

THE NATURAL THERAPISTS GUIDE



THE ULTIMATE MARKETING CHECKLIST

31 Essential Articles to Grow
Your Natural Therapy Business

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INTRODUCTION

This handy guide represents the some of the IICT's best online published articles, written especially with the therapist in mind. You'll find a range of inspiring articles that explore everything from running a natural therapy business; using social media; referrals; best business practice, plus a wealth of ideas to grow your natural therapy business.

Laid out as easy to read articles you can read this guide from start to finish or simply choose an article that interests you most and apply the strategies to your business right away.

It is my sincere hope that these articles spur you on to creating a lasting business that will touch and improve the lives of countless beings.



Lawrence Ellyard,
Byron Bay, NSW, Australia.



ARTICLE #1

ESSENTIAL INTERNET MARKETING TIPS FOR YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS

In today's marketing landscape simply having the best skillset for a particular job is not a guarantee for success. No matter what business you are in, the need to market your business online is essential for its growth and success.

If you run a natural therapy business, no matter where you are in the world, chances are you will be faced with stiff competition for your clients' dollars; the best way to prove to customers that your business is the best is to show them with professional online marketing that will get their attention and keep it.

Below is a list of the four most important internet marketing tips you need to be implementing in order to give your business the edge it needs to grow. These tips will give your business the shot in the arm it needs to outdo your competition.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA

To put it simply; a business without integrated social media is like a boxer in a fight with one arm tied behind their back. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn are free tools you can take advantage of to spread the word about your natural therapy business and what it can offer to prospective clients.

Not only are social media platforms great ways to get in contact with existing and potential future clients, they are also a great way to consolidate your online presence into a cohesive whole. Blog posts that you are posting on your website can be promoted on your Facebook and Twitter accounts, new accreditations and skills can be kept up to date on LinkedIn, and new products and supplies you have for sale can be advertised via your Pinterest and Instagram accounts.

With well over a billion users for Facebook and Twitter alone, you can be sure that this push in social media marketing is far from a fad. Getting your business on social media platforms is the easiest, quickest, and cheapest way to advertise your business to potential new clients.

2. MAKE YOUR WEBSITE RESPONSIVE

If your website is not a responsive website – unresponsive websites are sites not tailored to fit the screens of tablets or mobile phones depending on the user's chosen device – then it is doomed to fail.

While designing and implementing a successful website is far simpler with professional assistance it can still be done in-house, provided you have the savvy and time to find out how. Whether you design the site yourself or with professional help one thing is certain; a responsive website that is easily viewed by users on any device they choose is now not only the better choice—it is the only choice.

3. WRITE FOR YOUR SITE

Another way you can help to effectively maximise your web presence is also one of the simplest; write content for your website. When a potential customer comes to your page the last thing they want to see is a 'site under construction' banner with not a scrap of content to read.

Start with the basics; information about your business, the who, where, what, when, why, and how much of your services, then you can begin with the business of creating quality content for your site.

No matter how sophisticated your keyword algorithms, nothing beats quality, well written and researched, evergreen content on your site. If you are able to write in a clear and concise manner then

the only thing writing content is going to cost you will be your time, if that's not possible you can always outsource to a reliable copywriter who you can collaborate with and build your content around. With more information on your site you can show your clients just how knowledgeable and professional you are.

Writing for your site will give your customers something to click through, it will keep them informed, and it will keep them coming back for more.

4. EMAIL MARKETING

Flyers and pamphlets are great if you live in a densely populated city, but nothing beats an online newsletter sent out to your loyal customers to keep them abreast of any special offers or events you have coming up on the calendar. The best part of an email marketing campaign is that it won't cost you with expensive printing expenditures, which means more business at less expense.

Newsletters also act as a call to action for your customers, reminding them of your business and what it can offer them.



ARTICLE #2

TOP 10 TIPS FOR PROMOTING YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS USING ONLINE MARKETING

Unlike traditional marketing strategies online marketing strategies don't have to cost you an arm and a leg to implement and can be tailored to accurately market your products and services to people who are actively seeking or interested in your natural therapy business.

The benefits of online marketing are not a new discovery, they are however shockingly underutilised in the natural therapy field. To help ensure you get the most out of your business' online potential we have compiled this list of the top 10 most important tips for promoting your natural therapy business through online marketing.

1. SET UP A WEBSITE

While this may seem obvious to some it is simply amazing how many businesses do not have a website. Everything about your business' online presence links back to your website: without a website your online marketing is completely moot.

2. SET UP A LISTING FOR SEARCH ENGINE LOCAL DIRECTORIES

Simple and highly effective, setting your business up on search engine local directories is a proven method for increasing interest in your business. Google and Bing are free to list while Yahoo has a small fee to join but gets you access to a range of associated listings including White Pages, Yelp and MapQuest.

3. NETWORK THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram are all free services that are essential for online marketing success. Get involved with industry websites through Twitter, publish links to your articles on Facebook, update your credentials on LinkedIn, and put photos of

your new products on Instagram. These platforms are designed for marketing, so make the most out of them.

4. EMAIL MARKETING

Like traditional newsletters, email marketing is an effective way to stay in touch with your clients and let them know about any upcoming events or specials you have running, inform them of any news about your business, and promote new products you have available at your store.

5. USE GOOGLE ANALYTICS

There is no denying the influence of Google, and the best thing about their services is the way you can track all of the web traffic coming to your site. Just like you should be analysing your budgets every week, so too should you be checking on Google Analytics to see if your current online marketing is making a marked difference to your online efficacy.

6. SET UP AN ONLINE BUSINESS CARD

Every time you send an email to a client it is a small call-to-action so it should be clearly marked with your URL, your business' name, and telephone and address details. Design your online business card and give it as much thought as you would your physical card to make it an appealing call-to-action in every customer's inbox.

7. GET PUBLISHED ON AN INDUSTRY WEBSITE

While writing for your own website is a must one of the best ways to link your site to other pages and get better exposure to potential clients who aren't already viewing is to get published on a

website associated with your business. By getting published on an associated but unaffiliated website you are proving your expertise to current and potential clients and accessing new audiences outside those already viewing your website.

8. PUT VIDEOS OF YOUR PRODUCTS OR DEMONSTRATIONS ON YOUTUBE

If you have a natural therapy business that consists of visual stimuli then YouTube is going to be one of your major platforms for online marketing. Therapies like yoga and fitness can be demonstrated in well-produced videos that will receive thousands of hits if utilised correctly. If your area of expertise is less visual YouTube is still a great way to market any new arrival products or simply as informational and instructional videos about what it is your business does.

9. MAKE THE MOST OF GOOGLE MAPS

If you're a business with a storefront then you need to ensure that when customers come clicking they find all of the information they need on Google Maps. Ways in which you can effectively optimise your map include; making your map public, adding points of interest to help customers find you, add links back to your site, and always ensure your contact details are visible and available.

10. OFFER DISCOUNTS

Customers love to feel like they are getting a deal, so give them one. Social media is a great way to get the word out to potential customers about your current deals and discounts and introductory specials are a great way to get a bite from new customers.



ARTICLE #3

MONEY MANAGEMENT HELP: 10 MISTAKES NATURAL THERAPISTS SHOULD AVOID AT ALL COSTS

Sometimes the best advice for a natural therapy business, as far as money matters go, begins with what NOT to do.

Whether you are just beginning your business, preparing for some changes or revamping your business plans; a review of the following money mistakes can help you strategise better and avoid non-effective approaches:

MONEY MISTAKE NO. 1: NOT HAVING A MARKETING BUDGET

Even the smallest natural therapy business needs a marketing plan with a strict budget, even if that plan just includes the use of business cards or other simple forms of networking. So if you have fallen in this money pit: get out now! Develop a plan, set aside a budget and get marketing!

MONEY MISTAKE NO.2: OVERPAYING ASSISTANTS FROM THE START

Do not overpay your assistants at the very beginning, especially if you are paying them commissions. Some business owners pay their staff as high as 70% of revenue and this can cause trouble later. You can get equally well-qualified assistants and therapists working at less, allowing you enough money to pay your rent, invest in marketing, purchase the right level of business insurance and also make a profit. So always ask yourself: what can I afford to pay long term?

MONEY MISTAKE NO.3: OFFERING DISCOUNTS TO CUSTOMERS WITHOUT A STRATEGY

If you do not fully define the outcome of a discount and not get

something in return, it is best not to offer discounts at all. Instead, make sure you set aside time and resources to accurately measure the outcome of discounts. Run reports to see which services are profitable and regularly review your customer flow to determine off-peak discount offers.

MONEY MISTAKE NO.4: NOT USING COMMUNICATION TOOLS

By not using tools to record your customers' information, you are making the deadliest of all money mistakes. It is essential for natural therapy businesses to realise that retaining customers costs a lot less than adding new customers. So make sure you use and integrate scheduling, emailing and social media tools to collect, store and utilise customer records and information.

MONEY MISTAKE NO.5: NOT USING ECOMMERCE

Are you using your receptionist to do all the talking and selling? Remember: receptionists are costly and they also call in sick. Consider how you can use your website to sell your products and services 24/7. Today, there are many great business management tools specifically geared for small businesses that can turn ecommerce from a chore into a valuable additional source of income.

MONEY MISTAKE NO.6: NOT LIVING AND BREATHING NUMBERS

Most of you have heard the expression: "It's all in the numbers", but sometimes we fail to appreciate its value. Financial reporting tools not only help you see all areas of your business, they also help you see what customers like to spend on, making it easy for you to review and act on financial performance.

MONEY MISTAKE NO.7: RESISTING ONLINE BOOKINGS

It is essential that you allow your customers to book your services easily. Yet, many therapists tend to think of online bookings as 'scary' and 'daunting'. In reality, you can easily set-up inexpensive web based software to test if online bookings work for you. Chances are they will!

MONEY MISTAKE NO.8: NOT BEING EASY TO REACH

How can someone book your services if they cannot reach you? Do you list your email, phone number, website and other contact details clearly on your business card, brochures and other marketing tools? And if you do not have a website, it is time to invest in one! If not a full-blown website, at least have a Facebook page that lists your contact details.

MONEY MISTAKE NO.9: NOT USING AN INTERNAL MARKETING SYSTEM

Your current customer base is your internal marketing system. They all have contacts, friends, family members, colleagues etc. All these people can become your potential clients. So make sure you spend your marketing efforts in retaining current customers and also putting in place a great client referral program. By rewarding your valuable customers, you'll end up making more customers.

MONEY MISTAKE NO.10: NOT LISTENING TO YOUR EMPLOYEES

Your employees are your biggest assets. If you are turning a deaf ear to their problems, the problems may increase. So make sure you make things easy and comfortable for your employees. Remember:

if your employee leaves, they could take your clients with them. So do consider their needs and make it a win-win situation for all.



ARTICLE #4

NATURAL THERAPY MARKETING: 10 WAYS REVIEWS CAN HELP PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

Reviews are a double edged sword that can make or break a business, more so a natural therapy business owing to the very nature of the service delivery.

Today's consumers undeniably depend on reviews to validate their online research efforts; hence the review quality will impact businesses significantly. As such, review giants like Google Places, Yelp and the likes are continuing to mount and grow their territorial dominance.

Here are 10 ways natural therapy marketers could leverage reviews to grow their business successfully:

LEAD GENERATION

Prospective customers who use review sites, get their first exposure to your business through the reviews they read. And given that there is enough research carried out to support the fact that consumers tend to trust peer recommendations more than paid advertising, why not let the established review sites lead new customers to you?

IT'S FREE!

Positive testimonials of existing customers form an integral part of advertising. With your brand name and services freely exposed to the readership, reviews become a pivotal tool in increasing awareness about your brand. Reviews also have the capacity to cover a broader spectrum of information, so the mass exposure that small businesses gain through online reviews is a luxury that most cannot afford through conventional marketing channels.

VALIDATION

The feedback from independent reviews gives potential customers a candid inside-look into your natural therapy business, services and even employees. With a gamut of natural therapy services to choose from, prospective customers opt to do their own research before selecting their preferred choice. Customers trust no one better than other customers who've used the service, so to validate and authenticate your service, therefore more positive reviews will help increase the business' legitimacy.

TAKE CONTROL — TAKE CHARGE

In an era where customers are bold enough to put it all out there, don't wait for customers to create business pages and review your service without consent. Get smart and create your own page to manage positive and negative feedback alike, as this will leave YOU in charge of your online presence.

MAKE USE OF HAPPY CUSTOMERS

If there are customers pleased with your service and are willing to give their feedback, go all out and amplify those happy customers. Next grab a hold of those good reviews & testimonials and splash them on your Facebook page, website and blog using keywords to ensure potential client searches lead to the good reviews.

NEGATIVE REVIEWS ARE LEARNING TOOLS

Responding to customer complaints is actually a good launch pad for showcasing the business' conviction of its service standards and thus earn the trust of potential customers. Going a step further, businesses that take active steps in response to their complaints,

also portray their willingness to listen to customers and primarily demonstrate that customer satisfaction is their priority.

IMAGE BUILDING

Review sites can become formidable supporters in any business' online marketing strategy. Take the time to assess the reviews and publish the positives while also showing gratitude to customers who've given them. Image building starts in the mind, so this is one of the most cost-effective tools a natural therapist can use to build their image in the minds of prospective customers.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Online customer reviews, much like social media, lets you form a closer relationship with your customer base. And by replying, you give your customers the satisfaction that their input matters and encourages customers to become loyal in the long run.

