Tricks of the Trade:
Successful Marketing Strategies for Your Clinical Practice

A subsection from the 2-day Seminar:
Tricks of the Trade: How to Create a Successful Naturopathic Medical Practice

Presented by:
E. Camp, ND

http://www.healthjourneys.com/images2/free_audio_image.jpg

“A jug fills drop by drop.” – Buddha
Introduction

One of the most important lessons I learned in the process of starting and restructuring of Naturopathic Medical Practices is that people want, need and are willing to do whatever is necessary to have access to our expertise and medicine. As doctors and business people we face two major challenges as we go about establishing or restructuring our practices. The first challenge we face is learning those strategies, in our individual communities, that are the most successful in bringing people through our doors. The second challenge is learning and understanding our own personal strengths and weaknesses so that we choose those marketing strategies that “bring out our personal best”. So, this is a dual process – learning how to market based on what works best for us and for what works best in our individually unique communities.

Each community served by a Naturopathic Doctor varies in size and culture and has its own level of understanding about Naturopathic Doctors and Naturopathic Medicine. There are differences between licensed and unlicensed states, between the skills and personalities of each ND and between the types of each doctor’s practice. These differences are not necessarily “easier” or “more difficult” they just require different marketing plans and will naturally lead each ND into a unique marketing strategy. There are some common elements between communities and therefore there are some basic and general strategies that can be used regardless of the differences that exist.

The material covered today is taken from a larger, 2-day seminar in which elements of marketing are distributed throughout. I have pulled pieces from the larger seminar as they relate to marketing but in some areas they are taken out of context. In those instances, I have noted that it is an excerpt.

It is my sincere hope that the information I give to you will help you to be successful in whatever way you define success. Regardless of the route you choose, just believe you can do this, have fun and stay balanced.

Photo: http://www.i-walt.com/dharmaboots/media/images/2006/path.jpg

“You cannot travel the path until you have become the path itself” -- Buddha

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Marketing
"As you travel down life's highway...whatever be your goal, you cannot sell a doughnut without acknowledging the hole." -- Harold J. Shaylor

- **Overview**
  - Marketing vs Advertising
  - Market Research
  - Your Image
  - Media Planning
  - Sales Strategy
  - Customer Service
  - Community Involvement
  - Networking
  - Increase Visibility and Awareness
  - Advertising
    - General Advertising Pointers
    - Stretch Your Dollars
    - Possible Strategies
    - Top Dogs
  - Track Results
  - Put it Together

- **Marketing vs. Advertising**
  - “The best way to distinguish between advertising and marketing is to think of marketing as a pie, inside that pie you have slices [such as] advertising, market research, media planning, public relations, product pricing, distribution, customer support, sales strategy, and community involvement. Advertising only equals one piece of the pie in the strategy. All of these elements must not only work independently but they also must work together towards the bigger goal. Marketing is a process that takes time and can involve hours of research for a marketing plan to be effective. Think of marketing as everything that an organization does to facilitate an exchange between company and consumer.”
  http://marketing.about.com/cs/advertising/a/marketvsad.htm

- **Market Research**
  - The main point of doing market research is to learn who your market is so that you know how to engage their interest and get them into your clinic! In other words, market research enables target marketing.
  - Thinking and writing on the following, in conjunction with your market research, can help inform and guide your marketing decisions.
    - If you are going to be seeing pediatric patients only, your efforts will differ greatly from someone who would like to do, for example, oncology.
If you are serving a retirement community, you will advertise and market differently than if you are serving a young college community.

- What are the demographics within a 5 to 10 mile radius of your office?
  - What are demographics? The breakdown of the population into measurable, quantifiable statistical categories such as age, education, gender, income, etc.
  - You will have collected much of this information in the preparation of your business plan. If you did not prepare a business plan, you will need to do this to guide your marketing plan.

- Who are your ideal patients?
  - The answer this question you need to understand yourself and your community.
    - What areas do you excel in?
      (a) Do you work better with a particular age group?
      (b) Do you prefer one type of community over another such as a college community or a retirement community?
      (c) Do you function better in a clinic setting or in a home setting?
      (d) Do you have an area of specialty either in regards to a modality or a in dealing with particular imbalances in the body?
    - Who makes up your community?
      (a) Is this a young college community, a retirement community, a transient community?
      (b) Do you want to serve the general population of your area or are you going to market to a specific group?
      (c) Your demographic research will help you to answer many questions about your community.

- Area Competition
  - Go and meet your direct competition (local NDs and other holistic practitioners) and see how you can niche.
  - What are they doing successfully and unsuccessfully to promote?
  - Can a potentially beneficial relationship be started?

- Local Environment
  - Environment
    - Know your water supply, high metal levels, soil nutrient levels, large manufacturing facilities.
    - Introduce yourself to the environmental agencies because they will be a great source of information for you.
    - Look up your green cleaners and local environmental groups.
  - Weather
    - What are the weather patterns in your part of the country?
    - This can help you know when colds and flus peak in the general local populace and when seasonal allergies kick into high gear.
    - This can help you determine when to run detox workshops or advertise for particular programs.
  - Disease patterns
    - Are there prevalent conditions in your area:
      (a) For example, in the Northeast there are many people suffering from the symptoms of Lyme Disease whereas in Florida many people suffer from gastrointestinal infestation due to poor water quality.
- Are there outbreaks of pertussis or other imbalances that hit large groups of people at one time?

- **Politics**
  - Get to know your area politicians and law makers.
  - Host an open house for your fireman, police officers, teachers and other civil employees.

