason why they should continue talking to you which should also lead to a conversation. Both of these are your mission, if you choose to accept it.

The reason why they should continue talking to you does not have to be something that you say directly to defend this, but your credentialing and what you do. "...I am a nationally certified massage therapist here in Metropolis and I own Main Street Massage across from the Main Street Business complex." So many points covered in one sentence. The more practiced you are with this the smoother it will sound. Robotic is not the tone you are looking for. Following this up with a transition to a conversation as we mentioned above will finish up your elevator speech. So all together for a simple and to the point elevator speech, we have, "Hello, my name is Jane Smith. I am a nationally certified massage therapist here in Metropolis. I own Main Street Massage across from the Main Street Business complex. Have you ever received a massage?" The great thing of ending with a yes or no question is that you can be prepared to follow up to either answer. If the person says yes, you can easily follow up with questions like when it was or why they used massage therapy. If someone says no, you can tell them that you would love to give them some information on massage therapy in the event they would like to get a massage in the future. With these types of follow ups to any transition, it should be relatively easy to start a conversation. When in the conversation, enjoy it, let them enjoy it and

give them information. Doing this will allow for a positive experience that you and your practice will be associated with which in turn will strengthen your reputation.

Take some time to write and practice your introduction and elevator speech. Practice different scenarios for answers to any transition questions and work on tweaking your introduction and speech for different locations, events, and people. Mastering the ability to communicate efficiently with others and presenting yourself in the correct way is going to be important in every type of personal networking scenario. Take the time work on improving your communication skills because not only are you representing you and your practice, but you are also directly representing the Massage Therapy field.

### Marketing Products

No matter what type of marketing strategy you take you are going to need marketing tools and literature. The goal of this information is twofold. The first is to promote your business and the second is education. Make the items eye catching and informational. Handing out a business card is one thing but it makes more sense to hand out a business card attached to a brochure that explains the benefits and uses of massage therapy. Doing this gives your potential clients the opportunity to learn about massage therapy in your absence and may trigger a benefit of massage therapy that they didn't know existed.

### Brochures

One of the most powerful marketing products you can implement is a brochure. The brochure should be simple and should avoid massage therapy jargon unless you define your word choice. You don't want to scare people off from being overwhelmed. It is also nice to add a little information about you and your practice into the brochure. After they know the benefits of massage therapy, this will show them why they should choose you as their therapist. Think of it as a short biography with your credentials and some facts about you. Keep it professional and think of it as an elongated elevator speech. After writing the brochure, make it appealing to the eye. Add some pictures, but don't fill it with so much information that it looks cluttered or

worse too intimidating where no one will even attempt to read it. Lastly, when it comes to brochures proofread your writing multiple times. This is the written impression of your business and you want it to be strong and professional.

### **Business Cards**

The business card is also an important tool. There are a few techniques to business cards that will help differentiate your card from the crowd. The first thing noticed when anyone is handed your card is the weight of the paper. The heavier the weight of the paper the less likely the person will throw your card out after you give it to them. Having a heavier weighted card also conveys a sense of importance, a better than the rest sort of situation. This is exactly what you want because when paired against other massage therapists' cards, you want yours to be the last one standing. The person who has a business card printed on a thin almost copy paper like paper with perforated edges is going to be quickly overlooked when your heavy weighted professionally made business card is handed out. This card is your perception within a few inches of paper. Make the card simple and on a soft, neutral color. Don't choose a neon green or pink business card because you think it will make you stand out. Yes you will stand out, but is that the way you want your practice to be perceived? Do you really want to be the massage therapy practice that hands out neon green business cards? Choose a shade of white or beige with dark color writing and your logo. This does not have to mean that a pure white business card with black writing is the only way to go. Keep the font easy to read, no extreme scripts or cursive should be used.

When choosing a general format for your card, keep it simple. Your practice name should be centered and the largest writing on the card. Follow this with your name and credentials, title, and contact information. When it comes to the contact information especially when adding an email, make sure it is professional. Beerchugger85 may have been a cool email when you first got it in your twenties, but who wants to get a massage from beerchugger85? The simplest email is always your business name or your name. Nothing complicated like a lot of numbers or symbols should be used. MainStreetMassage or clark.kent are perfect examples of a simple and professional email address. The same should be considered if you choose to

incorporate a website into your practice. Simple, descriptive and professional are ways that you should be able to describe your email address or website address. When dealing with marketing materials and marketing as a whole, it all comes down to how you want to be conveyed. Do you want to be perceived as a professional who is serious about their practice or as someone who is cheap and didn't put much thought into something as simple as a business card?

### **Give Away Items**

Everyone has had the experience of visiting a trade show or health fair and walking away with a bag full of pens, Frisbees, and an assortment of other random marketing products. These “give away” items can be very useful in marketing, but can also be deceptively dangerous because of their high cost.

