

Ethics: Online Marketing Home Study Course

3 CE Hours

Text and Online Study Guide

Presented by the:

Center for Massage Therapy Continuing Education

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Instructions for the Ethics: Online Marketing home study course

Thank you for investing in the Ethics: Online Marketing home study course, a 3 CE hour course designed to further your knowledge of ethical and professional ways to market your massage practice online. This guide will contain all of the instructions you will need to complete this course. This is a 3 CE hour course, so that means it should take you approximately 3 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.**
- 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. 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 Ethics: Online 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. With the increase in the reliance of the internet in everyday decision making and information mining, today's business owners need to utilize the internet and technology as a whole to stay on pace with current market trends. This course will go over how to establish online marketing strategies, tips to 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 online marketing channels, but you will also learn the importance of online marketing and how to control the future of your practice by controlling how you market.

Section 1: Market Analysis and Online Differentiation

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 in an online environment and be able to explain why differentiation is important
- Explain why it is important to become a source of information online

Introduction

When it comes to business everything is about being prepared and planning ahead. Especially in marketing, it is important to make sure that your efforts are being rewarded. You can pour thousands and thousands of dollars into websites and email strategies, but if you have no idea who your potential clients are or why they are looking for a massage then this money can be completely wasted. How do you avoid this? How can you make sure that the marketing strategies you are implementing are targeted at the right people? Performing a market analysis and understanding your market will give you the information you need. In addition to understanding your clients, you will learn about your competition and the competitive environment in which your practice resides. The vast amount of information you can collect through a market analysis can give you the preparation needed to implement targeted and profitable marketing strategies.

Linking Online and Offline Market Analyses

When marketing through an online medium, there is a misunderstanding that the market analysis must be different. Many believe that talking to real clients or looking at the statistics for a “real” practice are irrelevant because the marketing is being done online. This could not be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is that you are marketing online to real people. The emails you send out, the content you write on your website, that post you just sent out on Facebook are all being experienced by actual clients, not numbers, not computers.

When you are implementing your market analysis keep this in mind. Use the information you have collected in this section to help you create and implement useful and targeted online marketing strategies that will help turn a website visitor into a new client.

Whether it is online or in person, marketing is only effective if you are marketing to people who are apt to use your product, in this case massage. The key to making your marketing investments effective is to understand your market. 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 in your marketing ventures. This information will tell you who potential clients are and how they are brought into massage therapy practices. For instance, 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 blog posts and emails related to relaxation and a spa based atmosphere would be more effective than posts and emails written about pain management and health concerns eased by massage therapy.

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. However, this local information does give you an upper hand on the competition. Knowing that you have an older population in your area, you can focus your online content on marketing to older citizens whether it is offering information on injury prevention or how massage therapy can help with specific injuries. Your local government agencies will have this type of demographic information along with other data that will be of benefit to your online marketing campaign. This local information will be especially important for targeting search engine traffic in your area. Regardless of any published information, the best marketing insights you will receive are 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 tells you which of your marketing channels are working. If you are scheduling

a lot of clients from visits to your website, then the money you are spending to keep up the website is offering you a great return. More information on understanding the return on your marketing investment is included in the last section of this course.

Before your client leaves, ask them if they would like to receive an e-newsletter or if they use social media. If they answer yes, ask for their email or give them information on how to get updates from you on Facebook or Twitter. This type of information will be pertinent in helping you target market your clients. Keep a running tally in your practice of the answers you receive to these questions for a couple weeks. If most of the clients you talk to say they are using social media, what would stop you from making a Facebook page? If your clients tell you that they would enjoy reading a newsletter, why wouldn't you start a monthly massage newsletter? These are the type of activities that will enable you to target guaranteed clients, increase your client relationships, and set you apart from your competition.

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. You should then consider what would be the best technique or information for you to incorporate in your marketing campaign.

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

Online 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 your site and ultimately call to schedule a massage appointment. Everything about your website, email, social media page, the whole online experience is being evaluated by clients and this evaluation will be immediately compared to other online interactions. If their experience with you ranks higher than the others, then they will visit or come back to your website. If not, you

will have lost a potential client. There are many ways, using online marketing, to differentiate yourself and make it clear to your clients that there is no better choice than you.

