

# PracticeBuilding SuccessSystem

Helping Health & Wellbeing Practitioners

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Achieve Remarkable Business Results

The Step-by-Step Marketing System  
to Help Grow Your Natural Therapy Business

Step 03  
Create Your Marketing System

Module 03E

## Using Networking More Effectively

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## Introduction

Dear Therapist,

Networking can be an effective strategy to grow your natural therapy business. However, it is not one of the top three I recommend! The reason? Quite frankly, that is because there are other strategies that are generally far more effective and for me, I personally hate networking events with a vengeance! But that's just me ☺ you might be a networking legend!

Speaking, for example, allows you to really “strut your stuff.” It enables many more people to experience you, see you as an expert and gain a deeper understanding of how and why natural therapies can be so effective.

As another example, Strategic Alliances allow you to get “more bang for your buck.” In forming Strategic Alliances, you are exposed to many more people and get to benefit from the concept of leverage, without leaving the comfort of home.

I am not, however, saying that you should not use networking as a component of your Marketing Train. Rather, I encourage you to really understand why you are networking, determine how well it is working for you and complement it with other proactive marketing strategies.

Therapists often place too much emphasis on networking. This is challenging, because while networking can be learned, most people are either natural networkers or they are not. If you are a natural, great! Take advantage of your gifts and use networking to attract new clients. If networking is not one of your natural strengths, that's okay!

As a general rule therapists are extremely sensitive, highly intuitive gentle souls. To dump them in the middle of a bunch of strangers with a handfull of business cards is often not going to work so well. I find I start picking up the energy going on in the room, which of course is one of desperation to get business cards in other people's hands. I finally get up the courage to go over and start talking with a stranger and I start to build up confidence only to have it knocked down the moment they drop you like a hot cake to speak to the next person in their vision (the one they have been looking over your shoulder at for most of the conversation). What I've come to learn is that is a totally acceptable way to network, just hop around the room having empty meaningless conversations with people, pressing a business card in their hand and then getting onto the next person who looks slightly interesting. I end up with a whole load of goeey dark energy stuck to me with the added bonus of feeling like a failure. I hear a lot of therapists "shoulding all over themselves" when it comes to networking. Please, do not fall into this trap!

If you don't enjoy networking or if it is not one of your natural strengths and talents you have two basic options:

- 1) Do not use networking as one of your primary marketing strategies... It is okay!
- 2) Be comfortable with your natural networking abilities and use the strategies below to improve your skills and results. Learn to be a good networker and enjoy the process of learning. NO shoulds!

There are many terrific books that focus on how to maximise your networking effectiveness. This class is not designed to be comprehensive in teaching you to be a world-class networker. Rather, this module will help you to better understand networking as a marketing strategy and how it fits into a successful natural therapy practice in particular.

**In this class you will learn:**

- How to view networking as a long-term strategy and alleviate the pressure to produce short-term results.
- That networking is not the best marketing strategy for most people. This is okay. You do not "need" to network, and quite frankly, there are plenty of other ways to grow your practice!
- When you change your expectations about networking, you open up a whole new dimension of possibilities and feel much better about the process!
- Networking has nothing to do with you. It is about others. It is about serving.
- How to virtually guarantee effective, worthwhile networking, when you focus on your Target Market and Niche.

I know this class may be a bit different than what you expected, in that it does not *teach you* how to be an effective networker per se... That is by design! Use this class to determine whether networking fits on your Marketing Train. Once you make that decision, you can focus on improving your networking skills as desired.

Good luck, have fun and email me with your networking successes!

Be Remarkable



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## Definition/Overview

For the purposes of this program, I refer to Networking as a marketing strategy to grow your natural therapy practice. Specifically, going to networking events and interacting with people who need and want what your service provides.

It is important to look at the distinction between the verb “networking” and the noun “network.”

Networking as a verb is the way most people use the term. It refers to interacting with others for the specific objective of growing your business.

To assist you in thinking of networking as a longer-term marketing activity, I ask that you expand your thinking and also view network as a noun. As a noun, the word network is a “large and widely distributed group of people or things that communicate with one another and work together as a unit or a system.” When you network, you are not just meeting the people at that one event, you are potentially connecting with their entire network!

When you expand your thinking to focus on the possible opportunities derived from a limitless network of people, it will take the pressure off of feeling like you “need” to make a sale at a networking event.

Instead, you can enjoy networking events as an opportunity to meet new and exciting people. Appreciate the energy of the room and learn from the guest speaker. Then, when you meet people and articulate your Who and What, either they will want and need what your therapy provides or they might know someone who does!