- **Local Business and Related Professions**
  - Becoming familiar with these groups can help you know your market.
  - Keep a data base that can be compiled into a handout that will also serve as a resource list for patients.
  - **Examples:**
    - Coops and health food stores
    - Medical supplies and pharmacies
    - Organic and raw foods sources
    - Local farmers where food can be picked fresh
    - Chiropractors
    - Nurse Practitioners
    - Acupuncturists
    - Nutritionists and Dieticians
    - Local homeopaths and unlicensed Naturopaths
    - MD Homeopaths
    - Colon hydrotherapists
    - Massage Therapists
    - Salons and Spas
    - Holistic vets and dentists
    - Medical and Osteopathic Doctors
    - Vets

- **Your Image**
  - Creating an image takes a conscious and concentrated effort.
  - Everything contributes to your image: you, your office and staff, your marketing materials, the way you conduct business, the colors you choose and even the words you employ.
  - A well constructed image gives people a sense of stability. You may not have been in business "since 1908," but if you have invested in creating an image, it goes a long way toward building "trust." People don't want a doctor who they think is going to pick up and leave town or go out of business in 4 months.
  - An "image" makes you more memorable. Forty percent of people better remember what they see than what they hear or read. So having graphics associated with your business and having consistent graphics on your business materials make you more likely to come to the forefront of people’s minds when they have a need for your goods or services.
  - Some questions to ask yourself:
    - What is it that you have that is unique or special in your practice?
    - What is it that stands out about you to your patients?
    - How would you like your patients to perceive you and your services?
    - What is it you want to be known for?
    - What is your current image or positioning in your community?
    - Where are you headed and where do you really want to be in 5 years?
○ Logo:
  ▪ A well-designed logo has many subtle meanings and tells a part of your story.
  ▪ A logo will help you to build an image and a brand.
  ▪ An agency can charge $500 - $2000 to create a logo and marketing materials.
  ▪ You can also get very good results with a logo design program.
    ◦ http://cooltext.com/ - Website offering very basic free logo design.
    ◦ http://www.aaa-logo.com/ - Free trial version which allows you to try the program out and design a logo. Full version costs $50 and allows you to create and save multiple designs.
    ◦ http://www.coolarchive.com/logogenerator.php - Another basic and free logo creator.
  ▪ Consider which colors you use and the font of any text because this could complicate further design work. Some fonts are not universal and if you choose one that is not universal you may have to choose something else in the end.
  ▪ Consider how it will look in black and white and on a letterhead.
  ▪ Once you come up with some sample logos, ask strangers what they think about them! This can be very informative. Ask them what they think the logo "says" about your company, what it brings to mind, what kind of impression it gives them.
○ Appearance counts: home-printed business cards with perforated edges or cards printed with standard designs say "small-time" to potential patients -- and that is how they will want to compensate you.
○ Items to spend a little more on:
  ▪ Business cards
  ▪ Brochures
  ▪ Handouts
○ Carefully select the pictures you use in your marketing materials and on your website. If you want to charge professional fees, it is important to look professional. You don’t need a glamour shot or anything fancy, just something basic.
○ Keep colors and themes consistent with all marketing strategies.
○ A slogan or encapsulated statement also determines what people think about you.
○ If you have been in business for a number of years this can be used to your advantage by using that information in your materials.

• Media Planning
  ○ This is mapping out a strategy for what, where and when your advertisements will appear in the media.
  ○ Media consists of:
    ▪ TV: local and cable access
    ▪ Radio
    ▪ Newspaper
    ▪ Internet listings
    ▪ Magazines
    ▪ Theatre and symphony playbills
    ▪ Gym billboards
    ▪ Newsletters: school, daycare, hospital
    ▪ Restaurant menus
    ▪ Phone book
    ▪ Church bulletins
  ○ It is a good idea to start by listing all the media you would consider, get price quotes and then make a plan that follows your media budget, a part of your marketing budget.
The sources you choose need to target your ideal group. This is how to make your advertising dollars stretch.

Media kits:
- A media kit introduces you and notifies media that you are available for stories or to comment on newsworthy events in medicine.
- Send to reporters and editors.
- Ensures they know who you are when you send out any press releases (see below).
- Media kits consists of:
  - Photo
  - Bio
  - CV and Resume
  - 2-3 articles that you have written and published
  - In addition to hard copy, burn everything onto a CD so they have it in electronic format as well.
  - Folder with business card attached
- Follow-up with a telephone call a couple of weeks after you have sent them.

Press releases:
- Send out press releases – these provide free advertising for you and all newspapers need “news” to help fill their pages, especially small local papers. They need news submitted by the local community or they have to pay more for journalists to go out and get news.
- Look through your local papers and magazines to spot the press release material submitted by commercial organizations. This will encourage you as to how easy it is to provide 'news' stories for the press and give you an idea of what they are looking for.
- Local TV and radio are also amenable to press releases, but they're a little bit pickier. Nevertheless, keep TV and radio in mind for anything going on in your business of local interest or 'novelty value'. This is especially important in small towns.
- Press release 'news' must be submitted to the news department (editorial department if it's a magazine) of the publication concerned. They like faxes in preference to mailed material as it is usually more current.
- Be aware that the journalists will alter your copy, so don't agonize over the precise wording, but do enough to make it interesting and newsworthy.
- Press-release publicity carries more credibility than paid-for advertising- People are largely unaware that much of what they read in the local and national newspapers is in fact carefully planned press releases. They are therefore more receptive towards it and believe it almost without question.
- A good photograph in support of a press release will dramatically improve your chances of publication. Either provide your own, or if the story is an event ask the press to send a photographer.
- If you have got something newsworthy, don't wait or the opportunity will be lost. Even simple things like staff promotions, qualifications attained, hobby achievements, new employees and births all make acceptable press release stories.