One of the biggest aspects of the business experience is your attitude. This may seem like a mute topic for an online marketing course, but your attitude and ability to communicate is more important online than it is in person. When you are communicating with someone online you have to be sure that what you are trying to communicate is conveyed in the way you intended. The majority of communication is usually done by body language so making sure the content of your website or email could not be taken in the wrong way is a new twist on communication. When marketing online, you have the ability to make someone's day and personally give your clients a great online experience. Because of this, your communication with clients and the way you treat them are so important to the success of your online marketing efforts. Be polite and have a positive attitude when answering emails or writing content. Your goal is to leave the people you engage with online with a positive memory every time they think of their online experience with your practice.

One way to differentiate yourself online is to become a source of information for your website visitors. When potential clients are looking for a massage therapist they are looking for the best. But how do they define the best massage therapist? They haven't received massages from every therapist and most likely have heard of only a few in the area. Your potential clients will define the best massage therapist as the one with the most knowledge, the expert in massage therapy for their area. So how do you become or show that you are the expert they are looking for?

While there are many different techniques to reaching this expert status, there are two main requirements: knowledge and visibility. The first requirement of knowledge is a given. To be the expert in your field you need to have up to date knowledge of trends, cycles, benefits and new techniques in massage therapy. The online arena gives massage therapists a unique opportunity to share this knowledge with current and potential clients in many ways. Sharing a recent study on social media or writing an article about a new type of massage modality that

you have learned and posting it to your website are both great ways to share the education you have. This knowledge will give potential clients confidence in you as their massage therapist because you have created credibility. This in turn makes clients more comfortable going to you for their massages and visiting your website for further information.

You may have all the massage therapy knowledge available, but if no one knows your name, that knowledge is useless for attracting potential clients. This is where the importance of targeted marketing kicks in. The visibility you are after in this type of scenario is not your basic marketing visibility; this type of visibility needs to demonstrate your knowledge and expertise. Try incorporating a blog into your website, post insightful information on your social media pages and make sure the writing of your Tips and newsletters exemplify your expertise. These are the types of activities that will help create that expert visibility you are looking for.

The next step is where it all comes together; make the information shareable. You have the knowledge and you have posted it on your site, now you want others to be able to pass this information around. Make sure all of your emails and articles have buttons that enable your clients to share this information with other people. The goal of this is to increase the footprint of your information. The more people that this information is shared with the higher the probability of someone scheduling a massage from your practice. This enables you to build your reputation and increase your credibility. Once you are pronounced the expert in your market, potential clients will have a hard time choosing the non expert for their next massage.

Conclusion

Don't be fooled by the misconception that online marketing has nothing to do with the analysis of your actual clients and your community. Use the combination of information you have gathered from public data, massage organizations, and your current clients to help you understand who you need to be marketing to. When you understand who your potential clients are and why they seek massage therapy you will be better prepared to market to them and their needs directly.

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. Reputation management
 - b. Becoming a source of information for clients
 - c. More education
 - d. None of the above
3. What is the best source of information on your market?
 - a. National organizations
 - b. Local government agencies
 - c. Current clients
 - d. None 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.

Section 2: Online Marketing Techniques

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
- Understand and explain the benefits and potential problems with using Groupon
- Define a social media strategy for your practice

Introduction

This section will introduce you to the more common online marketing strategies that you can use in your practice. These types of marketing outlets are used every day by massage therapists, yet many are being used in the wrong way. Unfortunately, when using online marketing it is very easy to hurt your practice because of a lack of information. As a business owner you need to understand that you have two business reputations: in person and online. The speed of acquiring information on the internet makes your online reputation that much more important. In the implementation of any of the strategies you are introduced to in the section, be sure to keep in mind your online reputation. Be cognizant of the impact on your reputation through your word choice and strategy design and you will keep yourself from encountering the problems that some less informed business owners face.