If you decide to use these products in your marketing endeavors, use them wisely. Only choose marketing products that are useful and relevant to the environment you are in. For example, instead of handing out hundreds of water bottles at a health fair, hand out pens because it will be cheaper with such a large crowd. Save the water bottles for the next 5k race in your community. Doing this will give a higher probability that your product will be used instead of thrown out and it also gives you more of an opportunity to make connections with people in your community. Save the more expensive items for targeted, small audiences and the less costly products broad reach opportunities.

When having these items created, try to choose products that will serve multiple groups of people and many different scenarios (more bang for your buck). Pens work almost anywhere, water bottles work great for all sporting events, and business cards work everywhere. As a side note, avoid putting dates or event specific details on these products. Nothing is worse than being left with 500 Frisbees that say “Health Fair 2011” when its 2024.

Keep these give away items, brochures, and business cards with you at all times. The easiest way to do this is to keep a box in the back of your vehicle so that if you run into

someone outside of a marketing event you still have the tools necessary to give them more information about your practice.

### Business Owner Relationships and Gatherings

Many communities offer opportunities for business owners to meet and get to know each other. Some of these events are created directly by the local Chamber of Commerce, but most are just local organizations focused on the expansion of connections in the business community. If you are ever given the opportunity to attend or join one of these organizations, I highly recommend doing so. Opposed to going business to business introducing yourself, these meetings allow you to meet and promote yourself to many business owners at the same location. Because these meetings are usually regular gatherings, they provide an environment that is conducive to the establishment and growth of business. This section will explain the importance of creating business connections and how to do so.

The contacts you create for yourself are only worth the time and effort if you take the necessary care to turn them into relationships. Relationships of any kind take time and must be actively managed. This section is not so much focused on client relationships as it is on business contacts whether they are suppliers, fellow massage therapists, or other business owners in the community.

Handing out a business card or meeting another business owner is only knocking on the door of the potential business relationship. The key is being invited inside. You may have made an awesome introduction and your elevator speech was flawless, you may have even had a great conversation, but it doesn't mean anything if you never see or hear from this person again. This is where the follow up becomes important. Whenever you meet or are introduced to a business person and you feel that it would be conducive for your business to build a relationship with this person, you must follow up. This person has only met you once so somewhere in your follow up you must reference something that would trigger their memory so they know who they are talking to. Allow them to put a name to a face so to speak. Topics from the great conversation you had and the location of the meeting are perfect ways to add to

your re-introduction. Make sure not to follow up too late as you still want them to remember the event or the conversation. Within a week, at max two weeks, from the original meeting is a perfect time to follow up on the original conversation. Anything longer and it is possible that they have forgotten what you both were discussing or have lost the spark of interest.

The medium of follow up and reason for the follow up are also very important and highly subjective to the type of original meeting you had. There must be a reason you want to follow up with this person whether it is some sort of business arrangement you both were discussing or you feel that you both could offer each others' businesses some sort of benefit. This reason should be discussed in the follow up. For instance maybe the contact you met was a gym owner and he or she had expressed interest in bringing in a massage therapist to give massages at the gym two days a week. This is a great opportunity for your practice so it is time to take the bull by the horns and turn this opportunity into a reality. For this type of situation it may be best to call and reintroduce yourself. Remind the owner about the conversation you had about bringing in a massage therapist to the gym and ask if there is a convenient time so that you two could meet to discuss this as being an actual possibility. If nothing else comes of this business arrangement you have still built upon your reputation and connections within the community. When this owner is ever asked to recommend a massage therapist you will be at the top of the list because of the positive impression you made. If anything, you should always ask if you could leave some business cards or brochures at the business and be open to take any of their materials back to your business. The reason for this exchanging of marketing materials is simple. In a successful business relationship both businesses are more successful from having the relationship than without it.

Business relationships are an active commitment. You have to keep in touch with the contacts you make even if it is a simple email asking how everything is going in their business or even better reference the last communication you had with them. If the last email you were sent says something about them expanding their business to a second location, in your next email or phone call ask them if the second location has opened yet. Just like in general conversation etiquette, stay active in the conversation and be an active listener.



The strongest benefit of a business relationship is the referral. Nothing says someone is a business ally than when they refer someone to your practice. Maybe you met a chiropractor a few months ago at a local business get together. You exchanged contact information and stopped by his or her office to drop off some business cards. Now you receive a phone call to schedule an appointment from someone who was referred to you by this chiropractor. That business relationship just added a client to your client list. After someone adds a client to your client list you should always thank them. This thank you can be a simple phone call, email, or the best of all, a return referral by you of one of your clients. This type of scenario truly shows that in a successful business relationship both businesses have added benefits of working together than working apart.

Before we finish up the business relationship section I want to make a point that these types of relationships are two way streets. Don't be taken advantage of or worse have negative effects on your reputation because of a certain business relationship. If you know someone is not willing to help you out in your practice don't take time away from your practice to help grow theirs. I would be really hard pressed to allow someone to take up coffee table space in my waiting room with their marketing brochures if they won't even let me put some business cards on their counter.