Many therapists do not enjoy networking because they feel that they need to make a sale, impress the person they are talking to, garner interest and make an impact. No wonder a lot of therapists don't like networking! When you take the pressure off - networking is a lot more fun!

## Benefits of Networking

As mentioned earlier, for many therapists there are often better ways to market your natural therapy practice than networking. I become concerned when I hear about therapists getting involved with three or more networking groups. They are always going to meetings... doing, doing, doing... moving, moving, moving... on this board, on that committee, working on this project, etc.

I caution you to be careful and not over extend yourself with networking activities if you are not getting the results you want. And, with that said, there are tremendous benefits to networking, as outlined below. I challenge you to reflect on these and add benefits of your own. The more focus and intent you create personally (vs. just reading this material), the more benefit you will receive.

## Secure Clients

Interestingly, when I asked about the benefits of networking, nobody says, "to get clients." Perhaps that is because this benefit seems so obvious?

Of course **you can and will secure clients from networking**. This is one of the big benefits of networking! And even though this is a benefit, I encourage you to focus on using networking "to secure Two for One Assessment Consultations" instead of "getting clients." When you view networking in this light, you see that it is one step in a marketing SYSTEM and it helps reduce the pressure for immediate results.

Here is an example of someone who got a newsletter sign up from networking:

Networking Event → Invite to join newsletter → Promote free seminar in newsletter → Deliver seminar and give value → Offer Two for One Sessions in seminar → Do Sessions → Secure client!

Do you see how attending a networking event can lead to a client over time? If a therapist bases their success solely on whether they secured a client from the event, they would have considered it a "failure." Once in failure mode, you will attract more failures to your practice. We need you to be feeling like a winner all the time to attract other winning opportunities.

## Exposure / Referrals

A great way to view networking is as an opportunity for exposure. The more people you interact with who want and need what you have to offer, the more your business will grow. The key is to choose the right networking events. More on that later.

## Practice

How good are you now at articulating your Who and What? Do you communicate with charisma, passion and conviction? I bet that you could use the practice! Throughout the Abundant Private Practices, Practice Building Success System I talk about the importance of professional posture. Well, networking events are a terrific place to practice. Trust me, the more you are forced to communicate to people exactly what you do, and how you do it, the better you will become. You will know instantly if your message is impacting people the way you want it to.

## Greater Understanding of Your Target Market

Do not underestimate the power of better understanding your target market by attending networking events. You will learn a tremendous amount! Wouldn't you like to fully understand the needs, struggles, aches and pains, hot buttons, and challenges of people in your target market? You can learn these things by networking!

How do you learn these things? Pay attention. Ask questions. Listen. All things that therapists are great at! What kind of speakers do they attract? What are the speakers speaking about? Listen in and benefit from conversations.

### **Give Value**

Throughout the Practice Building Success System, I emphasise the importance of giving value. The more you give, the more you will receive. Imagine asking yourself before every networking event, "How can I serve today? What can I give? How can I add value?"

Do you see the difference between this and "How can I get a client? How do I get Two for One Assessment Consultations? What should I talk about? How do I get people interested in me?"

Focus on giving value. Listen. Be a therapist. You will have a lot more fun and get better results!

### **Energy and Momentum**

As therapists, we are naturally "people" people – we are interested in people or we wouldn't be doing what we do. If you aren't naturally interested in people, then I suggest you try another occupation because eventually the people will do your head in! Therapists want to interact, connect, touch, talk, socialise, laugh but at a deep level. Don't be afraid to ask powerful questions when networking, let people see how gifted you are.

Most of us do not want to spend all day, every day stuck in our treatment room treating clients. We want to get out and enjoy human contact! This, in and of itself, is a great reason to network! Think about how you will benefit personally, professionally, spiritually, socially and intellectually when you interact in a safe and friendly environment with other like-minded individuals.

Also be aware there are many different types of networking. I have a virtual network called The Health and Wellbeing Practitioners Network. Don't underestimate the power of a virtual network. There are people on my network who would be perfect strategic alliance partners for your practice and they are ready and willing to form strong relationships with others because I have already taught them the importance of relationships in business.

You can visit my forum here: <http://wellbeingwinners.ning.com/>

### **Important Note on the Benefits of Networking**

A word of caution: I highlight some of these benefits to help spur your thinking about the reasons why you might be networking. If you are networking for reasons other than to get clients, great! Just be sure you acknowledge the reasons why you are networking. Be okay with it and no "shoulds!" Also, be sure you are still doing your other proactive marketing strategies and not tricking yourself into thinking this is one of them if it really isn't! (Wink! ;-)

## How To Network Effectively

You sure know me by now... It's all about laying out a step-by-step plan. I believe that following this structure will enable you to create the right mindset for networking and achieve far greater results and more fun in the process!