Throughout this section keep in mind the power of utilizing the networks of your clients. The internet truly is a web of information and networks. When you create any type of content make sure it is easy to share with others whether it is through buttons on the page or subtle hints of “share this with your friends”. When you send out an email to 100 people your goal should not be for 100 people to see it. On the contrary your goal is to have 100 people share this email with 100 new people and then those new people to continue sharing this information through social media, email, or blogs. We have the unique and powerful opportunity to take

information and have it shared through these webs of the internet. Use this to your advantage and promote your practice on exponential levels.

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 secret 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. As for the general theme of your site, 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.

Quality Content

“Build it and they will come” in no way applies to websites. Content is king when it comes to the creation and upkeep of your site. Just because you build a site does not mean it will be visited, much less a favorite website of your visitors. This is where content comes into play. Everything you write should be relevant and beneficial to your visitors. The more content you have on your site, the more page options you are giving to your visitors. This can not only lead to longer average visits to your site, but more importantly you also start to create a connection with the visitors on the site. The goal is to give your readers material they enjoy. These visitors will want to continue reading until they decide that reading isn’t enough and they would like to become an actual client.

For clarification, content does not mean filling every page with filler and repeat information. Good content is quality content. Keep your main pages easy to read and simple, but link to other pages that are filled with great information for your readers. These more detailed pages become the home for that good content. For instance, on your homepage you

may have a sentence or two about who you are, but you offer a link to your “About” page to learn more about your practice. The next page they visit should be a page filled with content. Maybe on this “About” page you speak a little about your visit to a foreign country and that’s where you witnessed the benefits of a certain type of massage therapy. That trip helped you decide that you wanted to be a massage therapist to use this unique type of massage. Now you could offer another link to another page containing more detailed information on your massage therapy education and the definitions of the different modalities you offer. All these branches are creating this great big tree of information for your potential clients. Not only are they learning so much about you and your experiences, but they are building upon their knowledge of massage therapy as a whole.

About Page

Everyone always wants to know about “the man behind the curtain”. Who is writing the information on the website? Why are they doing it? 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 as their massage therapist. 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

Every business owner has a list of questions that they are consistently asked by clients. Whether it is as simple as what to expect when receiving a massage or where you are located, it never fails that questions like these frequent the ears of a massage therapist. If only there was a way you could compile all these questions into one page on your website...Well you’re in luck! There is! The page is called a Frequently Asked Questions page or FAQs. This page is one of the most important pages on your site. Besides the homepage, this is usually one of the most frequented pages by visitors. This means that you need to make sure your word choice and information is accurate and easy to comprehend. Write out a list of the questions you are always asked then below each question give your answer. Keep your answers short, 2-3

sentences max. If you need to add additional information, link to a different page in the website that deals with this matter. For example, if one of the questions you are frequently asked is, “What types of massage do you offer?” then you should answer it by writing a short list of the modalities you perform, but also include a link to a page that explains each of these modalities in more detail (as previously discussed). This gives the visitor a concise answer to the question, but if they want more information you have given them that choice also.

When building your FAQs page, there is a lot more than just addressing questions you are asked on a regular basis. You are running a business and like any business there are certain things you want to address in certain ways. The order of your FAQs should not be random. Put the questions you feel are most important at the top. These should be very general questions that offer possibilities to link to other sections of your site, such as who you are or where you are located. More detailed questions or questions that really aren’t selling points should be kept to the bottom of your page, such as what type of oils you use or if you are open on weekends.

Even though the name says that the questions are frequently asked, the FAQs page has evolved into more of an outlet for companies to post questions that they feel are important to address. Some organizations use questions that actually aren’t asked at all, or asked infrequently. An example of this is a politician running for office. On the politician’s website there may be a FAQs page with a question asking for this particular politician’s stand on a controversial topic. Even though the politician just started this campaign and may not have been asked this question yet, it is important that the question be addressed. The FAQs page will answer questions a website visitor may not have thought to ask. This is an interesting marketing tactic and can be very useful. Maybe one of your selling points is your collection of various certifications. You want to highlight this as often as you can and the FAQs page is a perfect opportunity. To do this, you create a question that a particular visitor may not have thought of to ask, but one that will be beneficial in their evaluation of you as their potential massage therapist. “What are your qualifications as a massage therapist?” You can now address

this question with information on your certifications. This question/answer combination will make a great addition to your FAQs page.