Positive business relationships are such a strong tool when you are building or running a business. Spending the time to turn a contact into a relationship and keeping that relationship is worth the effort and will offer you benefits from so many different angles.

### Knock and Drop

The sooner you realize that you are your own best marketing tool, the sooner your business will see the benefits. There is no one that can explain your business or your business goals better than you can. For this reason, the biggest gains from marketing are going to come from your own sweat. This is exactly what personal networking is all about; you getting out in your community and promoting your business.

The best strategy for personal networking is the knock and drop strategy. This is where you as the business owner go out into your community and introduce yourself and your practice to business owners that you believe you could create a business relationship with. Because of the importance of these relationships, take the time to make the right decisions as to what businesses to visit. To help with these decisions, choose businesses that have the most in common with your business. Going to an auto repair shop to create a business relationship with the owner would have very few if any synergies to your business. Alternatively, instead of visiting an auto shop, why not stop by a local gym or sports club? Having a business relationship with one of these businesses would be more beneficial to your practice than the auto shop. The patrons of these businesses are already in the mind set of taking care of their bodies and would be more willing to think about getting a massage than someone who is fixing their flat tire. When you decide which businesses you would like to go visit, think about the first impressions section mentioned previously and how you plan on presenting yourself to these businesses. After this, either call to set up meetings with the business owner or walk into these businesses and speak to the manager or business owner. Out of these two options, setting up a meeting over the phone is always the best way to meet with the owner. As a business owner yourself you know that your time is valuable and how hard it is to meet with someone in the middle of your day. For this reason, use your time with the business owner efficiently to tell them what your business is about and what you do. Bring some marketing materials with you not only to give the owner some information, but also with the goal of being able to leave some of these materials for this business's customers.

It is important to remember the idea behind a business relationship. A business relationship can only be successful if both parties involved are better off in the situation than apart. For this reason, when you ask if you can leave some marketing materials behind, be sure to ask if there is some information on their business you could take with you. They may even ask you set out some business cards at your practice.

## Health Fairs

Health fairs offer an opportunity not only to meet other business owners in the community, but also to introduce yourself to potential clients that are interested in their health. This is a great marketing opportunity for your practice because it already satisfies a main market analysis condition. The people who are attending these health fairs are there because they care about their health; everyone in attendance is your target market.

When attending one of these health fairs as an owner, in most cases you will have to “buy” a table or space for the day or weekend. What this means is that you will essentially rent out table space at the health fair. Make sure that when registering you understand whether or not you need to supply your own table or tent (if held outside). During a health fair potential clients will be walking through the fair and will stop by different booths for more information on the different businesses. This is where differentiation sets in. Take the time to make your booth look presentable. Bring a table cloth, your marketing materials, and a display board with general massage information. When at the health fair, dress to impress and always stand in front of opposed to behind your booth. This gives you the opportunity to engage the people walking by your booth. You now have the ability to walk up to and talk to potential clients and hand out marketing material opposed to forcing the attendees to walk up to your table. Like we have previously discussed, people are uncomfortable approaching people they don't know. The attendees of the health fair are no different, so take the initiative and introduce yourself to them and use the introduction and elevator speech techniques you have learned.

Another great attention getter for health fairs is a massage chair. Put on your display board that you are offering free massages. When people walk up to your booth, do your basic introductions and information giving, but after ask if they would like to get a sample of your massage. Give them a short 5-10 minute chair massage and show them that you have the ability to give a quality massage. Keep this experience enjoyable and you are well on your way to adding another client to your schedule.

Overall, health fairs are a great opportunity to educate your community on the benefits of massage therapy. Be ready to answer common massage questions and ease the fears or worries of those who have been reluctant to receive a massage. The expansion of knowledge about massage therapy is vital to the strength and survivorship of the field as a whole and your individual career. When you become a source of information for potential clients, they will feel more comfortable becoming a patron of your practice which will in turn create a better business environment for your practice and career.

### Location

Location, location, location. A phrase we have all heard repeated so many times especially when dealing with marketing, but why? Your location serves many different purposes including helping your marketing campaign which is what will be discussed in this Location section.

When choosing a location for your practice, visibility and your market analysis should be the two biggest considerations. Review your market analysis and the demographics of your community. Where are the bulk of your potential clients located? If they are all on the east side of town, then that is where you want to put your practice. But, there are other considerations besides just where your clients are located. Look at the surrounding businesses in the area. Which businesses would create good environments for a massage therapy practice? A space in the same plaza as a gym, acupuncturist or health club (as long as they don't already offer massage) would offer opportunities for networking and marketing beyond just being in the plaza. Positioning your practice near businesses with similar goals also serves as a good way to ensure that people who see your practice when going to these other businesses have the same types of goals and mentality. When you have your location, use your location as a billboard. Put massage therapy above the door, take the opportunity to put a sign in front of your practice, and make the face of your practice inviting. Make potential clients want to step inside and take a look at your practice as the potential spot for their next massage.

