

PracticeBuilding SuccessSystem

Helping Health & Wellbeing Practitioners

Achieve Remarkable Business Results

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

Step 03
Create Your Marketing System

Module 03G

How to Get the Most from Your Website

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Introduction

Dear Therapist,

When I first started to develop a web site I got very hung up over where it “lived”. I didn’t even know where a website lived. Now I know but don’t care! Over the years I have created four websites (with technical help from my dear friend David White web designer guru extraordinaire). I’ve learned a lot from those four projects and I wish I knew then, what I know now!

This workbook has been designed with that in mind. I want to shorten your learning curve and give you the information and resources you need to create a highly effective website that is a perfect “car” for your unique Marketing Train.

In this class you will learn:

- Why 95% of therapists benefit from having a website.
- The steps for developing and launching your website.
- How to determine the objective and scope of your website.
- Whether to do it yourself or hire someone.
- How to find the right web designer/developer.
- The Critical Success Factors for the key areas of a website:
 - Design
 - Content
 - Having your site work for you
 - Updating
 - How to attract well paying clients to your website
 - And more!

Developing, launching, maintaining and promoting a website can be a big project. And, it shouldn’t overwhelm or intimidate you. Having a website is an important part of your Marketing Train and this class will help put you on the right track! (ha ha :-)

Be Remarkable



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Benefits of Having a Website

In general, I recommend that you have a website for your natural therapy business. In today's world it is almost expected that you have a website for your business and there are many, many benefits of having a website. Now, with that said, I want you to remember what you learned in the first class of this Module. In that class on the Marketing Train I talked about the importance of focusing on your Engine marketing activities. These are active marketing strategies, like speaking, networking and conducting grassroots marketing.

As important and beneficial as a website is, alone it rarely brings a therapist business, unless you have high search engine ranking or a well defined google adwords campaign with great search criteria. So, if you don't yet have a website, definitely plan to add one in the future, but DO NOT let not having a website hold you back or take you away from active marketing!

Why 95% of therapists benefit from having a website:

- Provides credibility.
- People around the world can find you.
- Serves as a 24/7 billboard that sells for you.
- You can change it as often as you want.
- Virtually eliminates need for printed brochures.
- People get to know and like you before they contact you.
- A website is a relatively small investment that provides a big return.
- Provides the ability to earn passive revenue.

How to Launch Your Website

In this section I outline the steps for launching your website. For many people, a first website can be a daunting task. Perhaps you are wondering where to start. Go through these five steps and really think about what you want. Gaining clarity in these five areas before you start will make the entire process much smoother, easier and more enjoyable!

Step 1: Determine the Objective of Your Website

A website can be a BIG project. One of the keys for website success is determining in the beginning how big of a project you want and need it to be. I find that there are three main "levels" of websites.

If you are launching your first website, I generally recommend starting out at Level I. If you are looking to upgrade and further develop your site, give some thought about whether you want to be at Level II or Level III.

Level I: Basic - Electronic Brochure

The Level I website is basically an electronic brochure. This is a great place for a first website. You can always expand your Level I website in the future and grow into a Level II or Level III website.

Recommended pages for a Level I website:

- Home Page
- Services
- About You
- Success Stories
- Contact
- Newsletter Sign Up

Level II: More Comprehensive – Site Starts “Working” For You

A Level II website is more comprehensive. It is an opportunity for you to position yourself as an expert. This is accomplished by providing value and giving people reasons to visit your site more frequently. It enables you to build relationships with potential clients and gives people multiple reasons and proof why they should hire you.

Ideas on components of Level II websites:

- More Value-Add Content
- More Interactivity (give them something to do)
- Articles/Past Issues of Newsletters
- Calendar of Events
- Resources
- Free Reports
- Audio Clips
- Weblog
- Discussion Boards

Level III: Full E-Commerce Site – Passive Revenue Generator

The main distinction between a Level II and Level III website is that a Level III website has e-commerce capabilities. Having a Level III website is exciting! This is when you actually start making money while you sleep.

The main components of having a Level III website are having a shopping cart service (I use <http://www.1shoppingcart.com/app/?pr=1&id=81707>) – more details in the resources section) and having products to sell.

Ideas on things you can sell from your Level III website:

- Physical products (books, booklets, CDs, Tape Sets)
- E-Books, E-Booklets
- Teleclass and workshop sign-up
- Audio classes
- Membership sites

Step 2: Determine Your General Website Content

Once you have decided what “Level” website you would like to develop, the next step is to determine the number of pages and general website content.