Blog Posts

An easy way to merge all the components of a good website together is through a blog. A blog is nothing more than a regularly updated index of pages written by you on various topics. If you were reading an interesting article on massage therapy, you could share the article through your blog and write a paragraph or two about how you think it would be beneficial to your readers. Using another example, maybe you just received a new certification and want to talk about what you learned; you can create a blog post about that certification. The opportunities for what to put on your blog are endless. The main benefit of a blog is its less formal structure. You can talk about any topic (relevant to your practice and massage) and your regular posts are building more content for your site. If you decide to start a blog on your site, post on a regular basis. If you decide to write a blog post every week then stick to it. Eventually your goal should be to have some regular followers of your site and blog. Keeping your blog up to date will give visitors and clients a reason to come back and visit on a weekly basis to see what the new blog post is about. Just like all components of your site, even though a blog is a more casual setup, the content you choose should be professionally written and relevant to your readers.

Website Credibility

Just like a calendar, a website is useless unless it is updated. Up to date information is pertinent not only to good content, but also to the success of your site. There is no excuse not to have accurate information on your site. If you know you are going to be closed on a certain weekend or are changing your practice hours, put it on the site. There is nothing worse than having to explain to clients that your prices, location, or hours are different than what they assumed because you never updated the site. Your credibility and the credibility of your site decreases when this happens. All the work you have done to make the site a good source of information has been lost and the chances of that client going to your site again for information is very slim. For this reason, check your website regularly for mistakes and updates. If you find

changes that need to be made, make the change as soon as possible. Also include within the website multiple ways of contacting your practice, your hours and a detailed explanation of your practice location.

To wrap up the website section, it is important to take advantage of opportunities to share your knowledge and expertise with the community. A website is an effective and cost efficient way to market your practice as well as use your knowledge to provide information to all those who visit it. The most important thing to remember when building and updating a website is to enjoy it. Think of your site as a big hobby. It is never going to be done and is always changing and evolving. Enjoy working on blog posts and adding pages filled with new content to your site. The more you enjoy what you are writing about, the easier the ideas will come and the more enjoyable it will be for your visitors to read.

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 paragraph or two. 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. A message that reminds clients 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 on 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. To add that professional nature to your email based campaigns, I recommend using a third party email service (i.e. Constant Contact or Mailchimp). These companies will send out your emails to your mailing lists while allowing you to create custom email templates, incorporate your logo, and track the analytics of your email such as how many were opened or how many people clicked a link you inserted into the email. This type of information is very useful and will be discussed more thoroughly in the last section of the course.

Taking the email strategy to the next level, there is a way to combine both Etips and newsletters in a very targeted way. Instead of sending broad based Etips, you can target a specific group of clients and send them a short series of emails opposed to a year's supply. For example, you have many clients in your market who come to your practice for back pain. You

are constantly reading new studies and acquiring new information and skills to better help your clients with back pain. To help share this useful information with your clients, you can offer a one week data series where you will send one email a day related to the topic of massage and back pain. This gives relevant information and tips to your clients that have specific issues that you can solve. Using a third party email service will allow you to add and manage clients on the different email series that you offer.

Incorporating a email marketing strategies like these 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.

Social Media

The use of social media throughout our society is rapidly growing and is a great way to connect with your clients and potential clients in a more informal way. Now this does not mean that you can be lax on your professional image, but what it does mean is that it doesn't have to be all business. Post statuses, tweets, etc. at least once or twice a week. This keeps you in the mind of your clients, but not completely dominating their social media page. As we discussed before, content is king. Make the content you post on your social media page interesting and compelling to your readers. Once you have an active social media campaign running consider bringing your readers in on conversations by asking questions and waiting for comments or offering discounts to social media users. The caveat however is to make sure you have an active campaign. The strategy of asking questions or handing out discounts can work against you if you only have 10 "likes" on Facebook. For one thing the odds of those 10 people actually commenting back to answer your question is relatively slim and the only thing worse than not having any posts on your page when potential clients visit is a page with a bunch of questions and no comments. People like Facebook pages and follow others on Twitter because they like what that person has to say. When someone visits your page and sees no comments to questions you are asking, the page doesn't look active or exciting, you essentially set yourself up for failure.