Now that you have your location, any signs or marketing materials you create should reference the location of your practice. How many times have you talked about a business just

because of its location and not the name? Like that gym on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Main St., you may not know the name, but you know there is a gym there. The same needs to be true about your practice. Let potential clients and the residents of the community know that there is a massage therapy practice just around the corner. They may not know you yet, or even know the name of your practice, but they know you exist. This is the magic of choosing a good location. Now anytime you introduce yourself or anytime someone is talking about your practice, once the location is mentioned, the other party will already know exactly where you are talking about. With this they will be able to put the connection together between the massage therapy sign they pass on the way to work and the conversation they had with you.

### Conclusion

No one will ever be able to promote your practice like you can. For this reason, you need to capitalize on this strength and put in the time to strengthen your skills as an effective communicator. Small businesses have the downfall and advantage that in most cases the business owner is the sole employee and also the one person marketing team. This provides the opportunity for you to take complete control over the future of your practice. Your personal marketing strategies and the effort you put into marketing your practice will be directly represented by the number of clients you schedule in your practice. Take advantage of any opportunity you have to personally promote your practice whether it is as organized as a health fair or as informal as meeting someone in the grocery store. Be proud that you are a business owner and be comfortable talking about what you do and why people in your community should choose you as their massage therapist.

## Review Questions

1. What should you bring to a health fair that will allow you to demonstrate your abilities as a massage therapist?
  - a. Massage chair
  - b. Display board
  - c. Marketing products
  - d. Copies of certificates
2. What is the goal of a knock and drop strategy?
  - a. To meet fellow business owners
  - b. To spread general knowledge of massage therapy
  - c. To expand your reputation and possibly add new clients to your practice
  - d. All of the above
3. What is not included in a successful brochure?
  - a. Information on the benefits of massage therapy
  - b. Contact information for your practice
  - c. Information about you personally as a massage therapist
  - d. Recent detailed case studies on massage therapy

\*Answers to all review questions are compiled at the end of the course. Take the time to review your answers and go back into the text if you find any discrepancies between your answers and the answer key.

## **Section 3: Online and Individual Client Marketing**

### Section Objectives

At the end of this section, you should have the information necessary to:

- List what should and should not be included in a website
- Describe the similarities and differences of Etips and email newsletters
- Write out some ways to reward customer loyalty
- Identify the importance of referrals for a practice and describe ways your practice can promote referrals

### Introduction

This section will include two parts, online marketing and individual client marketing. With technology and the internet becoming such a large part of our personal lives, why not bring your business online? While there are multiple ways to use the internet in your practice, this section will focus on your website and client communication through email. The second half of this section will focus on individual client marketing. Some businesses forget that their clients are people and replace their clients' names with numbers. Without your clients you would have no practice. For this reason, take the time to reward your clients for loyalty and show your appreciation for any way that they help grow your practice.

### Websites

Websites offer a great way to promote your practice to the whole world for a relatively small fee. The creation of an informational website for your practice will be a surprisingly small investment. When deciding on the design of your website the key is to keep the design simple. To follow this simple design, you want to avoid a lot of animation and flashy colors. The website is there for information and like any written document from your practice, it should be proofread and exemplify a professional image of your practice. Within your website, you should include an "About" page. This page will allow you to show your potential and current clients who you are, what you do and why they should choose you. Imagine the "About" page as a

written elongated elevator speech. You want to give a short paragraph introducing yourself and talking about what qualifies you to be the reader's massage therapist. This paragraph should ultimately answer the question of why you should be chosen opposed to another massage therapist or another method of therapy. Make sure to include within the website multiple ways to contact your practice, your hours, and the location of your practice.

The goal of your website should be to offer information about massage therapy, not just to promote your business. Once you become a source of information for clients, they will feel more comfortable trusting you with their actual care and allow you to be their massage therapist. A good way to become a source of information in addition to putting information about massage therapy on your website is to provide links to other websites or massage therapy journals that could serve as additional resources for clients. Another great way to provide information is to answer frequently asked questions on a separate section of the website. If there are certain questions you are consistently asked as a massage therapist include them in this section with detailed responses to officially answer each question. These questions can include anything from "What is massage therapy?" to topics on what to expect when receiving a massage or how to choose a massage therapist. A website is an effective and cost efficient way to market your practice as well as provide information to all those who visit it.

### Email Newsletters and E tips

An innovative way keep in touch with your clients and to continue to pass on information about massage therapy is to use email for newsletters and Etips. While both newsletters and Etips are both sent through email, there is a distinct difference between them. Etips do just what their name implies, they give tips. Keep these tips short and sweet at max only a few sentences. Relate these tips to massage and general health and well being. Make sure the information is up to date and is of interest to your clients. You want your clients to look forward to your weekly Etips and enjoy reading the information you send them. When you send an Etip to your clients, you are sending them a friendly message that you are there to make their day to day lives a little easier while also marketing your practice by keeping you and your practice in their mind.