Sales Strategy
- Selling consists of two main functions: tactics and strategy. Sales strategy is the planning of sales activities: methods of reaching clients, competitive differences and resources available. Tactics involves the day-to-day selling: prospecting, sales process,
and follow-up. The tactics of selling are very important but equally vital is the strategy of sales. The advantages are too compelling to ignore."

http://sbinformation.about.com/cs/sales/a/aa111002a.htm

○ Strategy:
  ▪ Methods of reaching the client: advertising – print, verbal, graphic
  ▪ Competitive differences:
    ◦ This will become clear as you do your research of area competitors and as you sculpt what your practice is going to be.
    ◦ Do you offer lower prices?
    ◦ Do you carry different products?
    ◦ Do you perform specialized or different services?
  ▪ Resources available: what resources do you offer your clients that they need to thrive and make the most of their association with you?
    ◦ Meal planning
    ◦ Ongoing guidance and support
    ◦ Shopping service
    ◦ Handouts

○ Tactics:
  ▪ Prospecting:
    ◦ Finding and engaging the prospective client toward an encounter that ends in the opportunity to make a sale:
      (a) 15 minute complimentary consults.
      (b) Spending 2 hours a weekend at a routine location where people can find you.
      (c) Arranging for talks in locations where you can have access to people open to your services.
  ▪ Sales process: how do you sell your services and products to your prospective clients:
    ◦ Hard sell, soft sell
    ◦ Do you ask for the sale?
  ▪ Follow-up: are your clients pleased with their encounter with you?
    ◦ Follow-up phone calls and notes will reveal how things went and what areas need to be focused on.
    ◦ Gives people a sense that their experience is important to you.
    ◦ Part of good customer service.

◆ Customer Service
  ○ This is a natural continuation of marketing, image and sales strategy.
  ○ Many people today make their choices of which service to purchase based on need, price and customer service. In fact, many consumers will begin with and stay loyal to a company strictly because of the customer service.

○ Comprehensive approach:
  ▪ Any advertisements
  ▪ All public appearances
  ▪ Initial and subsequent phone calls and office visits
  ▪ Message they receive with every contact with office
  ▪ How are problems and issues handled and resolved
  ○ Excellent customer service and support = unparalleled word of mouth advertising, steadfast loyalty and an image beyond reproach.
Always have a process in place to ensure things are handled consistently and smoothly and make sure everyone (staff and all doctors) know and use that process.

Some ideas:
- Send thank-you letters with a small gift card to patients who refer other patients.
- Send a “Welcome to Our Practice” card.
- Send birthday postcards, winter or holiday well-wishes.
- Have a full-load of free samples to give away, put these in the bags that the sold medicinary items go into.
- Send a survey out using your mailing list service.
- Have someone, friend or friend of a friend, secret shop and secret call the office on a routine basis. This will help you work on problem areas with your staff and help you identify your very strong areas.

Resource lists and handouts.

Community Involvement
- How active are you in your community? These activities will shape how quickly you become known, how you are perceived and how often you are called upon.
- Volunteer a few hours a week anywhere that interests you: hospital, Red Cross, local shelter, children’s homes, church and local schools. A little research will turn up quite a list of volunteer organizations/opportunities and you can simply choose ones that really interest you.
- Doing free BP checks at a local church or community center.
- Join the Chamber of Commerce.
- Go to town and city meetings.
- Consider running for a City Board position: you have the credentials!!!
- Write a column for a small local paper, one you advertise with, of course.
- Meet with the people who administer local IEP plans at schools.
- Sponsor a local sports team or band group, or some other group that really needs your dollars and in return will do some talking about you.
- Integrate yourself into the community so that you become known and recognized.
- Initiate a corporate discount program:
  - Mail letters to HR depts. of corporations in your area.
  - Companies get an extra benefit to offer employees (10% off etc.).
  - You get more patients and perhaps some free exposure in the form of announcements and inclusion in company newsletter.

Networking
- “Business networking is all about helping others succeed, and in the process, finding colleagues with like skills and passions. Any business, no matter how big or small, cannot function without getting help along the way. Much of that help comes from networking.” Joe Pulizzi, http://www.businessnetworkingadvice.com/
- Networking is an area to plan out to maximize your time and energy.
- You only have so much time available outside of seeing patients and running your business and you want to use this time wisely.
- Also, there is no reason it should be a chore. Choose networking avenues that you really enjoy spending the time doing.
- If you do not want to get up at 5 am to go to a weekly “networking group” then find something else. This is just one very tiny, small aspect of networking.
- Some suggestions:
• Go in to visit all the businesses you did market research on. Stop by the offices/stores personally, equipped with brochures and business cards. Introduce yourself and find out if there is some mutually beneficial relationship you can establish.

• Local area health shows and fairs (see expos below), Write the name of the main contact or person you spoke with on the back of the card with a few blips that will help jog your memory later when you call to chat or invite them to lunch.

• Call area healthcare providers and take them to lunch.

• Get to know all the key medical personnel at local hospitals, clinics and schools.

• Get to know the directors of health and wellness at local big business, government and state agencies.

• Join in any “open” grand rounds at area hospitals.

• Search out the public health programs and get involved with ones that interest you.
  - Make a list of the people that you believe you might like to know and network with and then formulate a schedule where you go and visit them one-by-one until you have established initial contact with them all.
  - Continue to call, speak with them and invite them to events, etc…so you keep yourself in the forefront of their minds.