STRENGTHEN YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Online reviews can strengthen your online marketing strategy. Significant numbers of positive reviews over a period of time can not only build the confidence of prospective clients but also build the trust of search engines too. Another benefit of reviews is that you can leverage where your business will be listed within the search engine results, thus gaining more eyeballs.

BOOST EMPLOYEE MORALE

While the customer is certainly King, let's not forget the significance of the employee. A positive review, especially relating to a natural therapy session with a chosen therapist can do wonders in boosting

the morale of the staff. Hence businesses should capitalise and circulate such reviews using all means possible to exhibit the quality of the business and thereby warrant accountability on the part of the employees to maintain consistent service levels.



ARTICLE #5

10 CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS TO HELP GROW YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS

In the natural therapy industry, business growth is directly linked to customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth marketing.

As a natural therapist, your client's satisfaction must be based on meeting their needs but also anticipating their wants. You could take guesses as to what potential clients might need, but always pay attention to what they want. Satisfied customers are loyal customers, who will market your business to their family and friends through word-of-mouth referrals.

Below are 10 customer service skills that will help build sustainable growth for your business or practice:

1. BUILD A REPUTATION FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE AND RESULTS

Build a reputation for great services and long lasting results. Most businesses, even today, thrive on word-of-mouth advertising and recommendations from existing clients. Have a column in your new client form that asks how they discovered your business. If they mention the name of an existing client, be sure to thank them. Keep them motivated by providing VIP discounts and free services.

2. STAND OUT

Marketing using customer testimonials and online marketing will help clients get to know and trust your business. Distribute fliers with positive customer testimonials about your natural therapy business, choose premises that are visible and located conveniently for your customers, provide an outstanding online experience with a website rich in useful information and tips.

3. USE REPUTED PRODUCTS

Many companies manufacture medicines and other products for the natural therapy industry. Find a brand that is well recognised and has good ratings for pure and effective products. Display signs within the premises and inform clients that you only use reputed products for all your treatments.

4. KEEP CLIENT RECORDS UPDATED AND CONFIDENTIAL

When clients revisit for continuation therapy or a different treatment, they like to be recognised and enquired after. It also saves a lot of time in the therapy room if the practitioner has the patients most up-to-date history. Computerised records over a private network will help your staff easily access client information and treat them accordingly. Another important aspect is the confidentiality of such information, which is important to clients, but also a legal requirement in many countries.

5. BECOME A MEMBER OF REPUTED INSTITUTION LIKE THE IICT

Becoming a member of a professional industry body that is well respected and reputable will help offer your business professional affiliation and certification, demonstrating to clients and potential customers that you follow the highest standards of patient care and practice. Being a member of the IICT helps instil confidence in the minds of your patients.

6. EVALUATE YOUR OWN CARE AND SERVICE AGAINST THAT OF A COMPETITOR

Honestly and diligently evaluate your business against the care and service provided by a competitor in the area and strive to improve in areas you think your business falls short and promote what makes your business unique. Set new goals for customer satisfaction and explain to your clientele how you plan to achieve them.

7. CHECK SMALL TALK

Train your staff to check small talk and focus on the therapy. Use the end of the session to inform your clients of advancements in your field or other procedures available at your premises.

8. CONSIDER YOUR SPEED OF PROCESSING

Clients don't like to wait, especially those that make appointments. Speed up your processing by computerising your records and training your staff to prepare the therapy rooms and keep them tidy after each and every session. Designate break time for groups of your staff so that someone is always available when clients walk in or call to make an appointment.

9. OFFER PERSONALISED SERVICES

Individual clients need individual services. While packaging your services is a good idea, when need be, your staff must be equipped to personalise services based on specific client needs. This will keep your clients motivated to come to you and make them comfortable explaining their specific limitations, allergies, requirements or anything else they might need.

10. BE ACCESSIBLE

After the completion of a treatment, clients may have questions or require further clarifications. Keep the lines of communication open or create a Q&A on your website where they can call or log their queries. Make sure you respond to these queries in a timely manner. Keeping a client waiting and pensive after rendering a treatment, may result in a negative experience. When clients believe their needs are important to your business, they are more likely to return, time and time again.



ARTICLE #6

HOW TO MARKET A BUSINESS? 10 COST-EFFECTIVE IDEAS TO REACH MORE CUSTOMERS

Shoestring budgets don't have to make you invisible in the marketplace. There are enough simple ideas that can be developed into innovative marketing tactics, ensuring your business reaches your potential customers.

Here are 10 economical ideas that have been implemented by thousands of small-scale businesses, to reach more customers.

GET ONLINE

A website doesn't necessarily have to be a high budget marketing tool. While it is ideal to have a customised website, if the budget doesn't permit a fully-fledged one, you're better off exploring template based companies like SiteSell and make use of the many tools and tutorials that would enable the creation of a basic, but impactful website. Once done, set up listings within various search engines to ensure the business is found easily.

NETWORKING

The advantage for small businesses is that networking has become that much easier and economical through social media. Just get smart in identifying the social media sites most suited for your business, be it Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ etc. Through this process, identify partners and even competitors engaged in a similar line of work.

REV-UP THOSE BUSINESS CARDS

A business card can actually be one of the most powerful marketing tools that should be issued whenever possible. Get creative in designing the card, keeping in mind their purpose is 'longevity' so consider adding useful information valued by the customer, a

calendar or possibly even a discount coupon. A crafty idea is also to handwrite a personal direct number when handing over to prospects, indicating the willingness to offer a personalised service.

FREE CONSULTATIONS

Take the ‘business card coupon’ idea, a step further. Target people you think who would need your service and offer a free consultation. The only cost is your time but the long term rewards will be substantial. Offer some practical advice and suggestions and make the consultation productive in building up a good reputation about yourself. Once done, spin off the success stories on social media.

GUERILLA MARKETING

Given that guerilla marketing is cheaper than regular advertising, it is all about birthing innovative and imaginative ideas through word-of-mouth. From posting videos on social media to using graffiti chalk drawings for street marketing or creating billboard opportunities, guerilla marketing tactics are only limited to one’s imagination.

TALK TO THE EXISTING CLIENTELE

Companies spend substantial funds carrying out market research and seeking information with the aim of attracting new clients. Sadly, what most businesses don’t realise is the wealth of information that sits in-house based on their existing clientele. It could be simple phone interviews to gauge perceptions of your business, an online survey using online tools such as Survey Monkey or your Facebook page.

E-MAIL MARKETING

Use your website to get new prospects onboard to sign up for a regular newsletter to engage with new and loyal customers. Consider offering a customised content-pack to each new subscription, such as an e-book or free online consultation. Keep nurturing the email subscribers to the point of becoming paying customers, using that window to truly understand their needs, before they are serviced.

GROUP UP

Join professional groups within the industry and consider paid memberships of groups that would attract prospective clients. Get your name out there in the web listings of relevant bodies of authority and get actively involved in a handful of these groups. The more involved and committed you are the more your business will be visible.

REVIVE OLD DATA

Find a topic that is industry specific and give it a new spin on your website or blog. Gather data and statistics from reliable online sources and make your opinion a force to be reckoned with, especially in the minds of potential customers who would be searching your relevant topics online.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

PR is cheaper and more credible than advertising and PR campaigns don't always need high-flying PR firms for execution. While the advantages a good firm can bring are substantial, small-scale PR activities run by smaller companies can also trigger significant public interest. From getting timely press releases out, refreshing the

‘what’s new’ page on the website to even getting your marketing kit out to professional organisations. It’s all about leveraging individual success stories to form an effective PR campaign.



ARTICLE #7

**CUSTOMER LOYALTY FOR
YOUR NATURAL THERAPY
BUSINESS — HAVE YOU GOT
THERE YET?**

There is an interesting quote about customer satisfaction by Dale Carnegie. (The author of several best sellers including “How To Make Friends and Influence People”)

that goes like this - “Dealing with people is probably the biggest problem you face, especially if you are in business. Yes, and that is also true if you are a housewife, architect or engineer.”

The popular perception about customers in any business, including a natural therapy business, is that customers are fickle and change providers at the drop of a hat. The truth is far from that. Customers, essentially, are patient people who are looking for an honest and efficient service. When they believe they will get it out of you, and that they won't be unduly burdened financially, they remain happy and loyal.

Here are 5 surprisingly easy things you could do to ensure you have your customer in the bag, so to speak.

1. HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

In a natural therapy business like yours, whether you offer consultations, medicines or physical therapies, customers look for familiar faces they can trust and confide in. Know your customers by name, and build a personal relationship with them on the basis of their needs or the things they like to talk about. Not all customers are forthcoming with personal information about themselves, so try not to squeeze information out of less communicative clients. They may still enjoy attention without feeling their privacy is being invaded upon. In that case, keep your relationship with them limited to their needs and the services you provide. If you designate a specific team or a staff member to individual customers, building such relationships is a breeze.

2. TRY NOT TO SAY “NO”

At the inception of your business, you may have packaged your services in a way you hope are beneficial to potential clients / customers. But not all customers fit into the model. Some of them have special requirements and requests. Train your staff to accommodate the clients' needs and concerns. Of course; it might not always be feasible to accommodate requests by clients. In such a case, explain to them gently why the request cannot be honored and offer them alternatives.

3. BE GENUINE

Whether your customers are getting a service, consultation, medicine, or a piece of equipment from your natural therapy clinic or business, give them your honest opinion on their decision and explain to them the true worth of their purchase. You could cite alternatives based on their needs and make a complete care plan or package that is suitable to them.

4. GET FEEDBACK AFTER EVERY SERVICE RENDERED

Encourage your customers to give feedback either on a feedback form or to a representative assigned specifically for this job. Take the feedback positively and try to work on the clients' inputs. Train your staff to not lash out at customers when they receive negative feedback for services they have rendered. If, despite providing a great service, your customer is unhappy, look to learn from the situation. There usually is an important lesson buried between the layers of negative feedback.

5. DO NOT MAKE PROMISES THAT CANNOT BE DELIVERED

When clients come with specific requirements, be as straightforward as possible and be sure to mention any additional expenses they might have to incur. If the additional expenditure comes as a surprise to them, customers will likely not be pleased. It pays to be upfront about these matters!

Whatever you do to gain customer trust and loyalty, the most important thing to remember is to always follow your rules and never violate business ethics. Whether you are obliging to their personal requirements and making customised packages, or going beyond their expectations while rendering service, keep in mind that customer satisfaction is meant to keep you afloat in your business, not the other way around. Be honest and sincere about costs and feasibility and also about the alternatives you offer all the while ensuring that your business doesn't take a beating.



ARTICLE #8

HOW TO GROW CUSTOMER LOYALTY USING EMAIL MARKETING: TOP 10 THERAPIST TIPS

Email marketing is the most popular marketing method for businesses as it is known to be one of the most cost effective marketing tool to reach customers and convert leads into clients.

According to experts, regular personalised emails make readers feel special; and the cost of retaining an existing client is just one fifth of the cost of adding a new client. Email marketing ensures growing customer loyalty which means more referrals and more business.

As a natural therapist, you cannot afford to ignore the power of email marketing for achieving business success. Below are ten top tips for therapists to grow their customer loyalty and new client list using email marketing:

1. BUILD A LIST OF OPT-IN SUBSCRIBERS

Send out emails only to those who have opted-in to receive emails from you. Your subscribers have signed up because they trust you and are interested in the information you send. Tell subscribers you would like to keep them up-to-date with upcoming special offers and discounts. You may like to collect email addresses from people who fill out forms on your website, subscribers to your blog, existing clients and your contacts from trade shows, other events and social media. It's also important to prominently feature an "Unsubscribe" option in your newsletters to add trustworthiness and credibility.

If sending an offer, McKinsey Research has confirmed that you can achieve an increase in the conversion rate of more than 25% by sending readers of your email to a dedicated landing page promoting your offer.

2. FREQUENCY

The timing of emails is critical to the success of your email campaign. You can choose weekly or bi-monthly emails with relevant and useful content. It is also a good idea to send your mails after office hours and ensure your newsletters are optimised for mobile phones or tablets.

3. PERSONALISE YOUR EMAILS

When newsletters are customised to include the customers name, they feel valued and is less likely to go to their spam folder. It also pays to send out appointment reminders to clients and welcome and follow-up messages to new clients. A study by Experian Marketing Services revealed that sending out personalised emails produced a six fold increase in interaction rates.

4. CONTENT

The content of your marketing email is important to your business success. The information you send out should be relevant and useful to the subscriber. You can share an occasional story or add details of how much you care about your customers, the environmentally friendly nature of your service and the products you use. You can welcome questions from clients and also announce forthcoming events. Sales pitches should be avoided or minimised.

Occasionally surprise your customers with a personalised thank you video or a birthday gift voucher. Make the beginning and ending of your emails impactful for a lasting positive impression in your customers' minds.

5. FORMATTING

Your emails should be in a readable format and bullet points should be used in the text as well as professional photos. Add adequate clickable space to entice them to explore your website and ensure all newsletter text is checked for spelling and grammar.

6. USE AN EFFICIENT EMAIL PROGRAM

Your email program should be up-to-date, capable of reaching your subscribers through their mobile devices and spam free.

7. ENSURE CRM INTEGRATION

You need to respond to the enquiries that come from your subscribers after they receive your newsletter. Your business success depends on how quickly and satisfactorily you address their replies.

8. A/B TESTING

Implement A/B testing with different variations of your email content to know how well your emails are doing. Some email programs come with the A/B testing tools built-in. This can improve the focus and sharpness of your email campaigns.