The same idea of Etips can be used in creating a Facebook page for your business. This allows a location that combines the idea of Etips and basic information on your practice. When incorporating a Facebook page into your practice, you can post on your page the same Etips that you email out to your clients. This gives a public forum for your Etips to be read and allows opportunities for clients or potential clients to post comments or ask you questions. Facebook offers a great marketing channel for you to directly communicate and interact with your clients and anyone interested in massage therapy or your practice.

The next email marketing channel is a newsletter. Newsletters will definitely take more time to complete than a short Etip, but a newsletter doesn't have to be a book either. Your newsletter may only be a page or two long, but make the information interesting and formatting exciting. Think of your newsletter as your practice's own personal newspaper. Include current events that are happening in your practice, whether it's upcoming promotions or events you will be involved in. Also include new information about massage therapy as a whole by adding a couple paragraphs about a specific type of massage, a recent research study or a specific benefit of massage. Finally, include some fun information, maybe a massage cartoon or joke. Keep the newsletter light and enjoyable, use fun colors and pictures. You still want to be professional, but a newsletter from your practice is your chance to show your personality and creativity. This allows your clients to relate to you at a different level and form a bond with your practice that will keep them returning to you for their massages.

When clients come in for their appointment, ask if they would like to be included on your newsletter and Etips mailing list. Tell them about the types of information they will receive in these emails and how at anytime if they want to discontinue receiving these emails you would be more than happy to take them off the email list. Incorporating an email marketing strategy like this to retain clients in your practice is a great way to keep the relationship between your clients and your practice alive while continuing to educate the public on the benefits of massage therapy.

## Referrals

Referrals from current clients are going to be responsible for a lot if not most of your new clients. This all has to deal with word of mouth. You can't see it and there is no way to quantify it, but you have a reputation. This reputation is always changing and expanding. Whether it is positive or negative is up to you and the experiences your clients have at your practice. Bad news travels faster than good news, so hurting your reputation is a lot easier than growing it in a positive way. Word of mouth can get you far, so rewarding referrals to your practice is a good way to make your practice more referral friendly.

Post a note in your practice for all clients to see giving a discount for referrals. Give a discount such as 20% off a current client's next massage if a new client comes in to your practice after being referred by that current client. A good way to monitor this is to have some business cards made up, but on the back print a spot for the referrer to put his or her name. If a new client brings in this business card, the client whose name is on the back of the card will receive the promotion. Do not worry about the discount you are giving in these types of situations. If you can continue to give your clients a positive massage experience, this new client will give you more business than the 20% you gave to the current client. When you have a referral from a current client, call the client not only to schedule their discounted massage, but also to thank them for the referral and tell them how much you appreciate them helping grow your business. This goes in to the next component of referrals.

You want to create a great experience for your clients. You want your clients to feel a connection to your business besides just getting a massage. Tell them your goals for your business and that you appreciate them helping you achieve them. Clients like to patronize the types of businesses where they feel involved. You want your clients to take the time to *visit* their massage therapist for a massage not just to go and get a massage. Realizing the difference between these situations and understanding how important your clients are for your business will get you and your practice far in the business world.

## Customer Loyalty

Following the previous section where the experience of your massage was emphasized, this section will deal with how to maximize and market to repeat clients. Most marketing is focused on getting clients in the door. While this is an admirable goal, keeping clients in your practice is just as important. Your clients do not need to receive a massage from you. There are other massage therapists to choose from or they could simply decide not to get a massage. If you are giving your clients a great experience and you feel that there is no reason that they would not come back to you for their next massage then the following technique is not as important. But, in the event that you are in a highly competitive market or you feel you need to give your clients an additional reason to return to your practice for their next massage then a repeat client discounting program may be in order. In this kind of program you are offering an incentive for your clients to return to your practice for their next massage. If your clients know that there is a reward so to speak for coming to your practice for their next massage opposed to going to someone else then they will choose you. We will go over two types of customer loyalty promotions for massage therapy practices.

The first of these programs is offering massages for sale as a package deal. Offer discounts for clients who pay for multiple massages at one time. For example, if you charge \$50 per massage, you may offer a package deal for 3 massages at a cost of \$135 paid up front opposed to \$150 if the regular rate was paid. You can change these packages around and offer multiple packages for 3, 5, or 10 massages prepaid. I advise that you put an expiration date on these massages that are paid for up front. This allows the client a set amount of time to use the prepaid massages that they bought as a package deal. An expiration date also allows you the opportunity to know how many prepaid massages are still outstanding at any given time.