• Increase Visibility and Awareness
  - For this section, which is about extensive interaction with the public, there are a few items which are indispensable:
    • Literature and business card holders
    • Projector
    • Portable screen
    • Clipboards
    • Baskets to hold samples, different sizes
    • A box with a slit for raffle tickets
    • Raffle tickets – you can even have some printed up fairly inexpensively with your name and phone number!
    • A couple of tablecloths and smaller colored cloths to merchandise any display tables. It is even better if they can be embroidered with your logo. Look for a local seamstress to do this as it can save you money.
    • Safety pins and tape
    • Pens with a pen holder
    • Electric kettle, paper cups and wooden stir sticks
    • Tiered candy dish for bar samples
    • A few large platters
  - Open Houses
    • Hold a Grand Opening event. If you are house-call based consider renting a local space, holding it in your home or in a patient’s home.
    • Saturday afternoon as well as Friday night after work are good times.
    • Invite MDs, DOs, MTs, other practitioners, yoga studio owners, chiropractors, psychologists, and other professionals in the health and wellness communities. Contact all those businesses from your market research.
    • Put up flyers in obvious locations.
    • Advertise event on cable access stations.
    • Send out paper and web invitations to your mailing list.
    • This is an event to send press releases out about, free advertising!
- Serve refreshments.
- Be prepared to answer questions.
- Perhaps have a presentation running in other rooms on your laptop for people you cannot get to immediately.

- Chamber of Commerce
  - Join your local chamber.
  - They will list you on their website although it may cost extra in addition to membership.
  - Also provides free events and networking opportunities.
  - Must participate to get the most out of this.
  - They also host regular presentations that benefit small business owners and are free to members- for example, how to use web marketing.
  - Rates are usually around $300-400 annually.

- Presentations
  - Projector and screen are very helpful to own…
    - Projectors typically run from $350 (View Sonic) to $1000
    - Screens vary but you can pick one up for around $100
  - In-office presentations:
    - The size of the group you can accommodate depends on office size limitations.
    - Require RSVPs and do confirmation calls.
    - Advertise on websites, for free in the community events section of newspapers, on local radio stations, on community broadcast TV stations.
    - Generally pretty successful in recruiting new patients.
  - Locations for outside presentations (some suggestions, these are too numerous to list everything):
    - Nursing homes
    - Retirement communities
    - Schools- both for students and teachers
    - Support groups
    - Health food stores
    - Book stores
    - Yoga studios
    - Massage therapy schools
    - Large businesses (and small)
    - Churches or church groups
    - College classes
    - Corporate Wellness programs
    - If you are a house-call based doctor, you can often hold these in your patient’s home, they usually respond in a very positive way!

- Expos
  - First, this is a valuable activity to recruit attendees into patients.
  - Second, and perhaps more importantly, this is an event that allows you the opportunity to get to know other vendors. This get your name out there in the community, allows you to meet other business owners who become referral sources and in many cases patients as well! Simply put, this is a major networking opportunity.
  - Prices can range from $50 for a table at a smaller event with smaller attendance, to $500 or more for very large and highly visible events.
  - Some examples:
- Women’s Expo- often put on by a local TV or radio station, with big name speakers and all businesses that cater to women. Very visible, very large.
- Shopping type expo/fair- usually geared towards retail vendors who sell various items.
- Health Food Store Fair
- “Holistic” Expo- medium sized, usually with lots of various alternative health practitioners.
- Often, you will be the only ND in attendance.
  - You can offer BP checks which get people to stop, slow down, and talk.
  - Bring along lots of business cards, brochures or handouts that target the expected population. Bring your banner and promotional items.
    - Often, you can buy samples from some of your favorite vendors and many of them have very professional preprinted brochures they will send you for free!
  - Samples draw people in. Offer samples and then while you stuff the bag you can talk to them about who you are and what you do. Don’t just set the samples out front as people will grab and run!
  - Can also bring small items to sell- jars with pre-mixed tea, books, etc.
  - Come early to set up and then make rounds and meet other vendors before it gets busy.
  - When registering, ask the organizers if they need presenters. If so, you may also be able to do a presentation while you are there.
  - You may also be able to get an insert in a goodie bag that is given away at admission (this may cost extra).
  - Run a raffle – have people fill out a slip of paper with their name, phone and email. Offer the option of being added to the newsletter mailing list.
    - You can give away a free first office visit or some type of therapy that you offer.
    - You can also give away several “free, initial consultations”.
  - Take along a newsletter sign up sheet.
- Tea Parties
  - You bring tea, the host provides hot water, cups and a small audience.
  - No set talk, just show up and answer questions and evaluate supplements.
  - Offer a discount if they schedule right then.
  - Offer the host a free follow-up to arrange the tea party.
  - These are great for the friends and family of existing patients.
- Meetup.com
  - A great way to start your own group.
  - A way to get to know the people in your community who are already part of meet-ups.