9. INCLUDE CALL-TO-ACTIONS

Invite your subscribers to participate in discussions or to ask questions related to your therapy centre. You can have a check box for customers to request additional information such as special offers, content about specific areas of interest or text-only emails. Aim to make your email marketing strategy as personalised as possible.

10. MAKE INTERACTION EASIER

Your email campaign can only succeed if you make your website visit experience easy. So ensure all links work correctly, that your website pages load quickly and the content is engaging.

Email marketing is all about relationship building with your subscribers and achieving growing customer loyalty. Permission-based emailing with useful and relevant content makes you come across as an ethical expert in your field. Incorporating advanced technologies makes things easy for your subscribers to take action and benefit from your offers. Encouraging readers to ask questions or participate in discussions shows how much you care. Following the above tips will give you a much desired competitive advantage over other therapists and the more value you offer to your readers, the more your business will succeed.



ARTICLE #9

5 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MARKETING MIX: A GUIDE FOR NATURAL THERAPISTS

Now more than ever, people have started to recognise the importance of marketing their products and services, especially through the use of online platforms. Think about it, when you want something done or something to buy the first thought that comes to mind is to Google it!

Most of us hop onto computers, phones, tablets or other smart devices to ascertain who can give us what we want and for the best price. For natural therapists, whether you're offering goods or services, it is critical to your success to improve your marketing mix and broaden your reach of potential customers.

But what is an effective marketing mix? The marketing mix is sum total of activities, strategies and mechanisms that a business employs with a view to promoting its brand, product or service in relation to its desired audience, more commonly called the market. For someone in the natural therapeutic business the marketing mix boils down to how you price a specific product or service you offer, how you promote and how you position or place your brand, products and service in the market

THE RIGHT MIX FOR YOU - PRICING RIGHT

Customers who have benefited from Natural Therapeutic services will readily tell you one of two things, and in some instances both:

- (a) It is worth every dollar, even if it seemed pricey at the outset
- (b) In the long run it worked out to be less expensive than conventional medicine, with greater benefits.

For this reason, when you consider price as a part of the marketing mix, the first step to improving your strategy is to be reasonable. On the one hand, do not make the cost of your product so inhibitive

that potential customers won't be prepared to give you a try. On the other, what you offer is truly priceless, therefore do not be swayed by the need to make profit and price yourself low.

THE ART OF CROSS-SELLING

The second step involves optimising one product to increase sales of another service or product, called cross-selling. Cross-selling is the art of introducing customers to complementary products or services, in addition to what they are currently interested in.

The best example of this is “would you like fries with that?”, and there is a lot of advantages for both the customer and the natural therapist. Research demonstrates, cross-sells are responsible for an average of 10 - 30% of ecommerce revenues.

People love convenience and often make a habit paying a little extra for that convenience, so using this strategy to support your existing customers' needs and wants will result in further income.

GLORIOUS SELF-PROMOTION

Gone are the days when promoting one's business meant paying big money for television or radio advertisements. Nowadays, promotion means using the power of information to establish yourself as an expert and to establish your brand, product or service as one endorsed by experts. This brings us to the third step.

The easiest ways to establish yourself as an expert in any field is to promote yourself as the expert. And the beauty of the technological age is you don't need to write a book; you can do this simply through the use of blogs and their cousins, vlogs. For this type of promotion it is best to have a professional looking website and social media page which could feature articles that your followers may find interesting.

For instance, if your practice offers advice regarding skin issues, people may ask how to deal with acne. Writing a blog on this and similar topics which is search engine optimised will ensure that when people search for topics such as “what to do about my acne” your web page and in turn the services you offer will pop up! People will get to know more about you and will start to seek you out.

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

The fourth step is a spin off from the third step. After establishing a great online presence you can partner with other websites so that you mutually advertise each other for free or for a nominal cost. How does that work? Well, depending on your services, you may use certain products almost daily. For instance, if you stock a particular brand of supplements, offer to write expert posts on the suppliers social media pages in return for the supplier to add your website link every time you provide content.

ONLINE PLACEMENT AND POSITION

Once again, steps overlap as the fifth step is also linked to the fourth step.

You want to ensure that your products and services are well placed. Nowadays, this means having a SOLID place on the online space. Therefore you will have to consistently improve your web content, and social media content to ensure you are ahead of the game and engaging potential customers regularly and effectively.

Improving your marketing mix is not difficult, but it takes dedication and creativity. However, the fact that your business and your craft are important to you makes it worthwhile. So take the dive!



ARTICLE #10

GET MORE CLIENTS FOR YOUR PRACTICE USING DIGITAL MARKETING

Natural therapy, like other professional services, depends on new clients replacing the ones whose problems have been taken care of.

Traditional forms of media will provide some results, but digital marketing is more reliable and has grown over the years to include a variety of approaches. With the advent of social media, potential clients now spend more time online, providing a lot of opportunity for savvy businesses. You need to identify with your clients and interact with them in ways that keep them engaged and interested.

CREATE AN ONLINE PRESENCE

The first obstacle you need to overcome is setting up an online presence. The phrase that once equated to “I have an email address” has expanded over the years and now includes anything you do online. Connecting to your future clients means meeting them on their own turf, putting your practice in front of potential leads where they spend the most time. Your online presence is important and needs to be consistent across all of your accounts, including:

- Social Media (Facebook, Pinterest, etc)
- Email
- Search Engine Marketing
- Website and Domain

GET BACK TO BASICS

Online or off, the same business ethics that marked a professional practice 20 years ago are still the major indicators today. Customer service, high-quality treatments, easy access to your business and quality merchandise are going to help your digital marketing efforts

just like they have always been the backbone of traditional media campaigns. Join sites like LinkedIn, where professionals “rub” their digital shoulders, give your customers plenty of information to talk about, and maintain your online image with the same diligence you take offline. Positive word-of-mouth is always going to have an effect on your clientele and the internet is a megaphone of enormous proportions.

CREATE A RAPPORT

When someone refers a friend, that referral is probably going to look for your practice online before they attempt to make contact. By presenting an active, informative presence in social media and on your website, you are also reassuring those who want to verify your credentials, look up the products you carry and review the services you provide. The important thing to remember is that your social media accounts and website need to be active, including regular, topical posts and helpful images that highlight the best you have to offer.

It is important to keep stressing the value of a blog on your website for online marketing success. Blogging gives your business authority and engages followers on a regular basis. New posts should be published regularly so that people and search engines will know to expect fresh content and helpful ideas. If video is your cup of tea, video blogging has become popular, and can be used across multiple platforms including your website, YouTube and social media.

THE POWER OF DOMAIN NAMES

The url of your website is key. Having a web address that is easy to remember, optimised for important keywords and is marketing-friendly will mean more traffic and greater business success. Your domain name should reflect your practice, brand or company name,

and new top level domains are available that even identify the type of company you run, such as .clinic, . physio, .fitness, and others.

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

When someone is looking for a product or service online, they almost always start by typing a query in their favourite search engine. Behind the scenes, those search queries become keywords that indicate one company is more relevant than others. Digital marketing uses the combination of all facets of your online presence to determine whether your company has more importance on a given search. Most people know that this is how search engines determine where your website will appear on a list, but today, online marketing goes much further.

Targeted search engine ads, such as Google AdWords or Bing AdWords are more powerful than ever before, using the online activity of users to present them with current, relevant suggestions for products and services they have already shown an interest in. Using ads targeted to your site's keywords, you will be able to attract clients who are looking for your offerings, leading to a higher conversion rate and more return on your investment.

Every successful practice needs to maintain a positive online image. Creating and maintaining an online image will have a tremendous impact on your growth potential. It will let your clients know you are there with them, and show new visitors that your practice is a reliable source for information.



ARTICLE #11

TOP 7 TIPS TO GET YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS FOUND LOCALLY

There are a lot of natural therapy businesses, which includes massage clinics and therapy centres, offering an array of alternative treatments.

While most therapists prefer to work from home, there are some medium scale therapy centres that come up with their clinics in a specific locality. In order to make sure your natural therapy business is found locally, you have to use proper marketing strategies to promote your business.

Usually, alternative therapy practices, just like any other health clinic or gym, experience challenges building their business. While one clinic may struggle to get new clients, others may have a regular pool of clients. However, to ensure that your business grows and gives you a decent clientele, it's best to have a marketing strategy for the local market.

There are several tools that have been used to promote small, medium and large scale businesses before the internet came into existence. These strategies were aimed at making the locality aware of a new business on the market. For a natural therapist, just like any other health clinic, it is very important to start promoting the business locally so that people start talking about it.

Following we discuss seven techniques to make sure that your business is found locally:

TIP #1: NEWSPAPERS FOR PROMOTION

For local promotion, newspapers are a highly effective media for advertising. You may consider running an advertisement, ensuring to provide details related to the therapies you are offering and mention some discounts too. Discounts are always alluring and can attract more clients. Newspaper ads have a wide audience base, which will capture more readers especially in the 40+ years demographic.

TIP #2: LETTERBOX DROPS

To go local, letterbox drops are probably one of the best ways to reach out to people. The greatest advantage of this form of marketing is that it is local, though may not be a targeted approach. However, you don't know what exactly your target base is when it comes to natural therapies as men and women of varied age groups could be a part of the list. To send out letterbox drops, make sure the choice of printing paper is of high quality otherwise people might throw it away. You can also design postcards with an inspirational image or quote and information related to the clinic. If you use decorative ideas, your audience will not throw it away immediately. That's exactly what you want!

TIP #3: USE FLYERS

For local promotion, flyers can be a great idea as well. You can simply design and print, then reach out to local health centres, beauty therapists or hairdressers and offer them a cross-sell opportunity with your business. You could also use them at networking events you attend and leave them at key locations around your community. Once again, the aim is to ensure that the flyers aren't thrown out. It should look compelling, interesting, personal and engaging.

TIP #4: WORD OF MOUTH

There's nothing stronger than the power of word of mouth promotion. As people start knowing you, they will value the services you offer and they will start talking about the massage or therapy experience they have enjoyed in your clinic. As such, it is very important to make sure that you offer excellent service to each and every client so that they speak about your services. In addition, you should also encourage your clients to talk about the clinic and services. Another

effective strategy is creating a referral program to encourage more clients to join through your existing clients.

TIP #5: BUSINESS CARDS

To go local, carry your business card 24/7. Wherever you go, hand out your business card to people you meet and make sure it contains all the information needed to book an appointment and reach your clinic. At your clinic, have the business cards placed near the register and encourage clients to take a few away with them. Ideally, your satisfied clients will distribute the business cards to their friends and family, which will give you more traffic in the coming weeks or months.

TIP #6: SET UP A LISTING ON LOCAL ONLINE DIRECTORIES

Simple and highly effective, setting your business up on search engine local directories is a proven method for increasing interest in your business. Google and Bing are free to list while Yahoo has a small fee to join but gets you access to a range of associated listings.

TIP #7: MAKE THE MOST OF GOOGLE MAPS

If you're a business with a storefront then you need to ensure that when customers come clicking they find all of the information they need on Google Maps. Ways in which you can effectively optimise your map include; making your map public, adding points of interest to help customers find you, add links back to your site, and always ensure your contact details are visible and available.

With these handy strategies, local marketing and promoting your business is possible with any budget!



ARTICLE #12

THE ESSENTIAL BUSINESS START-UP CHECKLIST FOR NATURAL THERAPISTS

Thinking of starting your own natural therapy business? If you have the professional qualifications and a few year's experience in the industry, you may be ready to take the next step.

Having your own practice as a business is both challenging and rewarding. Though the idea may seem overwhelming, having a proper business start-up checklist and meticulously following it gives you a real opportunity to succeed in your own natural therapy business. It is extremely important, as over half of all new businesses fail within the first couple of years due to lack of planning and preparedness.

To remain immune to uncertainties in the business environment and to sustain and thrive, you have to be aware of what to expect before and during your business operations. It is advisable to visit your governments' websites about starting up a new business, where you can test your business readiness.

Here is an essential checklist to help you start your therapy business.

1. STUDY YOUR MARKET

Firstly, you should assess the need for your services in your area and whether your business has the potential to succeed in your chosen location. You should also look at the current trends in the industry to help you determine the probability of success, get to know your competition and what you need to achieve to gain a competitive edge. Maybe you can use a more customer friendly approach or a different product mix. The choice of location plays a critical role in your business success so you need to considering the demographics, passing traffic and noise levels.

2. SEEK ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Governments and other industry organisations provide advice and support to new and upcoming business owners including information on how best to start and run a new business. There is information about various aspects of your start-up business such as funding sources, how to manage cash flow, bookkeeping, legal matters, regulations, access to training, marketing plans and much more.

3. PLAN YOUR BUSINESS

- **Business Plan:** The success of your business depends on the robustness of your business planning. It is also important to periodically review and revise your business plan as part of your business operations. You can find information on these topics on government websites for small businesses, including downloadable templates for business plans and related start-up guides.
- **Marketing Plan:** You must also have a marketing plan in place for your natural therapy business. Online templates and guides are good place to start, in addition to the information you can seek from industry organisations and professional advisers.

4. SOURCE FINANCES

Setting up and running your natural therapy business involves a sizable financial investment and further inflow from time to time. Whether you plan to use your own funds or apply for a bank loan, make sure to have proper accounting. You may want to try other sources like venture capital or government grants. Make sure you have adequate finances before you embark on your start up venture. Find out about what insurance your business needs, from protecting your property and equipment to professional cover.

5. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

When you start a new business it is mandatory to follow the regulations as stipulated by your government. You should obtain any required licenses and also register your natural therapy business with the authorities concerned. Find out what taxes apply to your natural therapy business and make timely payments to the local, state or federal governments. You can also seek information on any business tax deductions that you can claim. Ensure you comply with the standards and codes of practice and also complete all the legal formalities.

6. CHOOSING YOUR BUSINESS NAME

You will need to check if the business name you have in mind for your natural therapy business has already been registered. You must ensure that your business name does not cause any trade mark violation. You may also want to consider protecting your brand with a registered trademark to prevent misuse or imitation. Similarly your website must have a unique domain name to stand out from the crowd and have a strong impact with your target audience.

7. PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

To achieve business success you should hire business support from professionals like lawyers, accounting services and online marketing agencies. The importance of technological support to keep up to date with the fast changing business world also cannot be ignored. Professionalism adds credibility to you and your business which cannot be underestimated.

8. HIRING AND EMPLOYING STAFF

It will pay to employ capable and experienced staff in your natural therapy business as client satisfaction leads to repeat visits and word of mouth publicity.

9. GRAND INAUGURATION

Publicise the opening of your natural therapy business in a big way and have a grand inauguration with introductory packages to get the word out in your local area.

10. JOIN A PROFESSIONAL INDUSTRY BODY

By promoting your professional membership status with an industry body such as the IICT, you are demonstrating to customers that you believe in delivering the highest standards of practice and patient care, which helps build credibility for you and your business and building trust with customers is a MUST!



ARTICLE #13

5 OF THE BEST SMALL BUSINESS APPS EVERY NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS OWNER NEEDS

If you are a natural therapy business owner looking for solutions to keep track of your appointments, handle employees and their schedules, monitor your cash flow and still not feel overwhelmed while doing it all, our recommendation would be ..

to embrace some of the excellent mobile apps that are available out there.

Every small or medium sized business owner can do with all the help they can get for increasing income, productivity, sales and visibility. So here are 5 great apps that can help you achieve just that:

TO HELP INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY:

1. Evernote: This is a great app known to enhance productivity. Available on both iOS and Android, the Evernote app helps a user create lists, make notes, share ideas, and store pictures, files, videos, web content and emails. Another plus with this app is that this information can be synced across all your devices - be it your mobile phone, your desktop, even the web. You can easily start off with the free version of this app and use it to share, organise and communicate with your team. It also has a very clean and easy to navigate user interface.

TO HELP WITH ACCOUNTING:

2. QuickBooks Online: While most of us may not exactly be enthusiastic about crunching numbers and bookkeeping, it is necessary for every small business owner to be on top of their finances. QuickBooks Online is one of the most popular accounting apps available with a simple accounting interface. It comes with a gamut of features which can help you keep tabs on income and expenses, generate invoices and send them to your clients. Another handy feature is that you link your bank to the app so that you can

check your financial transactions and keep an eye on your cash flow. It can be used on both iOS or Android devices and integrated with payroll – so it can even be used to pay your employees.

TO HELP WITH ACCEPTING PAYMENTS:

3. Square: If you have a small budget for putting together a payment setup, Square can come to your aid. Square, a payment app comes with a small debit and credit card reader that can be used to process payments quickly and efficiently. If you are a therapist on the move or if you work from a smaller practice, this app can help you record your payments, plot your sales and check your sales trends and reports on a daily, monthly or yearly basis. Besides helping you with your taxes, it comes with the added benefits of letting you record transactions even when you are offline. Square supports a wide variety of currencies and also lets a user manage tips and discounts.

TO HELP WITH MANAGING WORKFLOW:

4. KanbanFlow: If you have a small team to manage your natural therapy business and are looking to streamline your workflow process, then KanbanFlow which is a free app as far as the base version is concerned, is what you should try. This is a web based app and works on almost all smartphones. It is also compatible with both Windows based machines and Macs. You can delegate tasks, check what tasks your colleagues or employees are working on, which ones are completed and which ones are in the pipeline. KanbanFlow supports real time collaboration so if you or one of your team members makes a change, all the team members are updated about it. If you handle multiple kinds of natural therapies like nutritional coaching, massage and beauty therapy services, you can divide your tasks into subtasks and track progress on each of them.

TO HELP WITH FEEDBACK:

5. GetFeedback: Once you have established a sizeable customer base and are looking to expand, it is imperative to get reviews and feedback from customers and work on improving shortcomings if any. GetFeedBack is an online app and you can always start off with an initial personal version which lets you send out unlimited surveys with unlimited questions to your clients. This app works on smartphones, desktops and tablets so your customers can answer your survey at their convenience. You can send out surveys in formats that will be designed for customer feedback via email. You can then review your results in a format that you prefer and see your results in real time.

And that concludes our list of top 5 apps every SME in natural therapy must use. So go ahead and give some of these apps a shot, ease your day-to-day work and grow your business!



ARTICLE #14

KICK-START YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS STRATEGY - TOP 10 TIPS TO DRIVE YOUR SUCCESS

With non-conventional medicines gaining greater acceptance, along with an apparent growth of the ageing population, natural therapy businesses are anticipated to flourish in the future.

As such, here are 10 useful factors to take into account in manoeuvring your natural therapy business towards success:

1. CHOOSE EXPERIENCE

Studies have shown that the risk of failure is high, when kicking off a completely new venture and reality is that this would apply more so for natural therapy businesses. So, if you were to choose lucrative short term returns versus going with what you're experienced at, select the latter. While you're at it, stay abreast of innovative developments, techniques and treatments within your area of specialty in order to convert those experiences to expertise.

2. CAN THE IDEA REALLY MAKE MONEY?

Scrutinise the pros and cons of your idea to determine if customers will actually pay for your service. Critically assess the benefits & features customers would want versus what are being provided by other natural therapists. Thereafter when setting short term (1 - 2 years) and long term (up to 5 years) goals, determine if the IDEA can be transformed into your 'Unique Selling Proposition' (USP)?

If the answer is no, tweak it. If the answer is yes, go for it; you may have a winner in the making.

3. FORM PROFESSIONAL ALLIANCES

By forming alliances and joining professional bodies such as the IICT; it becomes that much easier for your business to be benchmarked

as top of the line. Furthermore it is becoming apparent that by natural therapy providers joining together and forming stronger alliances, make it easier for them to be recognised by both the traditional and non-traditional medical industries.

4. MARKETING & PROMOTIONAL PLAN

Remember the objective? You need a method of reaching customers consistently and therefore, establish a name for your natural therapy business. The 'Plan' in itself should detail how you will market your practice, first within the community and then outside. Assess the marketing avenues (traditional vs non-traditional) and make the call based on suitability. Note: The internet, direct mailers, pamphlets and flyers are more likely to render best results for this industry.

5. COMPETITIVE EDGE

Within the natural therapy domain, analysing your competitive edge is all about getting practical and getting your hands dirty! That's right, it's as simple as collecting all their written material, join their online communities and best yet; book yourself for a session and get a firsthand taste of where they excel and where they fail. Mapping out your competitive edge becomes easier, when you're well versed about competitors' strengths and weaknesses.

6. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

To keep the backbone of your practice in good shape, deploy prudence from the onset. Maintain accurate financial records and manage your cash flow accordingly. With a close eye on actual performance (keeping in mind your start-up position), stay away from budgeting 'optimistically' at least within the 1st year of practice. Whilst it is vital to develop a financial plan / budget - it is equally

important to monitor income vs. expenditure and assess areas that go over budget.

7. RESEARCH

Carrying out research will undoubtedly lower your chances of business failure. From understanding the demographics of your customers to pinpointing ‘your’ target market size, research will shed light on even the best location for your practice. Talk to industry experts and those who’ve been through the process while getting customer feedback to assess individual needs. There is a range of information & statistical sources along with industry research publications that would help carry out proper research.

8. IDENTIFY TARGET MARKETS

Identify your target market by listing down the characteristics of those who can potentially benefit from your natural therapy practice. From age, gender, medical requirements, social strata to many other demographic patterns can lead you to pursue your target market successfully without wasting time sowing seeds that won’t render a harvest.

9. ONLINE PRESENCE

In a world where practically everything is online, building an online presence is vital for success. If budgetary constraints don’t permit a fully-fledged website, it would be a smart move for start-ups to at least consider having a web presence through a free web hosting service.

10. EMPLOYEES

A fundamental requirement to ensure long term success of a natural therapy business is getting the right employees. How many hours a week do you need extra hands? Is it better to recruit an apprentice or novice who can be trained as you desire? What's the staffing affordability? Answers to these questions will help nail down the correct team.

Adhering to these guidelines will not only enable you to succeed in kick-starting a natural therapy business, but will also ensure long term sustenance of the business.



ARTICLE #15

**BUSINESS GROWTH
STRATEGIES: WHY
DIVERSIFICATION IS GOOD
FOR YOUR NATURAL
THERAPY BUSINESS?**

Whether you intend to conduct a small scale family-run business or a large one, the benchmark for success is growth.

There are several proven strategies to help in the growth of your business including listings, promotional flyers, hosting an event, advertising campaigns, offers and promotions, discounts and packages and tie-ups with charitable institutions. However, today we will focus on diversification.

Diversification can help you deal with fluctuations in the market. In the spirit of working smarter not harder, diversification is an attractive option for many natural therapists. Let us study how diversifying your services and products can help your business remain sustainable for the long-term.

But first up, some basics:

WHAT IS DIVERSIFICATION?

In a natural therapy business, you could focus on just one model like acupressure or reflexology. However, it makes no sense placing all your eggs in one basket. Diversification is a model that can help you maintain a core practice while working with the different strengths of your staff or by adding retail products to your offering.

For instance, your core practice could be natural medicine. But you could diversify to other modalities like aromatherapy, Ayurvedic medicine, western herbal medicine, traditional Chinese medicine and naturopathy. If your core competency is reflexology, you could diversify by hiring staff for acupuncture, musculoskeletal therapy, physiotherapy and massage therapy. You can also look to sell retail products that relate to these services, helping to generate incremental revenue.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT DIVERSIFICATION?

Diversification is market centric. If you already have a strong foothold in the local market, then it makes sense increasing the scale of your operations to bigger markets (and eventually international markets). In either case, sensitivity to customer needs and industry trends is very important. Another key consideration before diversifying is an accurate market analysis. This can help you answer many questions like:

- Are the products/services you plan to implement accurately priced?
- Are they relevant to the area and market dynamics?
- More importantly: do you have the resources, capital to offer these diverse services or products?

DIFFERENT TYPES OF DIVERSIFICATION YOU COULD CONSIDER

You could consider diversifying within the ambit of pure therapeutic procedures. You could offer an array of similar procedures for healing like acupuncture, reflexology, musculoskeletal therapy and physiotherapy.

Another kind of diversification is creating one or several parallel businesses. You could have a therapy business adjacent to a clinic with fully qualified doctors. The integrated approach to patient care could house homeopaths, naturopaths, doctors of eastern medicine, herbal medicine and Ayurveda. This diversification requires more capital and thorough planning. It also needs integration at the top level and also at individual levels. Staff must periodically be cross-trained to be able to understand the different healing philosophies and work in harmony.

HOW YOUR BUSINESS BENEFITS FROM DIVERSIFICATION

There are numerous advantages of diversification for a natural therapy business:

It helps eliminate risk

Every day, there are reports about new scientific discoveries and alternative cures - some of which are quite real (and some not so). But, clients are fickle and quickly shift from one practice to another, in which case you can be ready with an alternative strategy or healing plan.

Diversifying is great for startups

Diversification can help eliminate risks that come early on in a business. It can greatly reduce financial stress as you build your clientele and understand their specific needs and wants.

It can give you an upper hand over competing businesses

One thing that is certain in any business, including a natural therapy business, is competition. One business starts up and experiences success, then you can expect to see proliferation of similar businesses around the corner or in the next suburb. It is a good idea to plan a diverse setup right from the get go, that is difficult for potential competitors to replicate. Based on the speed at which competition takes place, you can naturally and gently create diversities in your own business while using effective marketing strategies to promote your core business as well as your diverse products and services.

You get revenue from both services and sales

When you have a diverse set of services on offer, you can also open a shopfront that retails products related to those services. Some

customers just like to window shop and when they spot a range of diverse therapies and treatments neatly segregated but available at the same clinic, they are not only impressed but also more inclined to walk in and make an enquiry or purchase a product. There is no promotion more powerful than word-of-mouth - even to this day. A good conversational sales rep and a wide array of products is a sure shot promotion for repeat and additional business.

GUIDELINES FOR DIVERSIFICATION

- When you plan to diversify, it will do you the world of good to follow certain guidelines:
- Make a solid plan before jumping in
- Allocate incremental budget
- Allow for additional advertising both traditional and online
- Listen to what your existing employees have to say based on their experience and expertise
- Understand what clients want from your business and anticipate what your local population may need in the near future
- Consider budget for cross training staff, building your online reputation or purchase new products

TO SUMMARISE

From a purely financial perspective, diversification can help reduce risk by possessing various ways of generating revenue. You can help reduce the impact of market fluctuations, protect against volatile

markets and maintain (or increase!) marketshare. When you have a diversification plan in place, it is easy to set and check off targets as you go.