In the event that you find out that your clients are not utilizing the package massage promotions, you can still reward client loyalty. To do this you can issue client loyalty cards. Set these cards up just like you would a business card except on the back have numbers that you can initial every time a client comes in for a massage. Once you have initialed over a set number

of massages, give the client a free massage. For example, let's say you set 10 massages as your set loyalty number. If you initial every number 1 through 10, the client can schedule for a free massage and you will collect the loyalty card. To help keep the incentive alive, consider offering discounts along the way, such as 10% off their next massage after their first three massages and periodic discounts thereafter. Not only does this type of program reward clients who are loyal to your practice, but it also gives your clients something to look forward to and may cause them to schedule massages more frequently.

### Conclusion

Keeping and growing relationships between your current clients and your practice is so important in marketing especially with the large role current clients play in promoting your practice and your reputation. Do what you can to show your appreciation for your current clients either by giving discounts for supporting your practice or by sharing information about massage therapy. Using technology to accomplish these goals is an efficient way to market and promote your business while staying up to date in the current trends toward more technology use in businesses.

## Review Questions

1. True or False. The main goal of a website should be to provide information on massage therapy.
2. Which of these online marketing tools should you use to give short informative facts or guides to your clients?
  - a. Email newsletter
  - b. Etips
  - c. Website
  - d. Email brochures
3. True or False. Website traffic will be responsible for most of your new clients scheduling a massage.

\*Answers to all review questions are compiled at the end of the course. Take the time to review your answers and go back into the text if you find any discrepancies between your answers and the answer key.

## **Section 4: Implementing and Analyzing Marketing Strategies**

### Section Objectives

At the end of this section, you should have the information necessary to:

- List the components of a marketing plan and how it should be organized
- Describe how to make a good written impression while marketing
- Use a basic cost benefit analysis to decide whether or not to continue with a specific marketing strategy

### Introduction

So far in this course we have discussed how to identify who your target market is and different strategies you can use to promote your practice. Unfortunately, too many business owners are unaware of where their clients are coming from or worse whether or not their marketing strategies are working. In this last section, we will discuss how to implement these strategies and more importantly how to analyze whether or not these strategies are working in your practice.

### The Marketing Plan

When setting up the marketing section of your business plan, you need to include three main sections. The sections are the market analysis, strategy descriptions, and the implementation. The first section includes the information collected during your market analysis. This market analysis information will serve as a guide for you when choosing marketing strategies and analyzing who your target market should be. Your goal when using this section is to pick strategies that will help you most accurately market to your target clients with the most range in effectiveness. You should also include in the market analysis section information on your competitors, specifically their S.W.O.T. analysis. Adding competitor information will allow you to better assess how your strategies will affect the competitive environment as discussed in the previous differentiation section.

The next section of the plan is where you describe your strategies. In this section, you want to specifically lay out each of your different strategies you plan to use. You should also include the costs of these strategies for future cost benefit analyses. When describing each strategy, don't think of the description as being a definition. For example, instead of describing your billboard strategy as a large sign with your name on it, think deeper. The strategy for the billboard should include mock ups of how you want the billboard to look and bids on the cost of printing and installing your sign on a billboard. Now you need to decide the location of this billboard. Start by collecting information on different billboard locations such as how long the leases are, the monthly costs for maintaining each of the billboard options, and most importantly how much of your target market you are capturing with each location. These are examples of the types of information you need to collect and think about for every possible marketing strategy. The more complex the strategy, the more information you need to collect and the more important it will be to have a comprehensive market analysis so that you can truly see which of your strategies are going to be most beneficial for your practice.

The last segment of your marketing plan will be the implementation section. This is where all your marketing knowledge and research will come together. Since we have discussed who you are targeting with your market analysis and different strategies you can use to market to them, the final piece of the puzzle is to decide which strategies to use and how to use them. In the strategy description section, you choose which strategies you plan to implement based on the benefit they will bring after consulting your market analysis. Now you need to take the information you collected i.e. location, costs, length of contracts, etc. and finalize the details. Continuing with the billboard example above, your implementation section will include which company you have chosen to create your billboard, where the billboard is located, and a final list of the actual costs that are going to accrue from this strategy. The final part of the implementation section is the timeline for when you plan to reevaluate the effectiveness of each strategy. For reevaluation, you want to follow the procedures laid out in the final section of this course on cost benefit analysis.

Now is the time to take that leap of faith. It's time to implement your plan. You have all the information, you know what it is going to cost down to the penny and you know how this strategy is going to benefit you. Make the phone calls, place the orders and watch as your plan unfolds. Be confident in your research and if you have done a thorough job, there will be minimal surprises and you will be happy with the results of your marketing campaign.

### Written Impressions in Marketing

When implementing any type of marketing strategy, an impression is always made. In most traditional marketing channels, your promotion will be through a written form and not by you personally (signs, brochures, websites, business cards, mailers, etc.). Impressions in writing whether they are in print or online are just as important as first impressions or any impression made in person. For this reason, since we have talked about the implementation of marketing strategies it is important to cover what needs to be done to create a professional written impression of your practice.