**Advertising**

- **General advertising pointers**
  - Best deal for start-up companies or brand new business is “in-home” advertising. Avoid “out-of-home” until well established and until your name is highly recognizable. In-home is anything that enters people’s houses (i.e. newspaper ad), whereas out-of-home are items like billboards or ads on the side of a bus.
  - There are usually no up-front costs when purchasing advertising unless you are purchasing a very large package and then a deposit may be required.
  - Expect to sign a contract.
Advertising is usually paid monthly if it is an ongoing service although some will try to get you to pay every 10 days.  
Make sure you are given what you bought before you pay. For example, the radio station says they will run your ad 2 times between noon and 4 pm but they end up only running it at 4 am.  
If you do pay up front, try to negotiate perks because of this (for example, a big discount, an extra ad, etc.).  
Get proofs and approve of everything before it is run.  
Expect Ad salespeople to be able to provide you with demographics information about who they reach.  
They may be willing to do trade for ads. You may also be able to barter with a graphic designer who will design ads for you.  
Ask about additional production costs and ask for this to be included in the contract. For example, you are getting a black and white ad and they put it in color and then try to charge extra for it after the fact.  
For any advertising, the company (i.e. the radio station or the newspaper) will usually write the spot or design the ad for you at no extra cost. Salespeople may try to tell you it costs extra but you can negotiate this into the package.  
Refrain from revealing how much you have available to spend on advertising and instead ask them to give you a rate card.  
Try to get 2 or 3 quotes per medium to have a base for comparison.  
Quoted prices are usually negotiable by 10-20%. If they refuse to budge, ask for extras instead such as a website link.  
Just remember that ads are a sales item and don’t be afraid to haggle.  
Yellow-page advertising is usually non-negotiable.  
Newspapers may be more willing to write a story on you or give you a regular column if you are a loyal advertiser.  

**Stretch your advertising dollars**  
 Target your market.  
 - Ask yourself every time you choose an advertising method: who is going to read/see/hear this and do they comprise my target market.  
 Community and neighborhood publications.  
 - In large metropolitan markets, advertising in daily newspapers and on television can be costly, and you may end up paying for a much larger audience than your business serves.  
 Look into regional ad buys.  
 - Some publications have regional or demographic editions where you can place an ad for a fraction of the cost of advertising in the regular edition.  
 - Cable TV stations offer local advertising that is broadcast only in certain markets. This not only saves you money, but helps you really hone in on the audience you want to reach.  
 Check into discount options.  
 - Most publications offer an agency discount of 15 percent; if you act as your own advertising "agency", you may qualify.  
 - You can also get frequency discounts for advertising several times in one publication.
Monthly magazines, for example, usually offer 3-, 6- and 12-time rates. And most publications offer retail rates, and many offer special rates for other types of businesses.

- Make a habit of asking what kind of discount they can offer you.

- **Buy remnant space.**
  - Ask if you can purchase leftover space or airtime that a publication can't fill, you won't get to pick your spots, but you can save anywhere from 30 to 80 percent.

- **Consider classified ads.**
  - The classifieds aren't merely for job openings, and they're available in magazines as well as newspapers.
  - They are much cheaper than standard display ads, and many publications let you run mini-display ads in the classifieds.
  - Classified-ad categories include a broad range of consumer and business products and services.
  - If you can't afford a big ad, just make sure you include your website so people can go and get more complete information.

- **Reuse ads.**
  - If you have a good-looking ad, make the most of your investment in the creative work. Reprint the ad for use in other publications or handouts.
  - You can also use pieces of the ad and recycle them for new uses.
  - If an ad works, stick with it. Repetition is effective, and you'll save money by not creating new ads.

- **Try to barter.**
  - Find out whether a publication will let you pay for advertising with goods or services. This may be an option if you're working with a small media company.
  - Sometimes called "trade" ads, these barter deals are often struck with restaurant advertisers, but it's possible they may barter with you too.

### Possible Strategies

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<tr>
<th>Mailing List*</th>
<th>Newspaper*</th>
<th>Church Bulletins</th>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletter*</td>
<td>Yellow pages*</td>
<td>Symphony Playbill</td>
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<td>Magazines</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Orchestra Playbill</td>
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<td>Radio</td>
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<td>TV</td>
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- **Mailing List**
  - One of the first things you can work on. Add all people as you go, friends, family.
  - Add all patients to your mailing list as you acquire them.
  - Take along a mailing list sign up sheet when you do expos or presentations.
  - Keep a mailing list sign-up sheet in your reception area.
  - When you make new contacts and get business cards, add these people to your mailing list.
  - Can also have a mailing list sign up on your website – often called a “Newsletter” sign-up.
  - You will use this mailing list to send out updates, newsletters, announcements.
  - One of the least expensive and easiest services to use: *IContact*  
    (a) [http://www.icontact.com/a.pl/196383](http://www.icontact.com/a.pl/196383)
**Newsletter**
- Producing your own newsletter for the local community is an excellent way of giving information, building an image of friendliness and trust, and advertising your own services.
- Incorporate both regular mail and e-mail to reach the broadest base of people.
- Use to announce new products or services.
- Drop off copies to local health food stores, yoga studios, nursing homes and other places where you would like to target a specific market.
- Publisher is very easy to use to create a newsletter.
- Commit to a frequency and size that you can sustain.
- Basic rules of advertising production apply. Keep it simple, easy to read, and avoid anything off-the-wall or extravagant.
- Include photographs and details of your staff.
- Maintain a consistent design- consistency of appearance is essential to build recognition, awareness and positive association with your business.
- Keep your audience in mind. Assess the content to make sure it is relevant, and presented in a way that your readers will want and be able to read it.
- It may be possible for you to recover some of the cost of the newsletter by selling some advertising space. You can certainly approach all local businesses that you found while doing market research as well as small vendors who offer things such as natural soaps.

**Newspaper**
- Often, small local newspapers which are free for the taking at coffee shops, book stores, etc. and which also get inserted in mailboxes or other large papers offer the best price, have great exposure and are widely read and distributed.
- You can often negotiate around 33% off published rates by buying a package.
- Change ad content to reflect new products or services.
- Use this space to advertise free in-office talks and area presentations.
- Look at the readership:
  (a) Does the paper specifically target women or men, young or older?
  (b) Is it placed in mailboxes directly or inserted into a larger publication?
  (c) Is it distributed to a particularly affluent community?
- After you advertise for a period of time, 3-6 months, you can approach the publications to write a weekly or monthly column. You may be able to use the article to pay for the advertising space instead of dollars! If not, it will still be great exposure for you.