ARTICLE #16

IS STARTING A NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS FOR YOU? 10 TIPS FOR START-UP SUCCESS

Looking to start your own natural therapy practice, here are 10 tips to set you on the path to success:

1. HAVE A VISION

Start by having a clear vision. Meditate on your goals. What do you want your perfect week to look like? Then talk to a friend or confidant about it. Write down your vision in a journal. You can further define your goals by selecting a name for the business. This can be a name that defines what you do or you can simply offer your services under your own name.

Define your goals clearly. These should be both short and long term goals. Think carefully whether you'd work full time or part time. Would this be your main business, or would you rather have something else along the side? Do you want to eventually grow and have people working for you?

2. SORT OUT FINANCIAL AND LEGAL MATTERS EARLY ON

It is important that you choose the legal structure of the business carefully from the start, whether you decide between limited liability, partnership or joint venture. If needed, consult with an accountant and an attorney to make the best possible legal and financial decisions for the new venture.

Create a solid business plan which clearly defines your business and your goals. List the skills and experience you bring to the business and discuss the advantages you have over your competitors. Decide how you plan on marketing the business in the plan.

3. BE VERY CAREFUL HOW YOU SPEND YOUR MONEY, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIRST YEAR

In the first year of your business, cash flow is the biggest issue you're likely to face. Yes, you will also make money mistakes but make sure you learn from them. Be very protective of your cash in the starting phase of the business. At the same time, don't be undercapitalised. Ensure you have adequate capital as you build your customer base.

4. CREATE A USP

USP stands for Unique Selling Proposition (for example in the case of FedEx it is "When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight!"). Do you have something you can sell that your competition does not? Can you back these claims? It is a competitive jungle out there, so you must identify your USP that differentiates you from your competitors - keeping your customers in mind. Once you have identified the USP, bring it to your customer's notice through brochures, websites and social media.

5. ADVANCE YOUR SKILLS

The minute you think you know it all is the point your business becomes vulnerable. One of the key tips to startup success (in any business) is to continually seek ways of enhancing your skills. If needed, set aside some weekend time for distance/online learning or certifications.

6. BUILD A RELIABLE TEAM

Whether it is a business partner, employees, front desk staff or consultants, hire the best qualified personnel to help you out. In the

beginning you might feel you can't afford paying them, but do try to get reliable help, so you can stay focused on your building your business plan and long-term growth.

7. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LOCATION

The location of your practice can make a huge impact on the success of your business. Gain an understanding about the demographics and economic characteristics of the area you are planning to service. Find out the demand for your modality/service. If you plan on renting space, do not dive in too soon as it can become difficult to break the lease which is expensive. Instead wait, study the area and then ensure that it is indeed the right space for you.

8. LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

The first year will be the hardest but that is normal. Things will eventually settle down as you learn and grow. Yes, mistakes are likely in the beginning but you must learn from them and ensure you don't repeat them.

9. FIND A SUPPORT GROUP

You cannot fight all your battles on your own. This is where a good mentor can come to your rescue. A confident mentor will have the skills and expertise you need and would have typically seen success himself/herself as an entrepreneur.

10. ENJOY YOURSELF

Finally, try and enjoy your business. A positive attitude will help you overcome all difficulties and also persuade people to work with you and want to do business with you.



ARTICLE #17

TOP 10 TIPS FOR NATURAL THERAPISTS: HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL HOME BASED BUSINESS

Nothing happens unless first a dream. This could not be more appropriate for those planning to run a successful home based natural therapy business. Many therapists start off with the goal of running a passionate practice, from the comfort of their homes, but fail to treat it as a professional business, at home.

These 10 helpful tips will provide you with hands-on knowledge and give you a heads-up on running a home based natural therapy business, successfully:

DREAM, BELIEVE AND DECIDE

Having the dream to run a practice comes easy. The problem occurs when converting that dream to decisions – consistent decisions at that. To make those tough decisions, you've got to believe in your ability to be a therapist from the point of view of a businessman / woman. Self-belief will take you places that dreams can't! So while the decision of wanting to be a therapist was probably made early, have you committed to make decisions that foster that dream into a successful practice, thrust by your self-belief? If not, stop; and take stock before moving on.

DEMARCATON

If your home does not have a separate entrance to what can be your potential 'Practice' then you've got to make one. Demarcation is pivotal in delivering, what could often be perceived as, sensitive / private therapeutic treatments to clients who wouldn't want the risk of the rest of the household walking in on them.

PROFESSIONALISM

While it is a good thing to make your clients feel 'right at home'; it is more important to maintain professionalism at all times while running your natural therapy practice from home. Ensure to not step over any boundaries, which if misinterpreted could make your practice appear questionable in the eyes of potential and existing clients that will render far more negatives than you'd want to deal with.

REGULATION

Many complementary and natural therapy based healthcare services require equipment such as chiropractic devices or alternative medicines. Prior to administering such products ensure compliance in line with Health & Safety regulations and/or Food & Drugs related regulations to ascertain how these regulatory bodies could affect your home based business. Also get familiar with certain qualifications that may also be mandatory for administering therapies.

COSMETIC & THERAPEUTIC PRODUCTS

From creams, oils, lotions to soaps; be very mindful of the use and sale of such therapeutic products within your home based practice. It is pivotal that you are well versed and informed about the ingredients contained within, while also being knowledgeable about the labeling, manufacturing and distribution of such products. The same applies to the use and sale of self-made therapeutic cosmetic products, which should clearly state the ingredients used.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

While training is mandatory, being certified as a natural therapy practitioner is also equally important to sustain yourself as a home

based business. Thus a formal certification can really boost your own morale while aiding the confidence building of your potential clientele. Bring yourself up to speed with regards to industry requirements when applying for a license to deliver your preferred service/s by getting in touch with relevant professional bodies like IICT, for further assistance in regards to this.

EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

If using various equipment and medical devices for your natural therapy practice, first ensure their authenticity and purchase from a trusted source. Secondly take all efforts to ensure they are authorised to be used within a natural therapy practice.

MARKET YOURSELF

Depending on how large a territory you wish to cover, be wise in choosing the marketing channels that suit you best. Flyers, business cards with a coupon attached, a Facebook page and online reviews may work best in getting your home based business a head start. However, personal referrals from happy customers will most likely top all that. So remember your clients are your best marketing channels!

FURNISHING

While furnishing is vital in creating a suitable ambiance for your practice, be prudent in your spend until the business is established. Some of the more popular methods of cost saving in this regard would be to purchase 2nd hand furnishing. When it comes to equipment, it would be wise to consider a short-term lease so that covering your costs is well within reach.

MUSIC

It is best to comply with all possible regulatory laws that would create a sound image of your practice in the long run. So if using recorded music within the practice, it is your responsibility to obtain applicable licenses so that you do not infringe any copyright laws when using music for commercial reasons.

And there you have it. 10 crucial factors to take into consideration when establishing and propelling your home based natural therapy practice towards success.



ARTICLE #18

HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO ATTRACT MORE CLIENTS TO YOUR NATURAL THERAPY PRACTICE

You're passionate about helping people create a healthier and happier life, you provide a great service and customer experience but you're unsure how to use the world's most effective marketing channel, social media, to attract more clients and loyal customers?

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IS A TOOL FOR NATURAL THERAPISTS

With social media being an integral part of our lives today, natural therapy practitioners have the opportunity to build a professional rapport with a worldwide audience. Social networking websites are powerful tools to attract people online. As such, within minutes, any business or professional contact can be established very easily.

Social media is the global place where you can meet people and know more about them. Whether you're just starting out or you have established a successful natural therapy practice and you want to attract more clients to your business, networking is a must.

Marketing online, especially for natural therapy practices, is based on authenticity, honesty and transparency. Only ethical practices will be crucial for the process and it will help you attract more clients. For a credible business move, you should ensure that your clients can relate to your website when they visit.

Likewise, social media also promotes the business and communicates its values to clients for success.

TOOLS TO ATTRACT CLIENTS

There are several social media platforms that can be used to communicate and interact with clients. In fact, most of these interactive platforms are easy to use, offering an array of opportunities to people to reach out to a wider base of customers and most are free.

One of the first and most promising tools is Facebook – it is one place where people gather and spread the word. Having your own page with professional description, services and the benefits of your practice can draw a lot of interest from all over the world. Engagement and Interest, eventually, converts into clients. Effective marketing techniques and engaging content will draw attention of audiences through Facebook however you need to have a plan of attack. What content would your potential followers find interesting? Educate, inspire and convert – this is your new mantra.

Twitter can be effective for spreading the news that you are online. Giving daily tips, interacting with people and spreading the word of wellbeing and health will attract followers. Also make sure you follow people on Twitter to increase your own followers – I aim to add at least 50 more people I follow each week and at least 20% of those immediately follow me back. Instant followers and potential PR opportunities!

It is content that speaks loud and clear when it comes to online marketing and social media marketing. With any social media, you have to play your cards right. Because you are promoting a natural therapy practice, you have to come up with really good quality and highly professional content. However, it should be interactive and personally appealing to people at the same time.

Sending out emails to a database of prospects is also a good idea. Newsletters and brochures can be sent with different offers and stating the benefits of different types of therapies, which will allow readers to understand. Be creative – you need to stand out from the crowd.

Finally, blogs hold great value, especially instructional or experiential posts. If you already have a website, you can also launch your blog and write some interesting and engaging content about the therapies you offer and how it can benefit. People who come online are usually

looking for something – it could be information or of benefit to them. They're online looking to engage, looking to be inspired, so give them what they are searching for and watch your business grow.

For healthcare professionals and therapists, social media is the best platform to reach out to a global audience. The modern era is more interactive and dynamic, and with millions of people online, it is indeed the best way to promote your business.



ARTICLE #19

ESSENTIAL SMALL BUSINESS SEO GUIDE: HOW TO ACHIEVE A GOOGLE PAGE ONE RANKING FOR YOUR NATURAL THERAPY PRACTICE

When trying to achieve a Google page one ranking for your natural therapy practice, it is vital to remember that EVERYONE is eager to get to Google's first page too!

However with just 8.5% of online search traffic actually making it to even the second page of Google searches, it is apparent that while search ranking is crucial, it is also something that takes time to accomplish.

So the question 'How do I achieve a Google page one ranking?' is one that cannot be answered easily. In fact not even Google has a straightforward answer, using close to 200 factors to determine how it will rank different websites.

But don't lose faith, here are some of the most tried & tested methodologies that can help your natural therapy business reach a Google page one ranking:

QUALITY IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

The quality of your practice needs to be mirrored on your website, and this is a fundamental factor in boosting your Google search rankings. Further, if your site isn't updated regularly or is perceived as being of low quality due to the nature of the content, you will struggle to increase your ranking. The first step is to identify any issues with your content (or lack of), slow load times, mobile optimisation issues and website architecture problems. Once done, fix those issues to create a more user friendly layout, which Google will reward you for. At the end of the day, Google's key aim is to provide their customers with the best search results and high-quality websites.

ADOPT BEST PRACTICES...WHILE YOU WAIT!

As a natural therapy business, your chances of being found online largely depend on how easily you are found using search engines. But let's face it; companies who reached the first page ranking did not get there overnight. Depending on the severity of the competition, consider adopting a supplementary strategy over a period of time by allocating regular budgets for resources like paid search engine ads, such as Google AdWords or Bing AdWords, while you build your website's content and organic search engine rankings.

AFTER ALL, CONTENT IS KING

The significance of having quality content cannot be stressed enough. Sadly many small-scale businesses fail in this area miserably:

- **Content length:** Can boost ratings as a considerable word count per page or topic can help convey the message more effectively.
- **Content originality:** Another core factor that will make or break your Google ranking, is plagiarised content. You will only boost your rankings by creating original content.
- **Content frequency:** The frequency and the recency of content updates, primarily for time-sensitive matters, are brought to light by Google in highlighting the last updated date. The frequency of substantial content changes like adding/removing pages is another freshness factor that Google is fond of.

SMART KEYWORDS DELIVER SMART RESULTS

While it is being questioned if keywords still deliver the same results they once used to, placing keywords within the domain are signals of relevancy within Google. Have you ever noticed that keywords are still made bold when searching the domain name on Google? So a domain that uses its keywords has a definite edge over competitors who do not.

DUPLICATION! A BIG NO NO

One of the big blunders made by so many websites is the duplication of content within its pages. Be it for lack of knowledge, time or mere laziness, using the same content with slight modifications will only trigger a negative impact on Google's ranking algorithm by lowering the website's search visibility.

LINK-UP! IT'S MORE THAN A FAD

Most often understood and valued by Google, this has a lot more to do with improving search rankings as opposed to being mere industry jargon. The amount of internal links to a given page indicates its significance in comparison to the other pages on the same website, while the quality of those internal links (in terms of their domain strength) will also help strengthen the page. Broken links on the other hand is perceived to portray poorly managed websites and negligence. On the flipside, having backlinks from matured domains can actually improve your site's rankings, as opposed to having links from too many new domains.

YOUTUBE FAN?

Google owns it! So why not utilise the advantage rendered by YouTube videos, which are more often than not, placed advantageously within Google's search results page. So if you YouTube it, chances are you will be found faster!

So while you convince Google of the authenticity of your services, products and business; also keep in mind that perseverance and patience are also best practices to be adopted while you wait for your SEO strategy to take effect.



ARTICLE #20

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLY GROWING YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS

The benchmark for success of any business, including natural therapy, is sustenance and growth. By incorporating the following time tested and tuned management practices into your natural therapy business, you will not only stay afloat and make profits but also increase the scale of your operations in a short time.