Whether it is a business card, brochure, advertisement, billboard, email or website, all written mediums should personify a professional and knowledgeable massage therapist. The advantage to written impressions is preparation. You can make sure that the points you are trying to convey through your writing are done so in the correct manner. More importantly, you can be sure that the points accurately represent you and your practice. The disadvantage is that a simple mistake can ruin the whole message and worse, you are not there to defend it. An advertisement that says, "Free Message" instead of "Free Massage" will never be flagged by spell check. This type of error makes potential clients question whether or not you proofread your ad or if you even cared enough to proofread it. The questioning of the advertisement is an obvious red flag, but what other flags does this type of mistake raise in the minds of potential clients? Why put your practice and your personal reputation in a situation where others have the opportunity to question whether or not you take your profession seriously? It is also good to keep in the back of your mind that while you are promoting and building your own business, you are also representing the Massage Therapy field as a whole. Strengthening the field builds



awareness of alternative ways to healing and care. This will eventually lead to a larger client base for those who have their business ready. The negative ramifications of misspellings, grammatical errors or sounding unprofessional in any written form are not worth the risk. Proofread all written documents whether online or in print or whether they are to be handed out to clients or to fellow business owners. It is always best to proofread documents, if you can, the day after you write them so that you are reading them with fresh eyes. Using another person to proofread documents is also recommended for the same purpose. Any documents you produce represent you and your practice; take the time and care necessary to make sure they do so in the appropriate manner.

### Cost Benefit Analysis of Marketing Channels

When you implement your marketing strategies, it will be very hard to decide whether or not the money you are spending on a particular marketing channel is less than the money you are collecting because of it. For this reason it is important to try to quantify the benefits of your marketing channels. This is difficult when looking only at profits or revenues because you are never going to use only one type of marketing strategy and you will never be able to quantify word of mouth marketing. The use of multiple marketing channels doesn't allow you the ability to identify what marketing channel led to the increase in revenues or number of massages given. To solve this problem, we must be able to quantify or semi quantify what the individual marketing channels are producing. To quantify the amount of business each channel is bringing into the practice a simple question will do wonders, "How did you hear about Main Street Massage?" The answers you receive to this question will give you the quantification you need to analyze your marketing practices. When you talk to someone on the phone this should be the first question you ask after their name and phone number. If you have an initial questionnaire (highly recommended for contact information) or client policies that incoming clients need to sign, you should have this question somewhere in the papers. This guarantees that you will know how every client that you give a massage to heard about your office. Keeping track of these numbers will serve as the main predictor of deciding which of your marketing channels are worth keeping.

To differentiate profitable from unprofitable marketing strategies you must do a cost benefit analysis. The cost of the marketing strategy is either the cost of the actual campaign or the cost of the time you spent marketing. If one of your marketing strategies costs you time away from your business then you need to consider the cost of you not being at your office. The easiest way to calculate this is find out how much you would have made giving massages the entire time you are gone. For example, you spend two hours a week at a local business luncheon. If you charge \$70 for a one hour massage, the cost of that business luncheon is at least \$140. This means that you need to have the equivalent of at least two one hour massages scheduled from each business luncheon. These can either come directly from the luncheon or from a referral of someone that you met at the business luncheon. If you find that after three months of going to these meetings that the benefits are less than the costs of your attendance of these luncheons, you should stop going to the luncheons and consider another marketing channel to spend your time on. The same type of analysis should be used in all other marketing channels.

When you get in the habit of analyzing marketing strategies and assuring yourself that the money and time you are spending is actually offering you a return on your investment, you will begin to see the positive effects marketing can have. In ending this section of cost benefit analysis, it is important to look at the unfortunate case of business chaos. Unfortunately, in times of business turmoil many business owners tend to cut marketing expenses as a first step back toward profitability. This is a dangerous move and one that does not make much sense strategically. If you ensure that the costs of your marketing strategies are outweighed by the benefits then cutting any marketing budget will do your practice more harm than good. In these cases it is almost always more beneficial to increase your marketing. This does not have to be a monetary increase, but focusing more on client marketing, networking, and other low cost marketing strategies can be the medicine your practice needs to pull it out of the rut.

## Conclusion

Like most business procedures, the marketing of your practice revolves around a plan. You may feel discouraged and it may be difficult to spend the time to do all the writing and research that is needed for an effective marketing plan, but it will be worth it. Without this in depth information you will be marketing your practice blind. Without the research you will never know how to decide between different strategies because you won't know which one is going to branch out and reach the most target clients. As a business owner, these types of gambles are unacceptable. You have worked too long and too hard to take risks that you could avoid just by doing something as simple as a marketing plan. After you write your marketing plan and have implemented your strategies, be sure to calculate the cost benefit analysis on each strategy. If a strategy is not working, stop it and start another. There is no problem with being wrong, these mistakes teach the biggest lessons and will serve as stepping stones to success along the way. However, there is a problem with knowing that your marketing strategies are not worth the cost of keeping them and refusing to cut your losses. Being able to recognize the problem and dealing with it is a strength of an entrepreneur. Hopefully with the information you have learned in this section you will be able to plan, implement, and analyze your marketing regime for efficient and effective marketing of your practice.