Below is a list of web pages often found on a therapist website:

- Home Page
- Services
- About the Therapist
- Success Stories
- Contact
- Newsletter Sign Up
- Articles/Past Issues of Newsletters
- Calendar of Events
- Resources
- Free Stuff
- FAQ
- About Natural Therapies
- Fees/Pricing
- Speaking Information
- Media Room

To get started all you need do is to create a ‘Word’ document and head up a separate page for each heading or page you are going to have on your website.

Then just write your website copy under each of the headings. Yes – it is that simple. I nearly made myself sick trying to work out how to get my first site live. When someone finally told me that this was all I had to do I was ready to cry.

Your website designer will then cut and paste the words you have written in your ‘Word’ doc into the appropriate pages in your website and bingo – you are live!

Step 3: Do It Yourself OR Hire Someone?

Now comes the step that often causes people anguish! Many newer therapists are on a limited budget and therefore often want to develop their website themselves. This can be a great thing to do, IF you have a good eye for design, have an understanding of website technology (or really want to learn it) and you have a lot more time than money.

In general, though, I typically recommend hiring a professional to develop your site and then learn how to make text updates yourself. This last step is critical – NEVER hire a web designer that does not have a system in place that will allow you to update your site once it's finished. You can have a Level I website developed for well under \$1,000 and just doing all the things you need to do (i.e.: determining the number of pages, writing the content, deciding on colors, etc.) will take a tremendous amount of time.

Thinking of doing it yourself? Ask yourself the following:

Do you enjoy computers and technology?

Do you have a good eye for design?

Do you have a lot of time to spend developing your website?

Is your business-building time best spent on developing your website (as opposed to engaging in some other marketing activity)?

Do you like to have a lot of control?

Do you want to update it yourself?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, you are a candidate for doing it yourself!

How to find the right web designer/developer:

When looking for a web designer/developer it is always best if you can get a referral. Ask people you know who have websites if they were happy with their designer. Visit other websites and email the owner and ask if they would recommend their designer. For people who are more price sensitive you might want to barter for web design. Be very certain that you get the website before you start giving away your services. If you are going down this track, please know exactly what you want and how long it is going to take and on what day the finished product will be developed.

Ideally, you want to work with a web designer who has expertise in these three areas:

1. Experience building a technically well functioning site.
2. Experience creating a visually attractive layout and design.
3. Understanding of search engine rankings and sales and marketing.

The last point is critical, because many designers enjoy creating visually attractive sites with lots of fancy bells and whistles, that often detract from the marketing effectiveness of the site.

When interviewing web designers ask the following questions:

Will you show me how I can update the site myself? (Assuming you want to.)

Will the site be built to expand and grow in the future?

What type of update support do you provide?

What are your rates and availability for future updates and additions?

What experience have you had developing sites for other service-based professionals?

Will the site be search engine friendly?

Step 4: Create Your Master Web Plan

By the time you get to Step 4 you should know the objective/scope of your website. You should have an outline of the core content and have either decided to develop it yourself or you have met with a designer and are ready to make a final decision and get started!

One of the keys to having your web project go smoothly is using your project management skills. In particular:

1. Determine Budget/ Project Cost

This is especially critical when working with a designer. Before the project starts have a detailed conversation with your designer about exactly what is included in the quoted fee. For example, if you are quoted a set fee, ask how many initial designs you will be given and how many revisions to the initial design are included. If the designer charges hourly (verses having a set project fee), ask for a written estimate on the number of hours required.

2. Create a Master Task List with Milestone Dates

Sit down and identify all the necessary tasks that you and your web designer must do in order for your website to launch. For example: determining the master template/look and feel, writing the content for all of the pages, selecting and registering your domain name, choosing a web hosting company, selecting a service for your newsletter, etc. When creating your target milestone dates be sure to give yourself enough time to get feedback on the design and the content before you launch your site!

3. Set a Target Launch Date and Add 1-2 Months

Creating and launching a website always takes longer than you think! Know this in advance and put some “cushion” time in your master schedule.