**Yellow pages**
- Fairly expensive compared to other methods but still a mainstay of advertising.
- Consider not only the town you are in but surrounding areas.
- Also consider other listings- NDs, homeopaths, acupuncturists, alternative medicine, etc.
- Reserve your ad money for advertisements in other media, just a name and phone number are sufficient in this media.

**Promotional Items**
- Get a banner and embroidered tablecloth.
- Bags and pens with name, logo and contact information printed on them.
- Calendars, pill boxes, magnets, stainless steel drinking cups, environmentally friendly shopping bags, shaker cups.
- T-shirts and shopping bags.

- **What Works**
  - Top dog: word of mouth referrals from existing patients
  - Website
  - Internet listings
  - Networking: results in referrals from other healthcare providers
  - Small local newspapers
  - Presentations – both in-house and to the community, especially to support groups
  - Tea Parties
  - 15-minute complimentary consultations

- **Track results**
  - In order to know what to keep spending money on in marketing, track your results. Especially before renewing a contract so you know if it was worth it. Over time, you will find that you are spending the least necessary for the best results.
  - Ask, on your intake form, how patient found out about you. Have your office manager keep track of this on a simple excel spreadsheet which lists all your marketing.
  - Review periodically.
  - Remember that longer time periods will yield more accurate results, especially as your numbers grow.
  - Helps guide your on-going marketing plans.

- **Put it Together**
  - **Before graduating:**
    - Develop a marketing plan, this takes research!
    - Set up website.
    - Write and keep articles and papers written in school as you can later use them in your newsletter and submit them to papers for publication.
    - Write or purchase presentations.
    - Collect advertising information.
    - Collect information on local events that you might want to participate in.
    - Collect names and contacts and begin a mailing list.
    - Develop logo and business cards.
  - **After graduation and when preparing to open:**
    - Prepare Grand Opening.
    - Write and send out press release announcing your opening and advertise your opening as desired.
    - Join local Chamber.
    - Put out first newsletter to your mailing list.
    - Send out your media kit.
    - Start networking.
    - Start giving presentations.
    - Create brochure with general information about practice.
    - Create other brochures about services you will offer.
    - Get samples and promotional items.
In practice and on-going:
- Choose on-going advertising.
- Participate in chamber and networking events.
- Hold on-going open houses.
- Presentations
- On-going newsletters
- Expos and fairs
- Send welcome postcards to new patients and birthday cards to existing patients, thank you cards and gift for referrals.
- Tea Parties
- Promotional items

Your Space (excerpt from “Find the Perfect Space”)
- The space that your practice occupies can contribute significantly to your marketing:
  - Is it well lit, ventilated and clean?
  - Does it encourage a sense of peace and well-being?
  - Does it offer people enough privacy?
  - Do you have good neighbors?
  - Do you have good visibility?

Passive and Group Income (excerpt)
"I'd like to live as a poor man with lots of money." --Pablo Picasso

Passive Income
- Passive income is income that is generated without the use of your time. It may take some of your time to get it established and running and it may take some time to manage it but for the most part you set it up and it runs itself.

- Most passive income programs generate reasonable revenue streams which individually do not necessarily provide a large enough net profit to allow you to become financially independent. The goal is to employ numerous methods so that collectively they add a significant income source to your practice.

- Some examples:
  - Money in an investment account earning interest.
  - Sale of books, herbal bags, package teas, lotions, etc., where you take a percentage of the sale. Work out a consignment arrangement where you take a percentage of what is sold, they maintain inventory and do all stocking. You keep track of sales so you know what is due to the vendor and what is due to you. Items can be found by visiting small locally owned shops and boutiques, advertisements in the newspaper, asking your patient population, etc.
  - Online dispensary.
    - Emerson Ecologics: www.emersonecologics.com
    - Natural Partners: www.naturalpartners.com
    - TID Health: www.tidhealth.com
o Pictures that are taken on consignment and hung on your wall.
  • Contact your local art school or department of art within local universities for names of students that would be interested.
  • Visit local coffee shops and art galleries to see who they have taken on consignment.
  • Contact local photography studios as they often have a list of young and upcoming photographers.
  • Visit local art shows to view community artists.
o Sale of books that you have written.
  • Self-publishing
    ▪ http://www.lulu.com
    ▪ http://www.blurb.com
o E-books (cut and paste into your browser window)
  • http://vcab.com/?ref=adwords&gclid=COm8i5fK1JMCFRQXsgodo2xwjg
  • http://www.iuniverse.com/ad/ggl/?v=2&cid=ggl_bookpublishing_ebook_publisher&s_kwcid=make%20ebook|1217757176&gclid=Clnmxa3K1JMCFQWxsogd11sbfQ
  • http://www.ezau.com/latest/articles/create-ebook.shtml
  • http://www.thesitewizard.com/archive/ebookpublishing.shtml
o Hydrotherapy done by student or employee.

- Renting out space: If you have a large office with plenty of space, renting space out can also become a source of passive income. In addition, if you only work 3 days a week, you can rent out your own office in the days you are not seeing patients.

