

# MARKETING STRATEGY FOR MASSAGE THERAPISTS

By Joy Slaughter

(E-mail [joy@acapitalsolution.com](mailto:joy@acapitalsolution.com))

You have your diploma, your shingle is up, and you have been very proudly passing out your business cards left and right. So, you wonder, why isn't the phone ringing off the hook and your classes or appointment book filled up?

Or maybe you started your practice a few years ago and slowly began building your client base. Word of mouth referrals, local advertising, and perhaps an online presence has helped – but now what? Your business is not growing and you are finding that perhaps your old method is stale, or just not working any more.

You have not done anything wrong, but perhaps you are spread too thin. Marketing requires a significant amount of time and manpower in order to achieve results.

Marketing is a bit advertising, a bit networking, and a lot of research and hard work. Successful and purposeful marketing will have a direct impact on the overall health of your practice. Marketing is a process that is complex in nature, but quite manageable when you allocate proper resources and assistance to it. Your homework in this area will enable you to better serve those you most passionately want to help.

How you decide to market, and what will work best for you, should be determined after you ask yourself three very important questions.

- WHO am I marketing to?
- WHAT are my core services?
- WHAT benefits and solutions do my services offer?

If you give these questions all the time and thought they deserve, the rest will fall into place (with some diligence and hard work, of course!).

## WHO AM I MARKETING TO?

Even in the massage therapy profession, it will pay you to have a specific niche where you concentrate your marketing. This may seem counter-productive, but many very successful professionals including [Robert Middleton](#) will back this theory up 100%. I also know this works from my own personal experience. For four years, I had marketed my business to the whole wide world – really. I did some local advertising and had a web presence, but really did not take it beyond that. I was getting business from my previous employer and some word of mouth projects that were paying the bills, but I was not growing, from either a business or personal aspect. I was not reaching my ideal client. The problem was, I had not asked myself who my ideal client was. Once I did this, it was absolutely amazing how much more clear my whole vision was, and how focused I was able to become to *better serve my clients!* I can now, speak to holistic service providers and ask – “what services can I offer to help you achieve your goals?”

Who are **you** marketing to now? Anyone within a 50-mile radius that may be in need of your services? Isn't that an awful lot of people? Do you think you are reaching any of them any more *specifically* and *uniquely* than everyone else offering the same services?

Who do you want to reach? What if you directed your marketing efforts to senior citizens? Or new mothers? Or chronic pain sufferers? Or those with post traumatic stress disorder?

Defining a niche or a target market from your heart - gives you very specific places to concentrate your marketing efforts. This does not mean that if you decide to market to new mothers, that you cannot accommodate an arthritis sufferer. Not at all!

What it does is create vision and focus in your message and allows you to speak directly to those you most want to serve. It helps you write better, more informative copy. It helps you connect and create relationships with your market. It gives your voice a specialist's edge, establishes credibility and builds confidence with prospective clients. It is what will truly help clients find and choose YOU.

### **WHAT ARE MY CORE SERVICES?**

First, establish what services you offer. It's important to be clear about what services you *want* to offer as well. Do some soul-searching - - what brings you joy and inspiration? With there easily being over one hundred massage modalities you simply could not – and should not – offer everything. You may be taught and certified in many disciplines, but are there some you feel you've been called to share? Reiki and hot stones? Aromatherapy and Raindrop? CST? Sports massage? Specialization and expertise in a few key areas are what will bring you more clients.

### **WHAT BENEFITS AND SOLUTIONS DO MY SERVICES OFFER?**

Once you have narrowed your list, think about what those services provide your clients. What tangible and intangible things do they come away with after a session with you? Is it peace and tranquility? Is it improved mental balance? Is it less physical pain? Is it an education in pain management through massage, meditation, and visualization? Is it love and care that nurtures self-esteem? Those are the solutions and benefits you want to emphasize in your marketing.

### **CASE STUDY**

A massage therapist decides to concentrate her practice in pre- and post- natal mother and infant massage - marketing to mommies, mothers-to-be, and their family and friends.

She promotes her practice as “Mommy and Me Massage,” advertises with attention-grabbing headlines “The one gift that will not be exchanged,” “Just what every new mother needs,” “Strengthen family development by learning how to massage your infant”.

She also offers gift baskets that include a gift certificate, essential oils and body care products geared towards new mother and babies. She partners with a local company that specializes in gift baskets as well as a local healthy foods store where the gift basket items are purchased in exchange for placement of brochures and flyers at the counter. She develops plenty of literature ready to be given out on topics such as the benefits of

massage during and after pregnancy, and learning the art of infant massage for parents. She also speaks to midwives and other groups that recommend massage to their patients.

As you can see, the possibilities are tremendous by marketing to a well-defined niche! But you will need some help to do it all and do it well.

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There are certainly a few concrete steps that need to be taken after deciding on a specialization and actually enjoying the influx of business from those you desire to help the most.

Using the above case study, what needed to be done after she decided on her specialization? Certainly, a bit of time was needed to get to the end result, but what specifically?

A Virtual Assistant can assist with the left-brain tasks.

- Research and brainstorming
  - The where and how of reaching your potential clients.
  - Finding those who may be suitable for partnering.
- Research – raw data, statistics, and expert testimonials to back up your technique.
- Writing – having material that you can claim authorship of further lends to your position as an expert.
- The compiling of information for - and the design of - informational sheets of techniques, brochures, newsletters, ad copy, and press releases.
- The actual typing of your material.

### OVERVIEW

~ Our first feeling as nurturers and providers is to reach the most people we possibly can. This can truly be counter-productive.

~ You stand to help MORE people by zeroing in on what you are the MOST passionate about and BEST suited for.

~ You are VERY passionate about what you do – so am I.

~ My passion is to help you succeed in your business.

**Joy Slaughter** is a Virtual Assistant specializing in business support to holistic service providers. Visit her website at: [A Capital Solution](#). Call at (609) 558-1172 or [e-mail](#) for a FREE consultation to see if Virtual Assistance is the next step in fulfilling your dreams.

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