### Step 1: Alter Your Expectations

The first step in using networking to grow your practice is to alter and set your expectations. Instead of thinking, "I am going to get a client," adopt a long-term approach. Review the list of benefits above and focus on results other than just getting clients. This will allow you to be more expansive, less attached to the outcome, more focused on providing value and more attractive!

This is a very, very important first step. As simple as it may sound, it is everything in determining your results.

### Step 2: Set Your Intent

Once you have set your expectations, if you are a goal-setter, it is time to set some goals! Appropriate goals might be to secure two Two for One Assessment Consultations, meet five people who want to subscribe to your newsletter, or simply to make a connection with five people at the event.

Also, remember to focus on other ways networking can benefit your business. For example, you can use networking to secure leads for speaking engagements, meet potential strategic alliance partners, generate referrals or learn about services or resources you need in your own business.

### Step 3: Focus on Your Who and What

This is by far the most critical step! If you want to enjoy success from networking, it is IMPERATIVE that you network with people in your target market, people who want and need what your therapy provides.

You should be very clear on WHO you treat (your target market) and WHAT you do for those people (your niche). If you have not yet identified your Who and What, please do so before you spend time networking.

This is critical in order to:

- Choose the most effective networking opportunities.
- Be effective at the networking event.

Over the last several years I've heard many people, including myself say "networking does not work for me." When I begin to ask some questions, about 70% of the time, these therapists are not networking with the proper group of people. In other words, the majority of the people at the networking event are not in their target market. They do not want or need what the therapist has to offer. In which case you might as well be at home with your family.

Here is an example:

Marie is a professional coach who specialises in helping single working mothers balance their personal and professional lives. She networks on a monthly basis with 4 groups: the Chamber of Commerce, the local ICF Chapter, the Rotary Club and a BNI group (Business Network International).

Coach Donna's specialty is the same. She networks with Parents Without Partners, Single Moms International, and she is on the board of The National Association of Single Working Mothers. She also attends her local ICF meetings to keep in touch with her fellow coaches.

Who do you think is going to grow their coaching business more effectively through networking?

It is almost comical to see, isn't it? Of course Donna will have more success.

I could go on and on and on and on again! :-)) about the importance of your networking being congruent with your Who and What. I cannot emphasise this enough!

The KEY is to choose networking organisations that are congruent with your Who and What. Whilst creating this module, I came up with the following thought to paint this picture. It's goofy and simple, but hopefully gets you to see very clearly the importance!

"When you fish in a small pond LOADED with fish, you do not even need to be a good fisherman!"

#### **Step 4: Test Different Networking Opportunities**

Since networking can take time, it is imperative that there is a fit between the places you network and your Who and What. Are their members potential clients? Are they interested in their health and wellbeing? You must determine this before you join an association and spend a great deal of time there.

I find that within two visits, you should be able to effectively determine if a particular organisation or networking opportunity is a good use of your time.

It helps tremendously if you are personally in your target market! This makes joining associations far easier. For some, you need to fit the profile. For others, this need not be the case. The only way to find out is to research and call in advance. Most will allow you to come a time or two before they require you to join. Many do not even require membership.

The big secret I'm going to let you in on is that you "should" (and you know I don't should on people easily) be having FUN while you are networking. I can hear the howls of discomfort as I write that – how can networking be fun you ask? Well if you have identified a niche you are truly passionate about, you will be surrounded by people who make your heart sing. Just last week I spoke to the Australian Institute of Kinesiology. The people I met there were fantastic

and every single person I spoke with had an interesting story and were interested in what I did. These are all people I would be happy to have around to my house for a barbeque. They filled me up when I was actually tired and had driven for two hours in rush hour traffic to get there. I left them feeling really good.

I talk about an Osteopath in the 90 Day Challenge who works with bike riders. He is one himself so wherever he goes he is networking, but he never has to do those horrible registration tables and that awful few minutes when you have to walk into a bunch of strangers. He just turns up on his bike and starts talking to people. To get a client he only needs to look for the person limping or carrying and injury. He could walk up to them and ask them how they did it. Let me tell you, when something hurts you want the world to know. If you know how you can help someone with an injury, give them a few tips and they will be in your treatment room the following day. I know an acupuncturist who is a natural star at this. She is a people person so she asks them about themselves. They tell her something. She says "show me your tongue", with a bit of coaxing they do, she gives them two or three facts about the way they are feeling and they are begging for a business card because they know she understands what is wrong with them.