DIVERSIFICATION

Diversification has many advantages for any business and more so for a natural therapy business. There are several branches of natural therapy that can be combined to improve health and create a harmony in the life of the patient. Having all options under one roof can help attract more customers and improve business.

MARKETING

Even a family-owned business needs advertising and a natural therapy business cannot function without a trained marketing professional. A dedicated person for the job will ensure all avenues of advertisement are covered and new avenues discovered. A trained marketing professional will also be able to streamline the operations of your natural therapy business and group them into easy services that attract customer attention.

PROCESSES AND COMMUNICATION

Every natural therapy business must have a solid process and plan. At the very inception, chalk out a plan and create milestones for growth. Write down the process you will use to reach these milestones and achieve growth. Ensure that the plan and process is communicated to every member of your staff. Keeping your staff informed of your plans for growth not only makes changes easier, it also keeps them motivated, content and involved.

Clearly defining processes at inception makes them easier to implement and refine. Adhoc introduction of new processes only creates diversion and makes it harder to implement in an already thriving business.

SOLICIT FEEDBACK AND OPINION

Solicit feedback from clients after every session. You should use this feedback to re-align your goals and adjust your processes to serve customers better and prevent attrition. Solicit feedback from staff as well. Experienced staff members are mines of information about management and success. Before you introduce a new process that you haven't had the chance to test, solicit the opinion from the more experienced staff and figure out the chances of success. Periodically give feedback to staff upon their performance and suggest areas of improvement.

DOCUMENTATION

Document every detail and process. A new therapist or doctor that you hire, will find it easier to align with the goals of your specific natural therapy business when there is clear documentation of processes, goals, procedures and communication protocols.

Documentation also helps the business keep track of patients, the therapy you gave them, their improvement and any medication prescribed. Documenting and storing the history of patients will also help the staff connect better with patients and provide holistic care. It creates immense client satisfaction and can help develop your business faster.

FOCUS ON PROFIT

Whatever management technique or practice you adopt, never lose sight of your objective: making profit. Every business is profit driven. Whether you diversify your operations and services, or personalise services for clients, or create packages for ease, keep in mind that everything you do must generate profit. Be bold and discontinue activities that generate no profit or steer you towards loss. Do not think twice before shutting down an unprofitable sub-venture.

RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE RIGHT JOB

Periodically train your staff to hone their skills. As you diversify, you will need more hands on deck and having inexperienced or untrained staff will make the transition harder. Another important aspect of growing a business is having the right people steer this growth. Hire qualified human resource personnel, finance personnel, housekeeping and therapists. Do not rotate jobs amongst therapists and management personnel. It will not only make the job harder but also precious talent gets wasted.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service is the ultimate goal of any business; or so the customers like to think. But truth is not far from their perception. While it is true that profit is the objective of your business, customer service is the anchor to higher returns. A happy customer comes back for more and brings friends, relatives and even acquaintances. Train your staff to aim for customer satisfaction and top quality service. Profits will follow.

All the aforementioned management practices, when followed diligently and with an eye for improvement and improvisation, can lead to higher returns and expansion of your business. However, the

devil is in the details. Whether you chalk out a diversification plan or create a customer service checklist, make it detail oriented. Abstract plans are more confusing than useful in a natural therapy business.



ARTICLE #21

10 THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU DEVELOP A WEBSITE: NATURAL THERAPISTS GUIDE

Your website is your window to the world and an effective marketing tool to make existing clients stay loyal and attract new clients. But how would you reach your targeted audience beating the thousands of therapist websites that come up in the internet search?

Thinking of developing a website for your therapy business? Use these proven tips and tricks that can serve as a guide to natural therapists.

1. ADOPT A NO-COMPROMISE WEB STRATEGY

A professionally designed website makes your online presence impactful. You have to instill confidence in your potential clients' minds about your expertise, reliability and professionalism to revisit and recommend it to others. Provide them with inspiring stories and compelling features to keep looking for more. Be up to date in design and content to keep abreast of other sites.

The website should display precise information about yourself, your credentials, specialties, your office hours and your contact details. Give easy access to your site visitors to keep them engaged and interested. Enable them to interact with you, share their contact details with you, sign up for a consultation, share your URL on social networks or recommend pages to friends.

2. ADD YOUR PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

According to studies, visitors are more likely to become customers when they see the photo of the site owner. Add a friendly photo of yourself shot professionally to your homepage for a personal touch and credibility.

3. CHOOSE HIGH QUALITY WEB HOSTING

Using the top ranked web hosting services has its own benefits. Choose the one which enables you to manage your site easily, efficiently and will run flawlessly.

4. RELEVANT AND USEFUL CONTENT

Make sure you have all the ingredients for top ranking by search engines to attract a large number of visitors to your website. More visitors means more exposure for your business. Your website should have inspiring and engaging content presented in a good format. Answer people's questions clearly and quickly.

5. USE A CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Using a popular content management system such as WordPress which is versatile and powerful, ensures a strong online presence. Some web hosting programs come with one click installation that is user friendly and customisable.

6. AREA OF SPECIALISATION

It is important to clearly list the specialties of your practice on your website so that potential clients can find you easily. You can consider mentioning some other conditions that you are qualified to treat in a separate list which is secondary.

7. CONTACT FORM

Websites with prominent built in contact forms work wonders for any business. It should have a significant label saying 'Contact'

or 'Register for a Session' in eye catching, bold letters. It is better than having your email address displayed on your site that attracts spammers. Visitors can contact you or even register themselves for a counselling session right away without any hassle.

8. JOIN 'GOOGLE PLACES'

Being on Google Places gives you a strong online presence. Your local visibility can also increase tremendously when you allow Google to know your exact location.

9. USE OF SEO

SEO is the best way to get search engines, including Google, to recognise you as an expert therapist and rank your site on top of search results when people try to find a practitioner. Correctly implementing SEO strategies can help search engines to send large number of visitors to your website. Your business cannot grow without steady traffic to your website as it is the best source of attracting new clients.

10. MAKE YOUR SITE MOBILE FRIENDLY

Mobile internet usage has far exceeded that of the PC making it imperative for online businesses to make their websites mobile friendly. Otherwise you will be left behind and even ignored by a majority of your potential clients. Use web design that is optimised for mobile and hand held devices. Test your website to ensure it resizes to suit mobile phone and tablet screens. You can use Google Webmaster Tools to test your site to find and rectify any problems.

Now that you know the top ten proven ideas to develop your winning website, implement them without any further delay. Make your

online presence awesome with relevant and engaging content and features that are optimised for higher search engine rankings and easy navigation. Remember that half of all visitors will leave if your website is dull, boring or filled with run of the mill content. Make your website shine with your care, trust, ethics and eagerness to serve.



ARTICLE #22

HOW TO USE FACEBOOK ADVERTISING AND GET MORE FANS! A GUIDE FOR NATURAL THERAPISTS

Recording over 1.1 billion active users per month and leading the list of global online communities; there is a reason why every business wants to leverage the “Facebook advantage”.

A solid social media presence can do wonders to grow your business. However for this to happen you first need a substantial following, and thereby learn how to serve their needs better. Statistically only around 16% of your fans will see a single post, hence don't worry too much about over-posting. Just ensure your ads are spaced out reasonably well throughout the day, as the more you post, the better the chances of visibility.

Following are some great tips on growing your fan base and strengthening your online presence, via Facebook advertising.

IDENTIFY GOALS

Identifying the goals for your ad campaign will render better results and thus help grow the fan base. Be it more visits to your website, increased fan engagement or increasing Facebook likes, your goal will determine the selection of the most suited ad type. As a primary step, increasing page likes will most likely deliver the best results as more fans indicate a strong brand name and one that is valued by the following. Hence the PPC (Pay Per Click) model will work best in getting more likes to your page.

FACEBOOK ‘OFFERS’

Use the ‘Offers’ ad mechanism to promote a deal exclusively for Facebook users; from a discount coupon with a free-e-book to a banded offer. Facebook offers also help increase ‘Likes’ by alluring users towards the offer. Ensure the offer gives value for money though, if not, the entire campaign along with your product / service will be perceived to be frivolous.

USE IMAGES!

A picture says a thousand words, more so in the case of image based ads on Facebook. Here's how to milk better benefits through image based ads and grow your fan base:

1. Image based ads stand out better amidst the crowded newsfeed and thus engagement is higher, so go crazy with your images! Image size recommendation should be at least 600 pixels in width.
2. Up to 6 images can be added per ad, with no extra cost. Multiple images will provide a better variety resulting in getting more eyeballs for your ad = more likes
3. Text is best kept below 20% in compliance with Facebook's advertising rules pertaining to image based ads. Refer to the Facebook ad grid help when balancing the text vs images to ensure higher visibility of your Facebook ad

CONTESTS

Contests continue to be a tool that drives traffic in any advertising medium, and again, more so on Facebook. So make use of this opportunity to giveaway freebies and create a competitively fun environment, to drive traffic to your Facebook fan page.

TARGET YOUR AD

Possibly the coolest fact about Facebook advertising is its ability to let you choose who you want the ad targeted to by utilising many variables such as keywords, age, geography, relationship status, gender, work status etc .

Using keywords craftily, Facebook ads will give you access to a substantial audience based on suitability. At the end of the day, increasing the fan base will become beneficial only if they are sincerely interested in your product / service. Hence tracking and tweaking your ad campaign is an integral part of its success. So in your pursuit of growing your fan base, make use of the Facebook Insights tool to monitor progress and gauge the quality of fan interactions with your campaign.

CALL TO ACTION (CTA)

A well-defined CTA is a must for any Facebook ad campaign to render long term positive results. The CTA must be clearly included in the body text of the ad, thus stimulating fans to take a desired action be it sign up for a free eBook, call today for a special discount or value added service / product and more.

PUSH YOUR MOBILE APP

If you do have a mobile app, run some paid ads to drive users towards the app. Given that almost 50% of users access Facebook via their smart phones, this is a super cool option in first driving, then growing and then letting them savor your Facebook page, on the go, via the app.

So while it's not rocket science, using Facebook advertising effectively can truly render phenomenal results in establishing a strong fan base and sturdy online presence.



ARTICLE #23

FINDING YOUR POINT OF DIFFERENCE - A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR NATURAL THERAPISTS

This article explains how you can develop your point of difference, also called the USP or Unique Selling Point. It explains what USP is, why it is important and also takes you through the process of identifying the unique features pertaining to your business, products or services.

WHAT IS USP?

Unique selling point is one of the most time-tested marketing techniques that help your customers understand why you are different from your competitors. You can use a single USP at the company level (e.g. we provide high levels of customer service) or even determine one for every product/service you sell (e.g. anti-aging massage, stress busting therapy and so on).

WHY CREATE A USP?

The answer is simple: You need to stand out in today's competitive market place. With a USP you can:

- Show your customers how you are DIFFERENT from your competitors
- Create a focus on your key benefits, so you can sell products and services more effectively

FINDING YOUR POINT OF DIFFERENCE

To find your point of difference, you need to:

- Understand and study the features of the products or services you offer

- Find out how your customers use your products or services
- Find out the features of your products/services from the point of view of your customers

Finding these three points is done either through sales reporting or market analysis as well as customer feedback. Most customers are more than willing to share what they liked or did not like about a particular product/service.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO FIND THE POINT OF DIFFERENCE FOR A PARTICULAR PRODUCT OR SERVICE

Here are the steps to work through when defining a USP for a product/service:

1. Start with a particular product or service, preferably one you want most to succeed. It should ideally be the greatest contributor to your profits or have the greatest potential
2. List all the main features of the product or service. This list should be based on the product's price, delivery method, location, function or technical specifications, quality etc.
3. Now take each of these features and convert it into more than one benefit. Remember: the main difference between a feature and a benefit is that a benefit is always from the view point of the customer. Customers buy benefits, not features. One of the simplest methods of converting each feature into a benefit is to use the words "which means that..." after every feature. For example: you can use words like "pampering" or "stress relieving" or "anti-aging" or "certified organic" or "rejuvenating" etc. to

describe each feature

4. Some benefits may be more important to your customers than others. So go down the list and rate each benefit based on priority
5. Sometimes, there may be no particular benefit to the customer that is different from that offered by your competition. In such a case you must still try and develop a particular strength as a USP or if needed, try to change or develop that product/service to something unique and not yet offered by the competition
6. Repeat the steps above for all your products or services
7. Once you have done this, start thinking about promotional activities to market your USP

SOME MORE TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN CREATING USP

The “who cares” test. Try your USP on other people in your target market. If they answer “Who Cares!” it is not a USP.

- Your USP must make you stand out from the pack
- A USP answers the question: “What’s in it for me?” from your customer’s point of view
- It helps put you in a league of your own
- It helps you achieve your goals
- A USP should be short and sweet. It should be the headline for the feature story

- It should grab people's attention and stop them in their tracks
- It should get them to ask you: How do you do that? Where can I get more of this? Can I make an appointment now?
- Remember that a USP focuses on a customer's needs, not your business needs

So, go on....find out what your customers need. And get it for them!



ARTICLE #24

**IS YOUR WEBSITE EFFECTIVE
IN GENERATING NEW LEADS?
WE SHOW YOU HOW IN THIS
NATURAL THERAPISTS GUIDE**

It's pretty much a given, that most people research the internet before they decide on buying a product or service. Your website should top the search results and help generate new clients for your business. Is your website working as a powerful lead generation tool?