This brings in the next point of social media, how do you build this active social media campaign? How do you get 100s of likes on Facebook and a plethora of followers on Twitter? The answer, just like anything in marketing is you have to work for it. Invite your current Facebook friends to your practice's Facebook page, send an email out to your current clients inviting them to visit your social media pages, put a flier up in your practice, and lastly be active on other social media pages. Try posting an intuitive comment on a post of another social media page. This is a great way to express your level of knowledge and in turn will entice people to look at your individual page. It all goes back to the initial concept at the beginning of the course. People are looking for the expert, they want to listen to and patronize someone who is interesting and has knowledge to offer. Offer this type of relationship and you will be well on your way to creating an active social media campaign.

The alternative to the strategy of working for Facebook likes is to purchase them. Yes, you can actually purchase likes on Facebook. This is a very effective and efficient strategy. While the cost varies depending on your filters, the process is simple. You create an ad for your practice and Facebook will show this ad to people who fit your filters. When someone likes your page from this ad you pay Facebook a set amount. Filters can include gender, location, interests, etc. This means that you can show your ad only to people who live within 5 miles of your practice and are interested in massage or health. Using the vast amount of information Facebook has on its users, you can target the exact market you established through your market analysis.

Groupon

The saying that there are two sides to every story is an understatement when discussing the impact of Groupon on massage therapy practices. But let's start with a brief introduction to Groupon as a tool for massage therapists. Groupon gives the opportunity to business owners to offer a discounted product, for massages usually 50% of true value. In return Groupon takes 50% of that discounted price. For example, your regular massage is \$60. You go to Groupon and offer your massage at \$30. You will make an arrangement with Groupon for a minimum

number of these discounts that must sell before they are active. On the day this offer is given you sell 300 massages at this discounted price. Groupon takes \$15 per massage (half of the discounted price) and you go on to schedule these 300 massages. Now for the two sides of the story. The positive side and really the only benefit I continually hear from massage therapists is that this technique brings people in your door. This is very true. You just booked 300 \$15 one hour massages. This doesn't sound like too much of a win in my eyes, but the argument is that you now have the opportunity to turn 300 Groupon clients into regular clients. The reality is this is normally not the case and you may be hurting yourself more than helping. The people who bought this discounted massage are hunting for discounted massages. They may go to you the first time, but the minute another half off massage is offered on Groupon whether it is by you or not, that is the massage they are going to next. It is very hard to convince someone who just paid \$30 for a massage that they should come back and pay you \$60 for that same massage when the chances of another \$30 discounted massage on Groupon are fairly high.

What is upsetting many massage therapists today is that this technique drops the value of massages. Pretty soon no one will be willing to pay the normal price for a massage because there are always discounted massages available. Worse than this, people in general believe in the idea that you get what you pay for. If someone is constantly getting a \$25 or \$30 massage then the normal massage price will move to \$25-\$30 based on basic economic principles and the days of being able to charge \$50-\$60 for a massage will be over.

If you are considering using Groupon as an online marketing strategy in your practice keep the information from this section in mind. If you decide that using Groupon is right for you then make sure that you have a proven and strong system in place for rebooking clients for their next massage before they even leave your door after receiving their first discounted massage.

Pricing and Discounting

No matter what course I am writing whether it is a marketing course or a general business course, I always address an issue that I find so important yet misunderstood by many business owners. This is the topic of pricing. Many small business owners feel that pricing is the

way to differentiation. 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 what you think your massage is worth. People understand the phrase, “you get what you pay for” and by lowering your price you are saying that the quality of your 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 crucial to raising the value of your massage. Regardless, pricing is important, but there are other techniques relating to cost that can be used 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

The techniques you can use to market your practice online are vast and are changing every day. Make sure you understand the main online opportunities that are available to you and your practice before you implement them. Some will be beneficial to only a particular type of practice, but not utilizing any type of online marketing is a mistake. We are in an age of information right at our fingertips. Phones can connect to the internet, whole corporations are run completely online, and you can directly market to people all over the world. Utilize these opportunities and make them work for your practice to help you achieve the goals you have set for your career.

