

Ethics: Professional Communication 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: Professional Communication home study course

Thank you for investing in the Ethics: Professional Communication home study course, a 3 CE hour course designed to further your knowledge on aspects of professional communication in massage such as resume writing, interviewing, and marketing. 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: Professional Communication home study course.

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Section 1: Resume Writing

Section Objectives

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

- Write a professional and informational resume that you can confidently use to promote yourself when applying for various positions
- List what information should be included and excluded from a resume
- Show how to organize and proofread your resume so that the content is easily assimilated by the employer

Introduction

In most cases, your resume is the first impression you will make on your future employer. For this reason, the content and organization of your resume will have a large influence on whether or not you are ultimately offered a job. Unlike most first impressions, the first impression a resume gives could be the last impression you make on that employer. One mistake and your resume is thrown out without the chance at a second impression. With so much riding on one single sheet of paper, you need to make sure your resume is flawless and presents a perfect depiction of how you want to be perceived by the employer. The resume perception is broken down into two main components, the organization and the content. Both are equally important and lacking in one dimension has the possibility of hampering the other. In this section I will go over each of these components so that you can create a winning resume.

Resume Organization

When organizing your resume, keep in mind that your resume is a story. Your resume should flow in a way that fills in all the blanks, leaving the reader with a perfect professional description of you at the end. Your resume should follow the following format:

- Name and Contact information
- Education

- Work Experience
- Certifications
- Honors and Awards

When building your resume, your name and contact information should be centered at the top of the page with your name being the largest font, much like the title to a paper. All the content that you enter into each of the above sections should be in chronological order starting with the most recent information. This step is most important in the Education and Work Experience sections as the most recent information should also be the most important. For the Certifications and Honors and Awards sections the rule of chronological order should be followed unless there is a clear distinction of importance between different achievements. For example, being a nationally certified massage therapist is a major certification and is highly relevant for the job you are applying for. Even though you may have a more recent certification in a specific type of massage, the national certification should take precedence and remain first in the list of certifications. For all content on the resume, you should add a date (year) of the achievement or range of dates for work experience. Format the dates in a way that is consistent throughout the resume. The employer should be able to easily scan down your resume and not have to search for dates that correspond to each component of the resume content.

The actual resume should be confined to one page. If you have more than one page of information, you should look at the content and be sure that the content you are including in the resume is relevant to the job you are applying for. You may have been a dog walker through school, but unless you know that your dog walking experience will benefit the job you are applying for, you should exclude it from your resume. For this reason the work experience section should really be considered the relevant work experience section.

Besides the basic organization, the aesthetics of the resume play a large role in your portrayal to the employer. One way to add to the aesthetics of your resume is to use a heavier weighted paper. Most office supplies stores will actually carry resume paper that is higher quality than copy paper. However, stick with white paper and avoid the paper that looks like stone or has some sort of design on it. Resumes are meant to have a consistent formatting and

“look” so that employers can quickly skim through resumes and easily find the key information they are looking for. This is why organization is so important. To ease the process of finding information on your resume, you want to highlight the most important points by putting them first in lists. You should also choose fonts that are basic and easy to read. Avoiding script type fonts, a lot of bolding (except in titles) and colors will also aid in making the resume easy to read.

Spelling and grammatical errors are common mistakes in resumes. This is due to the fact that most of the resume content is compiled in short segments and not written in complete sentences. The same idea of consistency follows here also. If you write one bullet point in sentence format, all the other bullet points should be in sentence format. Keep verb tenses in mind when writing your resume, especially in the work experience section. If you no longer hold a position, all the verbs should be in the past tense, current positions should be in the present tense i.e. gave massages, give massages. If you are not going to use full sentence format throughout your resume, which is normally the case to conserve space, start your bullet points with verbs. For the most part, the only time you will not be writing in a pure list format is in the work experience section. Under each position title you will include your job description in a bullet format. Start each of these bullets with a verb followed with the description. For example:

Main Street Massage and Spa	Miami, FL
<i>Massage Therapist</i>	2010-2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performed massage therapy on spa guests• Followed up with current clients about their massage experience	

Spelling errors create the worst impression you could ever give in a resume. Not only do spelling errors tell the employer that you didn't even care enough about the position to proofread your resume before you sent it, but it also makes the employer wonder how competent you would be as an employee if you are misspelling words in such an important document. To prove my point, I have a short story about a man who ran a petroleum company.