To grow your business by continuously attracting new clients you need to make sure your website is optimised to attract quality leads that make contact with your practice. Optimisation and relevant content are two important factors that deliver quality leads to your business. Here is a list of proven lead generation methods from experts which can serve as a guide for natural therapists.

AN APPEALING WEB DESIGN

Visitors leave within seconds when a website looks dull and contains boring and outdated content and features. Develop your natural therapy business website to be user friendly, professionally designed and customised with key sales triggers. The website has to be responsive and compatible with mobile devices, as mobile internet users have now outpaced desktop users.

Using proven colours, graphics, keywords, call-to-action buttons, lots of white spaces and a thoughtful format are essential ingredients for lead generation. The contact form must be displayed on all the pages in a prominent way to make it easy for the visitor to contact you. We also recommend a high quality photo of yourself on your homepage, which will add credibility to your website. Include information about yourself and the services you offer, working hours and how potential clients can reach you.

ADD YOUR VIDEO

The power of video marketing cannot be ignored. Make a high-quality video of yourself speaking to your potential clients about the uniqueness of your therapy centre and what you can do for them. Using video, aim to make a good first impression and evoke interest in your business by presenting a caring and friendly persona that people will connect with.

MAKE YOUR WEBSITE INTERACTIVE

Having an online form that enables visitors to fill out their questions or issues with their contact details entices the potential client to take action. It may be to book a counselling session or for an appointment to use your services. Use words like 'Book a Session' or 'Click here to get Free Advice'. You can give them something of value like an e-book or a free video in return for their email address, which you can use for building a relationship with them and convert into potential client. Another option is to add a chat session in the home page for the visitor to contact your office staff and have their questions answered immediately.

YOUR CONTACT INFO

Make it easy for your visitors to contact you without having to search for your contact information. Your phone number should be displayed boldly at the top of every page along with your 'contact us' form. Your website should prominently display your street address, your contact details along with other ways to contact you, your working hours and holidays.

POWERFUL CONTENT

High-quality content that is relevant to search engine queries, rich in keywords and placed appropriately is the best lead generation tool for your website. Use a lot of keywords that potential clients would type into a search engine to find a therapist in your field. Include latest news, current trends and stories that might trigger interest in your therapy centre. Your content should reflect how much you care for your clients and about your ethical practice. Provide answers to frequently asked questions and keep visitors engaged with your informative blogs, newsletters and articles. In short your content must be such that the readers come back for more and recommend and share your website with others.

CALL-TO-ACTION

The use of call-to-action buttons such as ‘Call Now’, ‘Book a Session’ and ‘Sign up for our Newsletter’ helps prompt your website visitors to take action immediately. These buttons must be prominently placed using good design along with a ‘Thank You’ page that would show up when a visitor submits their details. Your call-to-action buttons should be displayed on every page to help turn your visitors into leads. Asking them to ‘like’ your Facebook page also works well for generating new leads.

In essence, following the above steps can create a highly effective website that excels in lead generation for you. Your business success depends heavily on how you project yourself on your website to help attract new clients. A smart move to build a successful therapy business is to create a responsive website full of useful and helpful information for site visitors that is optimised for high search rankings. Having a website that is an effective lead generation tool is a sure way to get a continuous flow of new leads that you can convert into clients.



ARTICLE #25

STARTING A NATURAL THERAPY ONLINE BUSINESS: THE DO'S AND DON'TS

There are many modalities and disciplines involved in natural therapy, and a majority of those are well-suited for online business.

Aromatherapy, homeopathy and western herbal medicine are three obvious candidates, but even massage therapy and acupuncture need to have information shared, tools supplied and clients attracted. The sky is the limit for online natural therapy businesses, but it is important to use trusted methods and avoid the classic pitfalls associated with internet marketing.

STEPS TO TAKE

To get noticed online, a natural therapy business needs to use the same steps as other online businesses. Never lose sight of the fact that your focus is on natural therapies, and enlist the aid of online experts anytime you feel it is necessary to do so.

Search Engine Optimisation - SEO is the practice of using special keywords and phrases throughout your online content to create a feeling of reliability. Although the algorithms which calculate the effectiveness are regularly updated, a good rule of thumb is to have the keywords you want to score well on repeated at least once for every 100 words, and avoid a keyword density greater than 4 percent. SEO applies to all content on your website, even your “About Us” page, and should also be applied to blogs, video content, podcasts and social media.

Effects of Social Media - Social media is a goldmine for online marketing that is only beginning to come into maturity. There has never been a medium that was more effective at reaching vast numbers of people with targeted information, and a savvy online natural therapy business would do well to maintain a positive presence on multiple sites.

Content is King - To be recognised as a leader, you have to provide a steady stream of applicable content to your website visitors. This can be short how-to videos, a blog or eBooks that provides quality information that fits your practice. The main thing is that your website has fresh new content posted regularly, and that the content stays focused on your business, or its products and services.

Analyse and Compromise - Monitor your campaigns to see how well they are doing. If social media marketing is showing a greater return, put more focus on your social presence. If search engines are bringing in the most hits, then look at other ways to build performance in that arena. You do not have to invest in every digital marketing tool available, but you may have to experiment to find the ones that offer the most benefits.

MISTAKES TO AVOID

There are two sides to every coin, and an online natural therapy business has to be wary of common marketing mistakes. None of these errors are going to ruin your business, but they can all contribute to slowing down the responses you were expecting.

Going Blogless - Your blog is important in multiple ways. First, it shows your visitors that you are serious about your business, and informs search engines that you are topical and trustworthy. On another note, blogs are a great way to present marketing campaigns, typically in a sidebar that uses ads as targets to keywords in the blog posts. A blog is a very powerful marketing tool in itself, and failure to maintain an authoritative one can be the difference between long-term success and failure.

Failure to Reconnect - Allowing your customer list to get stale is a marketing mistake of epic proportions. Not only are previous clients a great source of testimonials and repeat sales, they are also your

ticket to social media fame. Businesses that fail to send out follow up emails and initiate future contact are allowing paying prospects to get away.

Excluding External Links - To build reliability, your blog posts and product sheets should include links to reliable sources outside of your practice (such as the IICT). Search engines view external links as a way to become more relevant, and human visitors will see them as confirmation that you are providing reliable information. Internal links to earlier blog posts are also a good idea, but make it a point to include at least one external link in every post.

Digital Marketing Takes Time - Online marketing requires a fair amount of time, but you can hire third party services to do most of the marketing. Where blog content is concerned, hiring a third party will probably net better results anyway, since the providers will be aware of how and when to use SEO. Either way, expect 3 to 6 months before you see the effects of online marketing.

Starting a natural therapy business online requires a lot of work, but you will find tools and partners along the way, and the benefits of success are well worth the time you invest to achieve your goals.



ARTICLE #26

HOW TO GET CUSTOMER REFERRALS FOR YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS

Customer referral is probably the most effective and least expensive method of expanding your natural therapy business.

Other marketing strategies such as advertising and promotions require time and budget to implement, whereas it costs nothing for your existing customers to become your ambassadors and help spread the word. Plus research has shown that people trust recommendations from their friends much more than paid advertising.

So, how can you leverage the goodwill of your satisfied customers to get more referrals? Here are some tips to help you spread the word about your natural therapy services:

1. CUSTOMER SURVEY

The first step is to ascertain that your customers are satisfied with your service. Online surveys or feedback forms can help gain insights into the minds of your customers. You can identify your strengths and weaknesses and also unearth your most satisfied customers. Try to focus on this segment for getting referrals to help expand your business.

2. LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA

Often your happy customers want to help you, but they don't know how. It is important to provide them with an effective medium to help spread the word. Your social media platforms, including LinkedIn and Facebook, should regularly invite readers to interact with your brand and to write reviews. Recent Forbes research on referrals points to the fact that 31% of all customer referrals are now coming from social media.

3. DESIGN REFERRAL PROGRAMS

You can be innovative and design a referral scheme for your customers. You don't have to provide monetary incentives, but you can offer them complimentary services at your natural therapy centre, eBooks or other relevant articles on natural therapy as an incentive. After you have launched the program, check its performance, assess your return on investment and also check if your customers are showing interest and responding. Another measure is to check if the referrals are converting into additional customers. Based on your findings, you can fine tune the scheme as required.

4. HOST EVENTS

Another strategy for getting customer referrals is to host an event related to natural therapy. This can even be a virtual event like a podcast. Encourage your customers to invite other potential clients and interested participants. Such events can provide you with a valuable database of new customers, who have been invited by someone they know. You can have their undivided attention during the event, which can be used to your advantage. If you can showcase your offerings and unique services, you can certainly attract new customers. You can also combine new promotions and special offers to encourage them to try out your services.

5. OFFER THANKS

As customers are referred to your natural therapy services, always remember to thank the person who helped you. You can send a card or a personal email thanking your client for the referral. It is an excellent opportunity to build stronger bonds with your existing clientele who have become your brand ambassadors.

Thus, it is important to have a strategy to get customer referrals. But as you roll out the referrals program, you should be aware of the unhappy customer. Social media can be a boon or a bane. It basically provides an open forum. An unhappy customer has the ability to write negative feedback about your business. This can impact other potential customers who have been referred to your business. Hence, it is important to judge customer satisfaction through surveys and address the issues before hand.

Expanding your business through customer referrals has tremendous potential. This strategy can help you in the long run, as it is rooted in the fundamentals of organic growth, customer loyalty and trust.



ARTICLE #27

5 SMALL BUSINESS INTERNET MARKETING IDEAS FOR YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS AND 5 MISTAKES TO AVOID

It should not come as a surprise that the best marketing ideas for small businesses, including natural therapists, are connected with the internet.

As a tool for reaching new clients and customers, promoting your business online far surpasses traditional media such as radio, TV or newsprint. Just remember that every endeavour has limits or requirements that cannot be overlooked if you want to be successful.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media has become one of the most affordable ways to reach out to prospective clients. You can display the reliability of your practice through regular blog posts, helpful articles and videos that educate or entertain. In social media, the more friends and followers you have, the faster your popularity can grow as you are recommended to others and the word gets passed from person to person.

The thing to avoid with social media is trading in your reliability for sensationalism. Businesses that embark on the path of extremes soon discover that they have nothing left to attract new followers with, or that they have lost their trustworthiness in the eyes of their followers. With social media, the goal is to show your followers that you can be counted on to have the best information, value for money services or the best quality products.

2. AFFILIATE BUILDING

Join professional organisations or clubs. It never hurts to rub shoulders with your business peers, and forming alliances can be a huge boost for both practices. Organisations that support natural therapy can connect you with other professionals, offer advice on getting your business going, or even suggest third party services to help you achieve your goals.

Affiliated companies typically exchange website links to give relevance to one another, and a common mistake is to include links from companies that you know nothing about. It is always a good idea to verify a website and the links that connect you to it. If a potential partner seems to be concentrated on fly-by-night operations or page after page of semi-literate rubbish, do your own website a favour and decline linking to that site.

3. NATURAL THERAPY BLOG

Your practice needs a blog. It needs a way to share information, offer tips and strategies, and keep your clients and customers up to date with the goings on in your practice. To do that, you need to make regular, authoritative posts that give the reader something they can rely on. Since maintaining a blog requires a good deal of work, the task can be contracted with third party companies that will research and write relevant posts for you, typically including some degree of SEO in the process.

There are two things that have to be avoided once you start a blog. First, it is an imperative that your blog stays on topic and is reliable. If you are using a blog writing company, check the facts and writing style yourself to make sure that accurate information is being presented, and that every post meets or exceeds a minimum level of form, function and style.

4. ONLINE PRODUCT SALES

Selling products online was where internet marketing began, and your practice can benefit from the sale of related products as well. Whether you have a private brand of remedies or serve as a distributor for other manufacturers, keeping those products in front of potential buyers is paramount. To do so, use your full complement of online tools, including social media, your website, paid advertising and a robust email marketing strategy.

Beware of the inventory trap. The only time you should keep a large inventory on hand is when you are selling the products out of a bricks and mortar location. For online sales, it is far more lucrative to become a reseller for manufacturers so that purchases can be drop-shipped directly from the manufacturer to the consumer. Keeping a large inventory ties up your funds and has the potential of leaving you with cases of unsaleable products.

5. WEBSITE COMPATIBILITY

Websites have evolved over the years, and need to be compatible with a wide variety of internet-enabled devices. Your website should be viewable with a majority of web browsers, computer operating systems and even newer devices like tablets and smartphones. Since you cannot predict the device your next big client will be using, it is more profitable to ensure compatibility with a range of devices and designs.

Avoid the mistake of assuming that because your website looks great on one browser, it will look great on them all. This mistake is actually very common, and thousands of website owners have discovered that conforming to the popular norm, such as Internet Explorer, could mean the site works partially or not at all with other leading platforms like Firefox or Chrome. Site testing is crucial to the long term success of your site.

More than ever before, the secret to success lies in how well you undertake various online marketing functions. The ideas presented here will help you get in front of the people you want to reach, and avoid common mistakes that small business owners make. You know what your natural therapy practice means to you, and the internet will let you demonstrate that value to others.



ARTICLE #28

TOP 5 MARKETING OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR NATURAL THERAPY BUSINESS SUCCESS

Marketing has changed a lot over the past 20 years, moving more into the realm of online marketing and putting less emphasis on traditional media.

A natural therapy practice, for example, that does not have a website today is passing up on the increased exposure and severely limiting the reach of its marketing investment. Your local marketing is still imperative, but that should only be a portion of your objectives for the coming year.