- Affiliate Programs
  o An affiliate program is one in which you earn a small compensation for referring people to a product and who end up purchasing said product.
  o Income via affiliate programs, if done in a tasteful and thoughtful way, can also significantly add to your monthly income.
  o Patients frequently enquire as to what your choices are for the best hair care, body care, textiles, water filters, air filters, food sources, pet food, etc. There are many fine, small, privately owned companies that offer affordable and incredible quality products who are willing to enter into an affiliate partnership with Naturopathic Doctors.
  o There are some recommended guidelines for participating in affiliate programs:
    ▪ Always disclose to your patients that you are an affiliate of the company.
    ▪ Choose the companies for the quality of the product so that when you recommend it to people it can truly be about the product and not about you earning money from it.
    ▪ Limit you affiliations to a few, well chosen companies so that your website does not become about marketing other peoples products.
    ▪ Remember this is to serve the needs of your patients and to be able to direct them to products they ask you about, this is not about pushing more products on people.
  o Please share whatever affiliate programs you find with your colleagues by sending the information into Business Naturally. The more NDs that participate in the same affiliate program the better! It increases our reputation among business owners and helps to keep NDs strong and thriving…
- Affiliate Opportunities  
  - Meal Mixer, Food-Allergy Mixer  
  - Vital Choice Seafood  

- Group Income

  - Group Income requires your time so it is not considered passive income. However, instead of earning at the rate of 1 person you earn at the rate of 10-15 people. It can take time to establish a good following of people but once your reputation and schedule become well known, primarily through word of mouth, this type of income can also support your private practice.

  - Examples:  
    - Running a detox workshop for a large group of people.  
    - Running a cooking class for a group of people.  
    - Holding community workshops: environmental, stress management, weight loss, shopping for good foods, etc.  
    - Offer an herbal tea blending class or herbal medicine making class.  
    - Structure monthly nature walks.

- Website (excerpt)

  "The art of medicine consists of amusing the patient while nature cures the disease." – Voltaire

- Overview

  - Starting Point
  - Your Website
  - Graphics
  - Basics
  - Intermediate/Advanced

  - Starting Point: Do you need a website and who is going to serve as the designer and webmaster?
    - First off: you need to decide if you need or want a website. The answer to this is completely dependant on what type of practice you are planning, how big you want to grow, how busy you want to be. A website can be a powerful marketing, educational and organizational tool when designed and used properly.
    - Second, you need to take an honest look at your skills. Are you a dabbler in web design and development? Do you have some definite ideas of what you want but do not know how to bring them into being? Do you want to be a part-time doctor and part-time webmaster? Or, do you have a background in web design and development and can put something together without blinking an eye? Basically, put yourself into one of 2 categories: beginner or intermediate/advanced.
      - Beginners: hire someone, period.
      - Intermediate/Advanced: decide how much time you want to invest in this part of your marketing. If you want to do it all and have the skills, go for it. Or do you want
someone to do the front-end work and then you maintain it? How you want to spend your time will dictate how much of your own time you personally invest in your website.

- In the beginning you may have time to create and manage your site but consider that if you have done your marketing well, you will run out of time before year 1 is over. A well done and maintained website is time consuming yet it can bring a super high return thereby paying for itself within a very short time. It is well worth the investment and ongoing cost.

**Your Website**
- Do it yourself:
  - www.joomla.com: fairly simple to set up a “CMS” site (Content Management System)
  - www.godaddy.com
  - www.concentric.com
  - many, many others
- Hiring someone
  - Who to hire?
    - Do you have a friend or family member who is a web designer?
    - Is there someone you can barter medical services for web work?
    - Get a referral from someone.
    - Use a web designer:
      a. One who hopefully knows something about the medical industry.
      b. Ideally, use someone who is familiar with Naturopathic Doctors and Naturopathic Medicine as this can save you time and money in the long run.
- Average prices (2008) so you do not get overcharged:
  - 3-5 page site, static (one time creation), simple-complex, $500-$1250
  - 5-10 page site, static (one time creation), simple-complex, $1000-$2000
  - Ongoing web management: $25-75 per hour: for updating content and keeping code up to date. Average cost per month, unless you are really changing things all the time, is $100-200. You want your web designer to be someone who offers this service!!
    - Simple = No active or changing content or designs, no databases. Just a place for people to go get information about you.
    - Complex = dynamic and changing content, blog, pod casting, online calendars, and so on.

**Graphics**
- A graphic artist helps you with things such as your logo, colors, coordination of elements, artwork, letterhead, advertising layout and many other aspects.
- Your web designer may also be your graphic artist. They can help you design your logo and graphics as well as do your web design.
- You also have the option to hire a graphic artist separate from your web designer. This is preferable because you will find that you constantly have graphics work that needs to be done. And you need it done within a day or two. Web designers do not usually operate like that.
- Fees run from $50-$150 per hour for graphic design work.
  - Keep in mind that if your graphics person is your web person it is normal for graphic fees to be charged in addition to the web fees. This can all be negotiated to some
point at the beginning, but graphic work is necessarily a flexible process and the fees are usually dependant on the time used.

- If you are an artist and have your own stuff to use, consider that you may still need a graphics person to scan and convert the work you do so it can be used at appropriate resolutions and in the proper format on the website and for your printed items.