One day while talking with him, he said that when he would look through resumes, he would automatically throw out resumes that had any type of spelling error. When he first told me this I was shocked, but after his explanation I understood his reasoning and eventually came to find out that this was not such an uncommon practice. He explained that spelling is the simplest mistake to fix in a document and that it takes less than five minutes to do a thorough proofread on a one page resume. How could he trust someone to professionally represent his business when they won't even take the time to professionally represent themselves?

Make sure your resume is flawless, especially with spelling. After you proofread your resume a few times have someone else look it over and check for spelling and grammatical errors. Another test that is purely for checking for spelling errors and also extremely effective is to read the resume backwards. Start at the bottom right of the page and read every word individually until you get to the top of the page. This technique forces you to read each word separately without the help of other words and general sentence flow that may conceal the spelling error when reading the resume in the normal manner.

When you finish adding the content to your resume and perform the basic formatting that has been described, you should take a step back and look at your resume. What you are looking for is a document that is obviously organized. Anything of consistent formatting should line up throughout the whole document, such as dates and tabs. If you use bullets (recommended), the bullets should all be the same shape and should have the same spacing and formatting throughout the whole document. To help with the aesthetics and formatting of a resume, most word processing programs have templates for resumes. Keep in mind that these templates are not perfect, but are a highly recommended resource. Use the information included in this section when organizing your resume and remember that organization and simplicity are pertinent to a successful resume.

Resume Content

The organization of a resume serves its purpose by aiding the employer in finding the important points that you are looking to highlight throughout your resume. However, making sure that these points exist and that they are relevant to the job are just as important.

Throughout your professional career you should create a running resume and use this resume to create individual posting resumes. What this means is that your resume should not be a form letter. You will be applying for different positions that require different skills throughout your career. If the positions are different why should your resume be the same? Imagine your running resume as a test bank. This resume has all the information possible on your career and professional history, all work experience, all certifications, etc. Whenever you apply for a job, it is important to understand what the job description is and the type of business you will be working for. Understanding this information is beneficial not only in the resume writing, but also in the interviewing process.

When you have a good feel for what the job you are applying for entails, what skills you will need, and what type of business you are applying to work for, it is time to pull from your running resume. Go down the list of all the information on the running resume and evaluate whether putting that information on this particular resume is helping promote you as a potential employee or whether it is even relevant for the job. If you are applying for a massage therapist position at a spa, include on your resume all the certifications, education, and experience relating to massage therapy. Your work experience as a chef or the fact that you have certifications in computer programming should not be included in this resume. Why would you take up valuable space on your one page resume with information that is irrelevant to the job you are applying for? This is where reading the job description is very important. Perhaps in the description of the massage therapist position it mentions that you should be competent with computers because you will be required to create some marketing materials and use the spa computer system for clients. In this situation including your computer certifications would aid in your appeal to the employer.

Conclusion

Your resume is a valuable piece of paper real estate and you need to justify why you add any content and where you put it. Remember, in most cases this is the first and only impression you make on an employer before they decide whether or not to invite you in for an interview. Your goal should be to create a resume with the thought and preparation needed to set yourself apart from the resume pool. Keep in mind the description of the position you are applying for and the types of skills the employer will be looking for on your resume. Doing this and following the tips given in this section will help you on your way to creating a winning resume.

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. Bright colored resumes will get you noticed in a professional way.
2. What should be centered and the biggest lettering on the resume?
 - a. Your contact information
 - b. Your name
 - c. Why you are applying for this position
 - d. None of the Above
3. What things should you look for when researching a company?
 - a. The company's mission and values
 - b. What skills you will need for the job you are applying for
 - c. The product or service the business offers
 - 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.

Section 2: Interviewing

Section Objectives

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

- Answer common interview questions by evaluating your personal experiences and researching the business you are applying to
- List the sections of the interview process and the components of interview preparation
- Describe the appropriate attire for an interview
- Describe a professional and appropriate follow up to an interview

Introduction

In most hiring scenarios, the interviewing process is the second stage. Your resume has passed inspection and the employer wants to meet the person that the resume described. But now what? The resume was the easy part. You had complete control over the entire resume situation; you put what information you wanted and where you wanted it. Even better, you didn't have to field questions or talk about yourself to a complete stranger. While the interview itself can be very intimidating because of the fear of the unknown, for the most part, interviews are usually very predictable. In this section I will go over how to prepare for an interview and more importantly explain what you should expect during the interview process to calm your nerves. The better prepared and more calm you are for an interview, the better the situation will be.