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. Communication is less important in online marketing than it is in face to face marketing.

*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: Analyzing Online Marketing Progress

Section Objectives

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

- List the benefits of website and email analytics
- Describe the importance of using quantifiable data in marketing decisions
- Use a basic cost benefit analysis to decide whether or not to continue with a specific online 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 online. Unfortunately, too many business owners are unaware of where their clients are coming from or worse whether or not their online marketing strategies are working. In this last section, we will discuss the tools you can use to analyze whether or not these strategies are working in your practice and how to use this information to make critical online marketing decisions.

Analysis of Online 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 online 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. In normal situations 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. Fortunately, because everything can be tracked online, finding data to analyze your online marketing is relatively easy.

Website Analytics

Most people do not use the data analytics information available to them when operating a website. For instance, Google Analytics, a website analytics system provided free by Google, will give you more information than you ever wanted to know about your website. You can find out where the traffic on your site originated from. Was it an email? Maybe a regular search through a search engine? You can also see where the location of your website users are, what pages they visited and for how long. It is easy to see how useful this information can be. Understanding your market is always a daunting task in marketing, but when online and using analytics programs, understanding who your market is and how they act becomes much easier. As an example, if you notice the majority of the traffic going to your website goes to the “About Us” page immediately after entering the site then beefing up that particular page and making sure it is up to date is extremely important. On the other hand if you realize that the traffic goes to your FAQs page and immediately leaves the site, maybe it’s time to rethink the organization or content of that FAQs page to help keep your users on the site. Incorporating the Google Analytics code needed to identify this information into your website is simple and can easily be done with the help of your web designer.

Email Analytics

The level of information given for emails isn’t as vast as that of websites, but still useful and important in different ways. If you decide to use a third party to send your emails, you will have the benefit of using their own analytics data. The larger third party email companies will include information on how many of the emails are opened, how many were sent to spam, and how many people clicked the link on your email. These are very useful metrics because of the many different techniques for marketing through email. However, using this data to your advantage will consist of a lot of trial and error. As an example, you send your first email on a Wednesday afternoon and you get an open rate on that email of 20%. However when you send your next email on a Thursday morning you get an open rate of 27%. Depending on the size of

your mailing list this could be a large difference in the amount of people who opened your email. The next time you send an email you know that it is better to send on a Thursday morning than on Wednesday afternoon. After multiple tests you will have a good idea of what time of day and what day of the week gives the best response toward your emails.

The same technique can be used for your spam data. The amount of subscribers that send your email to the spam folder usually depends on two things: the timing of the email and the subject line. The subject line of your email is crucial to the “survival” of your email from the spam folder. Avoid exclamation points or all capital letters. The title should be to the point and not sound like a one line sales pitch. In general people shy away from any type of marketing that sounds like a used car salesman. Regardless, all contact lists are different and only after trying a few email subject lines will you find out what kind of title your list responds best to.

When it comes to the timing of the email, try to avoid sending out emails more than once a week. Every two to three weeks is a good time span for general emails. Now this can change depending on the type of email you are sending. If the subscribers to your email list are expecting a weekly Etip then by all means send a weekly email, the same with a monthly newsletter. However, don't send three emails a week to someone who signed up for a bi weekly newsletter. The moral of the story when it comes to emails is to put yourself in the receiver's shoes. Think about your own inbox and the marketing emails you get. There are some that you send directly to spam and others you don't mind receiving. Why? Really look into what automatically sets off the spam alarm in your head and avoid it in your own emails.

While analytics data will help you understand your website you still need to find out what is actually driving sales in your practice. To quantify the amount of business each channel is bringing into the practice a simple question will do wonders, “How did you hear about our practice?” 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 or client policies that incoming clients need to sign, you should have this question somewhere

in the papers. This technique guarantees that you will know how every client that you give a massage to heard about your practice. Keeping track of these numbers and using a cost benefit analysis will serve as the main predictor in deciding which of your marketing channels are worth keeping.