## Review Questions

1. True or False. A marketing plan should be filed after its creation and reviewed every 5 years for revision or every time you change a strategy.
2. If you are currently advertising on the radio for \$250 a month, how many new clients, who said they heard of you from the radio, do you need to schedule every month to continue the radio advertisement strategy (assume you charge \$50 per massage)?
  - a. 5
  - b. 3
  - c. 1
  - d. 4
3. What is a good way to ensure that you are creating a good written impression?
  - a. Proofread
  - b. Ask someone else to read over any written materials
  - c. Use proper grammar
  - d. All of the above

\*Answers to all review questions are compiled at the end of the course. Take the time to review your answers and go back into the text if you find any discrepancies between your answers and the answer key.

## Answers to Review Questions

### Section 1

1. False
2. B
3. B

### Section 2

1. A
2. D
3. D

### Section 3

1. True
2. B
3. False

### Section 4

1. False
2. A
3. D

## All about Marketing Online Exam

1. What is a great way to get market analysis information from your clients?
  - a. Comment cards
  - b. Questionnaires
  - c. Simply ask them
  - d. All of the above
  
2. What type of business are you running if you focus your services on a specific area (need) of the market?
  - a. Group
  - b. Niche
  - c. Sample
  - d. Pinpoint
  
3. What is the most important factor in your marketing regime?
  - a. Differentiation from the competition
  - b. The cost of the plan
  - c. Location
  - d. The specific marketing channel
  
4. What does S.W.O.T. stand for?
  - a. Strengths Weaknesses Options Treatments
  - b. Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
  - c. Stress Work Options Treatments
  - d. Strengths Weaknesses Options Threats
  
5. What is not a way to differentiate your firm from the competition?
  - a. Your attitude
  - b. The massage experience
  - c. Pricing
  - d. Credibility
  
6. \_\_\_\_\_ marketing is the easiest marketing channel to control.
  - a. Internet
  - b. Personal
  - c. Location
  - d. Word of mouth

7. Why is networking important for a business?
  - a. Gives you a chance to create business connections
  - b. Promotes you and/or your business in the community
  - c. Allows you to stay current and up to date in what is going on in the market
  - d. All of the above
  
8. What is not one of the three tools in your networking toolbox?
  - a. Speaking notes
  - b. Elevator Speech
  - c. Business card or brochure
  - d. Introduction
  
9. When having a conversation with someone, you should:
  - a. Keep eye contact
  - b. Actively listen
  - c. Both A & B
  - d. None of the above
  
10. What are the two “action” items of an introduction?
  - a. Smile and posture
  - b. Handshake and smile
  - c. Posture and handshake
  - d. Eye contact and handshake
  
11. What is active listening?
  - a. Listening while partaking in another activity
  - b. Thinking about what the person is saying and analyzing how you could add to the conversation
  - c. Hearing what the person is saying
  - d. Nodding your head or moving your body when someone is speaking
  
12. What is the purpose of the “knock and drop” marketing strategy?
  - a. To meet other business owners
  - b. To distribute marketing materials
  - c. To network
  - d. All of the above
  
13. What is not a purpose of a health fair?
  - a. Educate the public on massage therapy
  - b. Meet other business owners
  - c. Introduce yourself to potential clients
  - d. Passively promote your business

14. What are the signs of a good website?
  - a. A lot of animation and bright colors
  - b. Simple to read and use
  - c. Information limited to your practice and not the massage therapy field as a whole
  - d. A lot of information in a very complex format
  
15. What should be the main goal of your website?
  - a. Promote your practice
  - b. Showcase discounts and promotions
  - c. Become a source of massage therapy information
  - d. None of the above
  
16. What differentiates an Etip from an email newsletter?
  - a. Etips are longer
  - b. Etips include more in depth information on massage therapy
  - c. Etips are short and to the point
  - d. Etips focus solely on the promotion of the practice
  
17. How are most massage therapy clients brought into a practice?
  - a. Billboards/signs
  - b. Website
  - c. Referrals
  - d. Social Networking
  
18. How can you reward your clients for referring other clients to your practice?
  - a. Saying thank you
  - b. Giving discounts
  - c. Both A & B
  - d. None of the above
  
19. What is usually the first expense cut in times of small business trouble (even though it is a bad decision)?
  - a. Payroll
  - b. Marketing
  - c. Utilities
  - d. Technology
  
20. When should you discontinue a marketing strategy?
  - a. When the costs are high
  - b. When the costs outweigh the benefits
  - c. After one year
  - d. After two years

This completes the All about Marketing exam.