What to Bring and How to Dress

When you go in for an interview you should always be prepared. One component of your interview survival kit is a folder containing extra copies of your resume. In the event there is more than one person sitting in on the interview you want to make sure they have copies of your resume. This will also earn you some brownie points because it shows your preparation. The other items you should have with you are a notebook (or portfolio) and something to write with. This gives you a place to write down the questions you want to ask and will allow you to

take notes during or after the interview. The last thing you should have is a small list of references. In some situations you will be asked for references before the hiring process is finalized. The faster the process goes, the sooner you will know the outcome. For this reason being prepared with a list of references can speed up the process opposed to waiting to contact the employer a few days after the interview. As a side note, you should always contact the people you have on your reference list and ask if it is alright for you to use them as a reference while you are applying for jobs. After the interview process, if you are informed that your references were used you should contact these references and thank them for allowing you to use them as a reference.

Attire for an interview is also very important as it sets your “in person” impression. Just like your resume, you should dress in the way you want to be perceived. In the case of an interview you want to be perceived as a competent professional that the employer would be comfortable hiring. The attire for this type of perception is professional dress. You can never overdress for an interview and business professional attire is always accepted. Simply put, business professional dress means wearing a business suit or comparable attire. Dressing professionally for an interview lets the employer know you are serious and have taken the time to prepare for this interview. Throughout the interview process, especially when pertaining to attire, remember that you are not only representing you as an individual, but the Massage Therapy field as a whole.

The Interview Process

The interview process is not a one day ordeal. The preparation needed to have a good interview experience starts a few days before. The first step is to do your research. This is the same type of research that was discussed previously in the resume section and for the same reason. You need to understand the position you are applying for and the business that you are hoping will employ you. The easiest way to do this research is to go to the company website or Facebook page. These websites usually contain an “About” section that talks about the business and may even lead you to other areas of the site where you can find more information. This collection of information about the business will give you talking points throughout the

interview and will allow you to answer more specific questions about your abilities and how those abilities will affect the business. All of these benefits of research emulate confidence. This confidence will allow you to be calmer during the interview and ultimately perform better.

When you are doing your research, write down a couple of good questions. The reason for this is that at the end of most interviews the interviewer will ask if you have any questions about the position or the business. You should always answer yes and ask one or two questions. Asking good questions shows the interviewer that you took the time to look into the job description and the business itself. This is also a benefit to you because people enjoy talking about themselves and what they do. Asking the interviewer a specific question that they have not heard before gives them the chance to talk during the interview and may even start a further conversation which is always good. The questions you ask should not be questions that can be answered off the website or were already answered during the interview. These types of questions actually hurt this particular strategy. You don't want the answer to your question to be, "I already went over that" or "That's on our website". In this scenario the interviewer may think that you either weren't paying attention or didn't take the time to at least look into the business.

To further your preparation, you should always drive to the interview location the day before your scheduled meeting. Doing this will prevent you from getting lost on your way and will calm your nerves. On the actual day of the interview you should always give yourself plenty of driving time to account for the possibility of any traffic or delays. You never want to show up late for an interview and in the case of first impressions, being on time is late. I recommend showing up 10-15 minutes before your scheduled time. When you are introducing yourself before the interview starts remember to smile, give a firm handshake, and hold yourself back from slouching. Doing these things create a professional and positive impression.

The questions during the interview are usually pretty predictable and a few examples of common interview questions are compiled after this paragraph. You should have strategic answers memorized to these questions. Strategic answers are answers that include extra "hire me" points. These points either include details about the business that is hiring, to show you

did your research, or details about your resume that you want to highlight. For instance, explaining your strengths and weaknesses is almost always a request during an interview. Since you know this question is coming there should be no reason that you aren't prepared with a winning answer. Be strategic. If you know from the businesses website that they focus on teamwork within their employees, why not talk about your strength as a team player and give an example of a time when you worked as a team. Obviously if you don't work well as a team you would not use this as your strength. The goal is to be strategic about your answers not to lie. This strategy goes back to the running resume idea previously discussed. If you know you are going to be applying to a lot of different positions, compile a list of 5 or 6 strengths and weaknesses, each with a story that talks about some of your key resume points. If a business has a large focus on organization, it would be better to use organization as your strength than teamwork and maybe talk about a time when you used organization to earn your national certification. Not only does this give a strength that is compatible with the business you are applying with, but also gives you a chance to reemphasize one of your main resume points.