#### Step 5: Network!

As I mentioned earlier, this is not a module on exactly how to be a star networker. There are complete books on this subject. Hopefully you see that when you do all that I have described throughout this module, there is less pressure on you to perform.

Think about the "fishing metaphor" I gave above. Sure, learning to be a great networker may be a valuable next step for you. And, do you see how if you...

- are clear on your Who and What,
- feel confident and passionate about your modality and your treatments and the benefits it can provide,
- attend Networking events that are filled with your target market,
- enjoy basic conversation and don't simply hide in a corner all night,

that you can enjoy results from Networking? Of course!

The last tip is the biggest one of all. Don't stand in the corner all night. I was once told this piece of valuable information by a star networker. The action is in the middle of the room, not on the outside. Most people go to networking events and don't get six foot past the registration table. The movers and shakers know this fact and they move through the crowd to either the back or the middle of the room. Make certain when you network that you move away from the edges of the room and into the middle. We all know the safety is in the corners because our backs are protected but to be successful networkers, we need to get into the middle of the room.

Finally, as much as I talk throughout this module about giving value, having a long-term perspective, setting realistic expectations, etc., **do not be bashful about articulating what you do for clients, who you do it for and how you do it!** Sound familiar? This is why you are at the networking event to begin with!

If you are at the right event, with the right people, if you are confident yet humble, articulate and passionate about what you do, and you resonate with a spirit of love and giving, TRUST ME, people will be attracted to you!

When you attend networking events that are not congruent with your Who and What, **do not try to be all things to all people.** When people inquire about what you do, use your Who/What Statement.

For example, "I am a life coach. I specialise in helping single mothers balance their professional career with their desire to be a great mom." Do not worry if the person in front of may be a married businessman! He will likely know someone who fits your Who and What. Moreover, if you follow the guidelines and are attending the "right" networking events, the majority of the people there will be in your target market!

## Critical Success Factors

Below are some of the keys to successful networking. Use this list to spur your thinking as you focus on your own unique "critical success factors" for networking!

### Get Involved / Contribute

I challenge you to evolve past belonging to organisations and actually contribute. You will find that this takes more time and energy. But, I would rather see you be more selective with your networking, limit your scope to one-three, go deeper, and play more of a role in one of them.

As you get involved with associations, you become more well known. Also, your credibility rises, as you are viewed as a leader and giver.

### Change Your Focus: The Focus of Giving

Fred goes to networking events thinking things like...

"I hope I get a client from this."

"My goal is to get 7 two for one sessions."

"What can I say that will make people want to hire me?"

"I am going to try to talk to 9 people tonight and tell them what I do."

Charlie goes to networking events thinking the following...

"How can I serve people tonight?"

"I am going to like everybody at this event."

"I am going to explore ways to help people."

"I am excited to learn about others and support them in any way I can."

Do you see how the first scenario is about Fred? It is all about him and what he wants. Also, do you see how his goals are short term? In the latter example, Charlie genuinely wants to help people. His thinking is more long-term and more about serving.

Not only will Charlie enjoy himself far more, he will also enjoy far greater results!

You are better to have two deep and meaningful conversations than flit about the room having shallow conversations with many. People need to get a sense of who you are and what you can do for them. Really let people get a feel for what you do and if you get the slightest hint that you know something about their health and well-being that will help them, share it immediately.

### **Follow-Up!**

Following up is another important factor that will have a huge impact on your success. Too many people go to networking events, meet people, get business cards and then don't do anything with them. Consider sending handwritten follow-up notes. If that doesn't work for you, then send an email.

Also, don't forget to invite people to subscribe to your free newsletter. Make the effort to follow up and do what you can to "keep them on your train" so you can continue connecting with them in the future and building a relationship over time.

### **Professional Setting**

There is also a distinction between networking and socialising. After all, it's not called "Netsocialise!" It's Networking! Sure, you can and should have fun while networking, but let's not forget the purpose in terms of marketing: to grow your business. By choosing networking events that cater to your Who and What and showing up as a professional who serves that particular group you maximise your networking effectiveness.

### **Resource**

Robyn Henderson is an absolute expert on the topic of networking. If you want to learn the "how to's" of networking then I strongly recommend you visit Robyn's website and purchase one of her books, ebooks or audio programs.

<http://www.networkingtowin.com.au/>

## Plan Your Networking Strategy

Do you intend to use networking as part of your long-term marketing system? If so, use this sheet to plan out your strategy for effective networking.

**The people I want to network with are: (i.e.: examples of people in your target market)**

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**Ideas I currently have for networking opportunities are:**

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**My next steps are:**

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**The concerns or challenges I have about networking are:**

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## Gratitude Sheets

This week I am grateful for:

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