Cost Benefit Analysis

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. To explain this let's assume you have just implemented an online campaign in which you pay a company to promote your business online. Essentially you are paying for the traffic to your website. The company charges you \$300 per month for this service. Throughout the month you are tracking where your clients heard about your practice. You may have some that said the newspaper, another the radio, a lot of referrals, but now you have a column for your website. If you are charging \$50 per massage, you need to have at least 6 people say that they learned of your practice directly from your website ($\$300/\$50 = 6$). These 6 people give you \$300 in revenue and are essentially paying for this online campaign. If you find that this strategy is not paying off (less than 6 "online" clients scheduling) then it is time to discontinue this strategy.

You should analyze every new campaign after 3-6 months, depending on the strategy. If you find that the cost of that particular online channel is higher than the benefit you are receiving from it then you should shut it down. This is where you become the master of your practice. It will be hard at first because in most cases you will have spent a lot of time setting up this marketing channel, but continuing a marketing strategy that is losing you money is a sure path to failure. Follow the advice of stock market traders and "Hold onto the winners and sell the losers". Take control of your practice statistics; know the ins and outs of what is working and what isn't and make the decision when it needs to be made without the emotional component.

Conclusion

Online marketing strategies have many benefits, but the largest by far is that of information. Not only are you able to see exactly where clients are coming from and how they engage with your strategies through analytics data, but you are also able to easily quantify the costs. Be sure to calculate the cost benefit analysis on each campaign. 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. This can be difficult with online strategies because you cannot see the actual engagement with your clients, only numbers, and it is easy to forget about automatic strategies implemented months ago. Despite these difficulties, stay on top of your strategies and continue to analyze them. Hopefully with the information you have learned in this section you will be able to analyze your online marketing regime for efficient and effective marketing of your practice.

Review Questions

1. True or False. A website should be left alone after its creation and reviewed every year for revision or every time you change a strategy.
2. If you are currently advertising through an online marketing channel for \$250 a month, how many new clients, who said they heard of you from this online source, do you need to schedule every month to continue the online 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 a particular page on your website has good organization and content using analytics data?
 - a. The traffic on your site stays on that page for a long time in comparison to other pages
 - b. The traffic moves on from this page to another more detailed webpage within the site
 - c. After visiting this page, users leave the site
 - d. Both A and B

*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. C

Section 2

1. True
2. B
3. False

Section 3

1. False
2. A
3. D

Ethics: Online Marketing 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 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

3. 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

4. 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

5. What is the most important facet of any online marketing campaign?
 - a. Content
 - b. Appearance
 - c. Ease of use
 - d. Price

6. What page of your website should include information on your credentialing as a massage therapist and information on why you should be chosen as a potential client's massage therapist?
 - a. Home page
 - b. About page
 - c. Blog
 - d. Contact page

7. What section of your website can provide information as well as address the possible concerns of potential clients?
 - a. Blog
 - b. FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)
 - c. About page
 - d. Contact page

8. What is a problem with keeping out of date information on your website?
 - a. Decrease in credibility
 - b. Clients are misinformed about hours
 - c. Clients may decide not to return to the site for information
 - d. All of the above

9. 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

10. When utilizing social media, how can you increase your Facebook likes or Twitter followers?
 - a. Invite personal social media friends
 - b. Notify current clients with a flier in your practice
 - c. Be active on other social media pages
 - d. All of the above

11. If you decide to utilize Groupon in your practice, what system or procedure should you already have implemented to take advantage of the quantity of new clientele?
 - a. Comment cards
 - b. Rebooking new clients
 - c. Future discounts
 - d. All of the above

12. What is not a way to differentiate your firm from the competition?
 - a. Your attitude
 - b. The massage experience
 - c. Pricing
 - d. Credibility

13. What feature of your email is most crucial to the email's survival from the dreaded spam folder?
 - a. Email subject
 - b. The actual email content
 - c. The timing of your email delivery
 - d. The frequency of your email delivery

14. 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

15. 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

This completes the Ethics: Online Marketing exam.