Example Interview Questions:

- How could you contribute to our business?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses? (A very tricky question to answer. You should always follow up your answer to this question with an explanation of how you are working on turning this weakness into a strength.)
- Can you give an example of a time you had to work as a team?
- Can you tell me of a time you ran into a conflict while working with someone else or a team? How was the conflict resolved? What part did you play in the resolution of the conflict? What did you learn from the conflict?
- What is your greatest achievement?
- Why do you want to work here? (This should be your most polished answer as it is the most important and a great time to show off the research you have been doing on the business.)

- Do you have any questions for me about the position or the business?

After you go through the actual interview, it is usually customary that you are given a chance to tour the facility. Before you leave you should always thank the interviewer for their time and ask for their contact information or a business card along with their preferred contact method.

Following Up

The interview process is not over after the interview. Arguably the most important part of the process comes after you leave the interview. If you ended the interview in the correct way, you should have the preferred contact method and information for the person you interviewed with. When you leave the interview your first task is the follow up. If you are still interested in the position after the interview, when you get home you should email the person you interviewed with. In this email you should thank them for their time, tell them that you enjoyed speaking with them and that you look forward to speaking with them again soon. If email is not the preferred contact method, you should pick up a thank you card and drop it off at the business addressed to the person you interviewed with. The card should include the same information as the email. If you choose to send a card instead of email, dropping off the card in person is preferred to mailing. The hiring decision may be made before the mail is actually delivered and this delay in receipt of the card defeats the purpose of the follow up. Overall, the follow up gives you an extra edge over the other applicants and keeps your name fresh in the mind of the employer.

Conclusion

The interview process gives a mix of emotions, but mainly a feeling of overwhelming nervousness. Before you are overcome with butterflies, remember that you were chosen for an interview. The business did not choose to receive your resume; you chose them and allowed them to evaluate you as a potential employee. To be invited to an interview shows that they did in fact choose you after their initial evaluation and are now using the interview more as a confirmation of the resume than as a complete evaluation. If you take the information given to you in this section and prepare yourself for the interview process you will be less nervous about the unknown and will have the preparation needed to present yourself in a positive and professional way.

Review Questions

1. True or False. You should research the business you are applying to before writing your resume to send to the business.
2. Which of the following is involved in creating a good first impression?
 - a. Professional attire and attitude
 - b. Firm handshake
 - c. Confidence and a smile
 - d. All of the above
3. How should you follow up to an interview?
 - a. Only by phone as it is more personal
 - b. By mail because it is more professional
 - c. In person because it shows you care
 - d. Whichever method is the preferred contact of the person you interviewed with

*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: Networking

Section Objectives

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

- Describe techniques that can be used to manage the impression made by you and your practice
- List the components of an effective introduction and “elevator speech”
- Describe how to conduct and follow up on a business conversation in a networking setting
- Describe techniques that can be used to make yourself more comfortable speaking in front of other people specifically in a speech or presentation format

Introduction

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 that will find you. Business is all about relationships whether they are with business owners, practitioners or clients. Impression management is making sure that the way you carry yourself in your career and/or the way you operate your practice is a direct representation of how you want you and your business to be perceived by the community. Due to the impact impression management has, it 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 your career.

First Impressions in Person

There are three main tools in your networking toolbox that must be completely polished and ready for business. These tools are your introduction, your elevator speech, and your resume (if looking for a job, business card or brochure if you have a business). These three tools in most cases form 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 or career. 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 in your career and if used correctly the most productive. Because of this, why wouldn't you want to be awesome at promoting yourself? The first step to self promotion is the introduction. The first impression of you when talking to potential clients or employers will be made within the first 30 seconds. The last thing you want is 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 or job.

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 a business owner 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 taking the time to explain 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 problem with walking up to someone without eye contact, with a straight face, introducing yourself and looking disinterested. No person much less a potential client or employer is going to hang around long enough to even hear who you are or what you do.

Eye contact is the most important part of an introduction. Look the person who you plan on introducing yourself to in the eye as you are approaching them. Doing this gives 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 that you are interested in what they are saying. Keep in mind that eye contact is not staring; you want to look interested, not make the 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 in itself is an important habit to learn. When you are in a conversation there is a difference between just hearing someone talk and actively listening. To actively listen in a conversation means to be engaged in the conversation. 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 awkwardness and for some, the feeling that he or she needs to continue talking. This never ends well. Lastly, when engaging in a conversation, truly think about what the person is saying and how they are saying it. This will enable you to understand where the conversation is going and will give you more relevant talking points to add to the conversation.