- **Basics** - Regardless of whether you are going to hire someone to do your website or if you will serve as your own webmaster there are some basic things you need to prepare ahead of time and this will take some research and brainstorming.
  - **Name (aka URL)**
    - Have several ready to go because when you go looking you will find some of them are taken.
    - There are numerous places that you can search for and register a name.
    - Even if you are a “beginner” and are planning on hiring someone to do your website, you can look for and register a name.
    - Some places:
      - www.concentric.com
      - www.GoDaddy.com
      - there are numerous places to do this
  - **Logo +/-**
    - If you have a logo, great! Your web designer will need this.
    - If not, no problem, just be prepared by:
      - generating a list of what you want to “say” with your logo
      - keep sketches or general ideas of what it might look like
  - **Color scheme**
    - Put together a general idea of what you want the colors of your website to be.
    - The web designer/graphic artist can arrange them for you but they will need a starting point.
    - For instance, it is enough to know if you want blues and greens, or earth tones.
  - **Sample pages**
    - Look around the web and see what you like.
    - Keep track of those URLs and provide them to your person.
    - It will help if they are industry similar but this is not absolutely necessary.
    - You will need to be able to identify specifically what you like about these sites:
      - the shape of the menu
      - the color scheme
      - the way the pages flow
      - the particular options
      - keep a list for your developer
  - **Layout: menu, items, # pages, flow**
    - You will need to know how you want your site structured.
      - Menu:
        - (a) what items are included in the menu
        - (b) side or top menu bar
        - (c) tabs, circles, buttons, squares, etc.
      - How many pages will your site consist of?
      - Which pages will lead to which other pages?
  - **Photos**
    - Gather all photos you want to use so you can provide them to your designer.
• **Content**
  - You will be the one to provide content to your web designer. This includes the information that is inserted into the shell that is created.
  - Some ideas about content: articles, areas of interest to you, patient testimonials, resources and links, handouts, book suggestions, recipes, and of course all the basic information about your services and office hours.

• **Budget**
  - You will need to tell the person you hire exactly how money you have to spend and they will tell you what they can do for that amount.

• **Extras:** newsletter, blog, calendar and any other items you would like.
  - While this may be out of your budget in the beginning, be sure that if you want to do any of these extra sorts of activities that the site that is built can incorporate them at some point.
  - Some things you may want to do with your website eventually:
    - have an updateable calendar
    - interface a blog
    - E commerce
    - pod Casting
    - post patient forms online (passworded)
    - allow your patients to take a quiz
    - tool that allows people to enter their e-mail address to be put on your mailing and newsletter list

• **Intermediate/Advanced** – If you are more advanced and are planning to do some or all of the work yourself then here are some hints to really help your site become a presence on the web. And, even if you are paying someone to create your website, many of these things apply to you as well; it is just that you won’t be doing the set-up on your own.
  - Either reserve your domain name and keep it parked for free until you are ready to do something with it or purchase a very basic hosting plan that allows you to get an index page uploaded and is associated with an email address.
  - Create your index page:
    - include your logo if/when you have it
    - your email
    - telephone if the one you have is going to be one you will use
  - Fill in all meta tag information at the beginning of your page.
  - Upload your page and monitor your email regularly.
  - Start as early as you can, year one is the best if you have an idea of your name. Today, register a URL, regardless of where you are in your education. If you don’t know what your name is going to be, then wait until you do. But, try and figure it out as soon as you can. Until you have your license, you may not use “ND”, “NMD”, “Doctor” or “Dr” in the URL.
  - Set up an email address that you check regularly.
    - Give no advice, no appointments, no answers about anyone’s health in any way.
    - Clearly identify yourself as a Naturopathic Medical Student.
    - DO NOT DIAGNOSE OR TREAT!!!
    - You can answer questions about when you will be opening, what services you anticipate providing.
    - You can also answer questions about what Naturopathic Medicine is, education of Naturopathic Doctors, you get the idea.
○ Rotate or continually add to content on index page: what are you interested in?
  ▪ Put links to good pages, list organizations, post articles and presentations.
  ▪ This will:
    ◦ keep people coming back
    ◦ increase the number of hits your site gets
    ◦ bring you up higher in the search results
○ If you know where you will be located once you graduate:
  ▪ Start adding content about your local area:
    ◦ Statistics on soils, common illnesses specific to your area, area agencies and
      health food stores. There is no limit to how much information you put on your
      website as people really appreciate information.
    ◦ For information on specific environmental issues in your area:
      ◦ www.ewg.org (water quality)
      ◦ www.scorecard.org (for pollution and air quality)
    ▪ Put your scheduled talks on the website and on break, go there, set up talks,
      volunteer, do shifts and start to network.
○ Start linking your page to other pages.
○ Start registering your page on practitioner location sites.
○ Become a member of national and state associations and get involved from the
  beginning, includes getting your site listed.
○ Start and maintain a blog or newsletter now.

Budget for Marketing (excerpt from “Finances”)

● When creating your budget for marketing, you will rely heavily on your marketing plan. The
  key here is to put together your dream marketing plan and then trim it down according to
  your budget.
● Many specialists recommend that initially, 10% of your revenue should be redirected back
  into your marketing budget. This number can be downsized as your patient flow approaches
  the goals you have set for yourself.
● Your marketing budget will be comprised of initial marketing materials, strategies and
  advertising and so will fall into your start-up and ongoing fixed costs. If you are already in
  practice and are looking to revamp your clinical practice you would call it something different
  and the content of the material will be different but it is still a larger chunk of money to start
  with that flows into a monthly and ongoing annual expense.

Marketing in Unlicensed States (excerpt from “Unlicensed States”)

● It is highly recommended that one of the first things you do after making a decision to set up
  in an unlicensed state is to hire an attorney who specializes in medical law.
● He or she can and will guide you to be sure you do not say, publish, write or advertise
  anything that is an illegal activity.
● This is one of those areas that is worth the monetary investment.
● Interview 3-4 attorneys – do an initial consult with each (usually complimentary), give them
  specific information and find out how familiar they are with your field.
● Come prepared with a list of what you do, the therapies you use and your credentials.