1. BUILD YOUR BRAND

Building your brand involves setting your natural practice apart from other practices, and becoming active in ways that promote your services and products. In traditional media, this includes using billboards, radio and TV spots, typically pointing back to your website for further information. To be effective, your URL should name the practice or be easy to remember.

A thriving practice has a lot of repeat business, and previous clients are an excellent way to promote brand recognition. Digital marketing will bring previous customers back again using communication such as email. Natural therapy is well suited to methods such as online coupons and discounts, customer loyalty programs or a regular e-newsletter that keeps your clients informed and excited. Newsletters themselves are not new to marketing, and a hardcopy version should always be part of the complete marketing plan. However, digital publications can be targeted to potential clients in ways that printed media could never achieve.

2. EXPAND YOUR MARKETS

Traditional media is limited in its ability to reach specific demographics, but online marketing is designed for that very purpose. And because

digital advertising is more affordable, your marketing can be both diverse and broad ranging. Pay-per-click advertising will reach individual elements of your target market and funnel interested parties back to your website. And while PPC is not a new idea, paid advertising has reached the point where it can identify and reach out to those who are currently searching for a given product or service, and that is going to be an important tool in the near future.

3. KNOW YOUR COMPETITION

How are your competitors reaching out to new clients, and are you matching them move for move? In a global marketplace, you have to be on top of new tools, but you also have to stay in touch with the industry. Look at competing websites and ask yourself how you do this part better, or provide a better explanation for that procedure. Look for niches that you may have overlooked, services you can perform more efficiently, and visitors who are having trouble finding what they are looking for. Not only will studying the competition help you improve your own marketing objectives, it will reveal errors that your competitors are making that you will be able to completely avoid.

4. ANALYTICS ARE IMPORTANT

In digital marketing, analytics is the science of understanding patterns and trends. Once the realm of search engines alone, analytics are now used on social media platforms to find out what prospects are looking for and define the interests from placement in search results to being shared on social media.

Social media platforms like Facebook use different algorithms than a search engine, but the barrier between the two is fading. Facebook users are presented with an endless stream of advertisements that are picked to match their interests and their online searches.

That is why you may see an advertisement for the same pair of shoes you were looking at online earlier, or find yourself prompted by a company reminding you that this or the other product is still available. Social media is still using keywords and phrases, but it is also looking for recent online behavior, and tailoring the sidebar to match your known interests.

5. BUILD PROFESSIONAL ALLIANCES

Joining one or more professional affiliations will benefit your marketing objectives. Forming partnerships and alliances makes it possible for like-minded businesses to create a broader base, referring patients or exchanging professional ideas.

Successfully marketing a natural therapy practice can be achieved in a number of ways, and always with the ultimate goal of building the business name and increasing the bottom line. Examine every new marketing campaign carefully, taking note of the ROI, and refine your objectives throughout the year to take advantage of the methods that work best for you. Keep in mind that marketing methods are always in a state of flux, and be prepared to accept new ideas when they come along.



ARTICLE #29

HOW TO ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE USING GOOGLE ADWORDS: A BEGINNERS GUIDE FOR NATURAL THERAPISTS

Google AdWords is the most utilised and targeted online advertising method available today.

Google AdWords is Google's Pay per Click (PPC) advertising program that enables prospects to find you when they are looking for a therapist using targeted keywords. You can stay away from long term contracts and commitments for your online marketing with this cost effective advertising option, only paying for leads who click on your ad.

WHY MAKE GOOGLE ADWORDS PART OF YOUR ONLINE ADVERTISING STRATEGY

- **Control over cost:** Google Adwords is one of the least expensive online advertising options and you have the flexibility to set a suitable budget for your advertising campaigns as well as only having to pay for the clicks received from your ad.
- **Better ROI:** According to statistics, the return on investment (ROI) of PPC campaigns is around 400% to 1000%. In the therapist business the importance of high ROI is supreme.
- **Top search ranking:** According to studies, most people who use Google look don't look past page 1 of the search results. If your business is not on page 1 organically (non-paid ranking) for your most important keywords, Google AdWords can be used to achieve a page one result using paid advertising.
- **Quick results:** Getting organic traffic to your site means optimising your content, images and website architecture, which can take time. Paid traffic obtained through effective ad campaigns like Google AdWords produce immediate

positive results.

- Leads of a higher quality and quantity: Google AdWords direct prospects to your website by using highly targeted keywords and local information.

Use Google AdWords to get targeted leads to your business that are both high in quantity and quality. The best way to use Google AdWords is explained in the following steps:

STEP 1:

Decide your budget: Since Google AdWords gives you the power to control your campaign, you can set a daily spend limit that suits your budget and business size. You can start with as little as \$5 a day and gradually scale it up.

STEP 2:

Ensure quality: Experts insist that the quality of your ads decides the success of your Google AdWords campaign. To determine the quality of your ads, Google applies a 'Quality Score' to give you the ranking and the cost you pay for your ads. The quality is measured by the relevance of your ad to your business and website and will then rank your ad position accordingly. Aim to create ads that are highly relevant to your business, website and the ads landing page.

STEP 3:

Be creative: To get a high 'Click Through Rate' (CTR) your ads should be enticing, unique and relevant. Study the ads of some top ranking competitors and find a way to stand out. Your text must compel the prospect to click on the ad. Test different variations of format, text,

headlines and offers. Track which ads perform the best and get the highest number of clicks. Another good tip is to include your best performing keywords in your ad, either via the text of the headline.

STEP 4:

Choice of keywords: Keywords are the words people type into the Google search engine when searching for a product, service or information. By using the right keywords, you can direct these prospects quickly to your web page. The Google 'Keyword Tool' gives you a fair idea of different keywords and phrases and how competitive they are in AdWord campaigns. You can also find the cost of each keyword in accordance with your location to ensure the success of your AdWords campaign. You can even analyse the cost per click of different keywords giving you an estimate of how much your budget should be to achieve. Use the keyword planner to study statistics and find out which keywords are most relevant to your business, have strong search traffic and are not too expensive.

STEP 5:

Create location targeted campaigns: Google AdWords can be tailored to your local market with a sharp focus on your city and postcode or even a certain radius around your therapy centre. Being a natural therapist, your potential clients are the people living in your neighbourhood. That means you need to create a targeted ad campaign that will be shown only to people who are most likely to use your services.

STEP 6:

Test, review and revise: Having set up a good Google AdWords campaign for your natural therapy business, you are not done yet.

You need to make your therapy practice sustainable and grow by being watchful of ongoing trends and changes to keywords. Test your ads performance from time to time and make changes as necessary to ensure you stay ahead of the game.

When it comes marketing your natural therapist business you cannot afford to be complacent and lag behind. To thrive in the fast-paced online world which is rife with competition, it is more important than ever to implement a powerful and rewarding marketing strategy.



ARTICLE #30

TOP 10 CHECKLIST FOR DESIGNING YOUR NEW WEBSITE: A GUIDE FOR NATURAL THERAPISTS

As a natural therapist, launching your website can be the most crucial step. Since natural therapists follow the B2C (business to consumer) structure of marketing, there are various factors that should be taken into account before launching a website. Therefore, a quick checklist is what you need to make sure everything goes well.

One of the key areas to concentrate is the design and content. Content marketing will cover the best practices to promote services and products offered by a natural therapist to consumers using engaging, informative and useful content.

Since you would be speaking to consumers directly, without any intermediary, the language and nature of your website should be friendly and rational. After all, the emotional aspect of natural healing and wellbeing is the most important factor in this situation.

HERE'S A CHECKLIST OF 10 KEY POINTS TO BE NOTED:

#1: For all pages, make sure your website is responsive when viewed on desktop, tablet or mobile. Optimised experience across different layouts makes a website easy to access. Cross-browser and cross-device testing is mandatory. Ensure that the site runs fast and uses effective content and caching delivery networks. If you are selling natural products, make sure that the basket or cart is visible on all pages across the website. Checkout button should be large and obvious. A prominently visible Search box is necessary. Ensure that the process of signing up is easy.

#2: For the Home Page, make sure all services and products are visible. Use call to action words to encourage visitors to explore the site. Use imagery to clearly display your service, products and offerings. Include sections for Featured Products, Recommended section and Top Selling section.

#3: Check your Landing Pages. For specific promotion of products and services, landing pages are helpful. Dedicate pages to users, which will convert into much better returns. Check Headline, introductory text, banner images, product selection etc. Include badges, testimonials, and social proof to build trust. Use call to action words to help visitors purchase.

#4: Product/Service listing pages are also equally important. These pages comprise of list of products and services. Categorize the listing page if you have several categories to offer. Show proper stock availability details. Show offers and include multiple filtering and sorting options to speed up the selection process.

#5: Individual Pages are the face of any service or product offered. Since you are launching a natural therapy website, you will have a couple of services to offer. List those services and link them to respective pages where you will elaborate on the therapies and its benefits. Here, content is the most crucial factor to convince your readers and convert. You can add buttons like “save for later” or “wish list” for quick conversion.

#6: The Cart is where your visitors will purchase the service. Make sure it shows accurate stock levels and displays specifications of a particular service or product properly. Allow ease of updating items in to the cart and removing products and quantities. Show estimated time of delivery.

#7: Make the Checkout process short and easy. Avoid all unnecessary items and strip back the navigation feature. This will ensure that visitors are focused only on checking out. Help your guests' checkout without any hassle of creating an account. In case of services, ensure there is a proper channel for prior appointment and your website is responsive.

#8: Set up a blog where you can publish articles about the natural therapies you are offering and how it can benefit people.

A blog is the best way to pass on information about a certain brand or service to increase traffic. Use Facebook and Disqus along with other useful social networking links to ensure visitors like your post and share it often.

#9: Emails are another essential ecommerce staple, which ensures that visitors return to your site.

Send emails thanking users after they book an appointment or make a purchase. Always send a confirmation email. Whenever new services or products are launched, make sure you invite your customers via email to inform them. Always keep your customers informed.

#10: Ease of payment is another crucial link to convert your visitors into prospect customers. Allow Google Checkout or PayPal for off-site options of payment.

With the aforementioned checklist, you are just a step away from launching the most interactive and amazing new natural therapy website!



ARTICLE #31

HOW TO BECOME SUPER REFERABLE USING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Whether you want to reach the world or get in touch with your local community, social media is a valuable tool for your practice.

Unlike traditional print, radio and television, social media can be fine-tuned for individual marketing goals. There is a lot of work involved, and applied analytics are vital, but using social media to become super referable is worth the investment.

PEOPLE POWER

In a bricks and mortar location, word of mouth is a valuable tool for acquiring new customers. Social media is no different, and the goal is for your followers to share information with others and encourage them to become followers as well. The exponential power of sharing an experience with friends causes information to go viral, leading to thousands or even millions of new viewers. Encouraging loyal followers will promote your brand and make your company a more reliable source of information. People are the key to maximum exposure, and social media marketing helps you more accurately reach your target audience.

RELIABLE AND RELEVANT

For your website to rank at the top of website searches, it has to be relevant to specific search terms, and show a steady flow of click-through traffic from other sites. Using social media to promote your site, products or services makes you more visible to a greater number of people who are interested in your specific offerings, building traffic and relevance and ultimately helping to increase your search engine ranking.

SHARING AND SOCIALISING

How you use social media will affect what you get in return. Sites like Facebook or Instagram are fantastic locations to build your company image and stay in touch with your followers. Keep in mind that activity is important, as a steady stream of new content helps draw a continuous stream of new interest. Staying focused on your products or services builds brand identification and product recognition. Doing business online opens a whole world of possibilities, and you can reach your followers through any medium you wish, from blogs to instructional and how-to videos. Posting on popular topics and engaging with your readers will promote sharing, and that leads to an ever-growing network of potential clients.

BREAKING NEWS

Keep your public informed on developments, press releases, specials, industry trends and more using online services such as Twitter or Pinterest. Because a twitter message is short, millions of people use their smartphones as a twitter interface, including the customers you are trying to build a relationship with and the suppliers you want to consult. Twitter feeds tend to receive multiple posts during the course of a day, and that requires an investment of time, but the service has a global reach that can be very lucrative. Twitter is akin to broadcasting text messages, using the same 140 character limit, so keep your communications short and on topic. Topical tweets can fly like the wind, reaching far beyond your circle of followers.

SPECIAL DEALS

Social media makes it easier to get special offers and coupons in front of the customers who are looking for them. And when you

encourage visitors to spread the word, positive experiences will echo far and wide. On facebook, offer special discounts or merchandise for “likes and shares,” offer daily or weekly tips, and respond to comments or enquiries. You can be creative with specials deals, multi-item packages, or reduced costs for a specific number of customers. Social media is open to a million marketing ideas that you can implement yourself, and you will find helpful consultants available to assist you where you need it most.

MIX IT UP

Do not be afraid to try different approaches. To make the most of social media, your first objective is to put your name in front of people who are looking for your services. To test the effectiveness of simultaneous campaigns, issue special promo codes for each marketing plan, and calculate which ones give the best returns. And through it all, email should be in constant use, sending newsletters, asking for personal testimonials, and thanking previous clients for their business.

Social media will let you communicate with devoted clients and provide useful information to future ones. It demonstrates your relevance in your field, and tells people how to find you, what to expect and why their friends need to know it as well. Social media marketing puts the world at your fingertips, but focuses a majority of the contact with those who meet your marketing goals, including location, products, and professional services. Using social media marketing to promote your practice provides a greater yield on your marketing budget and shows the world that you are an authority in the field.