The other two aspects of the “action” of an introduction deal with confidence more so than technique. These components are a firm handshake and good posture. Now there is no need to break someone's hand when giving a handshake, but you should give a firm handshake that shows that 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, directly speak to people 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 will feel like everyone is watching you, but eventually you will build up the strength and bravery against the fear and worry of people looking at you. After overcoming this, you will be enjoying the fact that you have the confidence to walk up to strangers, introduce yourself, and possibly add a client to your practice or get that dream job.

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 perceived and treated 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 career or 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 widely 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 as 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. 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, employer or fellow businessperson your business card or brochure (resume if you are looking for a job) 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 them. The reason why they should continue talking to you does not have to be something that you say directly to defend this, but more so 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." There are so many key points in just this 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 before will finish up your elevator speech.

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 and I own Main Street Massage across from the Main Street Business complex. Have you ever received a massage?" The great thing about 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 receive a massage in the future. With these types of follow ups to any transition, starting a conversation should be relatively easy. When in the conversation, enjoy it, let them enjoy it and give them information. Following these techniques will allow for a positive experience that you and your practice will be associated with which will in turn 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.

First Impressions in Writing

Impressions in writing whether it is in print or online are just as important as first impressions or any impression made in person. Whether it is a business card, brochure, advertisement, email, resume 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 is done so in the correct manner. More importantly, you can assure that the points accurately represent you and if you are a business owner, 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 and career you are also representing the Massage Therapy field as a whole. Strengthening the field builds awareness of alternative ways of healing and care. This will eventually lead to the growth of the field and a larger client base for massage therapists.

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 whether they are to be handed out to clients, employers or 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, the Massage Therapy field and your practice; take the time and care necessary to make sure that they do so in the appropriate manner.

Creating and Keeping Business Relationships

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 on client relationships, but more so focused on

business contacts whether they are suppliers, employers, fellow massage therapists, or other business owners in the community.

Handing out a business card or meeting a fellow 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. This idea is similar to the idea discussed earlier when following up after an interview. As a business owner, 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 them, 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 that 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. Anything longer and it is possible that they have forgotten what you 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 do massages at the gym two days a week. This is a great opportunity for your career, 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 an actual possibility. Even after the meeting, as long

as you have continued to make a positive impression, if nothing comes of this business arrangement you have still built upon your reputation 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 impression you made. If anything you should always ask if you could leave some business cards or brochures at their 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 continuing without it.

Business relationships are an active commitment. You have to keep in contact 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 aspect of a business relationship is the referral. Nothing says someone is a business ally than when they refer someone to you to receive a massage. Maybe you met a chiropractor a few months ago at a local business get together and exchanged contact information. You stopped by his or her office to drop off some business cards and 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 of one of your clients. This type of scenario truly shows that in a successful business relationship both businesses have added benefits from 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 relationship. If you know someone is not willing to help

you out in your career, 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 reception counter.

A collection of positive business relationships is such a strong tool when you are building a career or running a business. Spending the time to turn a contact into a relationship and keeping that relationship is worth the effort and offers benefits from so many different angles.

Public Speaking, Practice Makes Perfect

For many people the words "public speaking" are more frightening than any snake or spider. The idea of standing up and talking in front of a group of people sends chills down the spines of so many. But why? The underlying fears that people face when having to speak publically are things like rejection, timing, boredom, or the worst, forgetting what to say. Public speaking is a skill and skills are perfected with practice. While you can practice speaking in the comfort of your own home, public speaking is a skill only practiced in front of others. So before we go into how to enhance this skill, let's discuss some of the benefits of being comfortable speaking in front of others.

1. When you are able to speak in front of a crowd confidently, speaking to one or two people individually becomes easier as you are increasing your comfort with your own communication style.
2. Think about the opportunities. Some health fairs and business luncheons allow individuals the opportunity to introduce themselves and their business to all those at the event. Why not take this opportunity to promote yourself and your practice to a whole room of people instead of trying to talk to one person at a time?
3. Public speaking builds confidence. Confidence is essential to being successful in the business world and will allow you the opportunity to take your career to whole new levels.

The tips on how to calm yourself down before a speech or how to prepare for a speech are endless and everyone has their own techniques even to the extent of picturing the audience in their underwear. The best tip that I have is preparation. If you are comfortable with what you are going to speak about or have your speaking points memorized, most of the battle is already won. Before walking up to the podium take a few deep breathes and keep the speech in perspective. I guarantee this speech won't decide your fate and it won't be the last time you ever give a speech, just another tally on the board.

To practice public speaking, which is a must, I highly recommend joining an organization that promotes and welcomes the practice of public speaking. Toastmasters is a great organization that will fulfill these needs and there is more than likely a local Toastmasters near your practice. The next thing you should do is to take all the opportunities you can to speak in public. If you are offered to promote your business or speak at an event, take it. The more you speak the less nerve wracking giving a speech becomes and once you overcome the nerves and have done your preparation you will be surprised at how easy giving a speech can be.

Conclusion

The fear of public speaking and communicating with people we don't know is rampant all throughout society. You are not alone. Even the best public speakers and communicators will say that there will always be some amount of fear no matter how practiced of a speaker you are. Knowing this, you should continue to strengthen your communication skills without the fear of other's opinions for you are doing what very few are willing to do. This confidence will be recognized by those around you whether you are talking to a small group or to a large audience. With confidence comes respect and people that respect you and your work as a professional in the community will patronize your practice and help you with your career. Remember to carry this confidence with you in your networking ventures and to work on growing business relationships throughout the community. All of these things combine to form a good reputation, not only for you, but for the Massage Therapy field as a whole.

Review Questions

1. True or False. An elevator speech is a speech given to a small room of people, giving the feeling of being in an elevator
2. What is the best remedy for reducing public speaking nerves?
 - a. Always speak first
 - b. Prepare ahead of time
 - c. Don't use notes
 - d. Tell jokes to the audience
3. True or False. Whenever you create a business connection, you should stay in touch to keep the relationship alive.

*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. D

Section 2

1. TRUE
2. D
3. D

Section 3

1. FALSE
2. B
3. TRUE

Ethics: Professional Communication Exam

1. Which would describe an effective resume?
 - a. Very detailed and elaborate
 - b. Organized and to the point
 - c. Flashy and multiple pages
 - d. Vague and structured

2. Why should you research a company that you wish to work for?
 - a. To know if you truly want to work for that company
 - b. To have the information necessary to ask intelligent and meaningful questions
 - c. To have the information necessary to structure your resume in the correct way
 - d. All of the above

3. How can you make a good impression at an interview?
 - a. Dress casually so the interviewer doesn't think you are too uptight
 - b. Don't add to conversation and stay relatively quiet, this will help you avoid saying something you will regret
 - c. Show that you have researched the company by asking questions and being involved in the interview
 - d. All of the above

4. What is an interview follow up?
 - a. Scheduling another interview with the same interviewer after the first
 - b. Going over the answers to interview questions when you get home
 - c. Contacting the interviewer after the interview
 - d. Scheduling an interview with a different organization after the first

5. How should you follow up to an interview if the interviewer does not give you any contact information?
 - a. Email
 - b. Personally delivered thank you card
 - c. By phone
 - d. By mail

6. 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

7. What are the three components to your networking toolbox?
 - a. Resume (or business card), introduction, smile
 - b. Introduction, elevator speech, conversational skills
 - c. Introduction, elevator speech, smile
 - d. Elevator speech, resume (or business card), introduction

8. 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

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. Which is a good technique for making sure you make a good impression in writing?
 - a. Use big words
 - b. Proofreading
 - c. Use bolded and large wording
 - d. All of the above

12. Which of the following is a danger when you have a typo in a document?
 - a. It hurts your reputation
 - b. Others may think you are careless
 - c. You are not present to defend the typo because it is written
 - d. All of the above

13. When should you contact a business connection you just met?
 - a. The next day
 - b. When a situation comes up that you would need their input in
 - c. Maximum 3 days
 - d. Maximum 2 weeks

14. What is the best way to become a better public speaker?
- a. Practice speaking in front of a mirror
 - b. Practice speaking in front of others
 - c. Strengthen your vocabulary
 - d. Practice dictating hard to pronounce words
15. Which of the following is a way to calm your nerves before a speech?
- a. Prepare beforehand
 - b. Take deep breathes
 - c. Put the speech in perspective
 - d. All of the above

This completes the Ethics: Professional Communication exam.