Step 5: Implement Your Master Web Plan

If you have gone through the first four steps all that is left is to implement your plan! As you are working on your site keep these guidelines in mind:

1. Follow the recommendations below when developing your content and design.
2. If marketing writing is not your forte, get help with your content and visit other successful therapists' websites for ideas.
3. Get your content as "good" as possible before giving to web designer. It is a lot easier and more cost effective if you make edits and changes before the content is placed in the site.
4. Have patience and remember you can change and modify your website over time. Everything does not need to be "perfect" in order for your website to launch!

Useful Tips to Make Your Website Work

It's Your Website – Make It About You

- Have a picture of you looking at your visitor or doing something interesting
- Have previous clients tell your visitors about you

Write directly to the reader

- Use I and you
- Write as if they are in the room with you

Have a killer grab line at the top

- You only have a few seconds for the reader to decide to stay – a grab line at the top is how they decide

Benefit laden websites work

- Features vs benefits – tell them HOW you can help them not about your modality. This concept is key, most therapists talk about their modality and themselves and leave very little space for the visitor. Check the way you visit websites and keep that in mind as you write your copy.

Make it easy to Navigate

- Navigation is always on the left hand side or across the top
- Easy to understand page names
- Don't make it a task to find the navigation

Make it easy for people to find you

- Once you have a website stamp it on everything

Make it easy for you to stay in touch

- Don't even bother with a website if you don't have a mechanism to collect their email address

Make it easy for Search Engines to find you

- Keywords need to be repeated in the text of your home page
- Search Engine's love site maps
- Never use splash pages
- Never use Flash
- SE's love simplicity and up to date relevant content

Use a Simple Visual Appeal

- Black font on a white background
- Use visuals toward the bottom of a page so they can be loading while the visitor reads the top part of the page
- Use warm appealing colours

Sound Professional Right From the Start

- Get a professional sounding email address and domain name

In fact the name of your website will help determine your search engine ranking. Think about what people might key into a Google search string and perhaps see if your can purchase a domain name that reflects what people may be searching for. The clearer your domain name explains what you do, the easier it is going to be to get people to visit your site.

Keys for a Successful Website

There are four main areas that determine the success of your website: the design, the content, having it “working” for you and keeping it updated. Below I identify the Critical Success Factors in each of these four areas. Keep these in mind as you develop your first site or evolve it over time!

Design

It is critical that your website have a professional look and feel. If you can create this yourself, great! If not, it is worth investing in the services of a professional who will make your website look professional. As you work on the design keep these questions in mind:

- Is your website professional, attractive and inviting?
- Does the design appeal to your WHO & WHAT?
- Does the design fit with your personal branding and business identity?
- Is your website fast-loading? Have all of your graphics been optimised to be as small as possible?
- Have your graphics been properly labelled and optimised for searching and for the visually impaired?
- Is your design clean and simple? Have you eliminated anything that is distracting from your core message and purpose of each particular page?
- Do the graphic elements (pictures, logos, icons, etc.) add to the site or detract from it?
- Do you have good usability? Does the navigation system make sense and is your site laid out in a logical way?
- Is your site readable on different computers and operating systems? Are you using readable fonts? Does your website “fit” within a regular-sized computer screen? Does your website view well on a mobile phone screen?
- Are people able to find what they need on your site?
- Is your contact information easy to find? Have you included a phone number and email address?
- Have you included a way people can sign up for your newsletter. This is probably the one biggest reason to have a website so you can stay in touch with your visitor because they will only return if you give them a reason to come back.

Content

Concise, well-written content, or copy is key to the success of your website! Write your website copy as if you are speaking directly to the reader, as if you are having a conversation with them. Really speak to the reader! Use the word “you” and ask questions. Focus on the results/benefits your therapy provides and/or the problems your therapy solves. If you were your ideal client, what information would you want to see? What would compel you to contact the therapist?

Home Page Copy: The goal of your home page is to capture the visitor’s interest and attention. You need a killer headline that will get their attention and make them read further. What you have on your home page determines whether or not the visitor will click into your site. You have a maximum of thirty seconds to make them stay. I hear spirits dropping as you read that last sentence, but just think about how you visit web sites. If it doesn’t attract you very quickly and take your interest will you will click away? Web visitors have become very discerning and easily distracted these days. You need to win them very quickly or they are gone. You don’t need to tell them everything on the home page, just enough so they want to know more. Then make it easy for them to find the page with the information they want next.

‘About You’ Copy: On the page about you be personal. Include your picture, a professional bio and some personal information. The more they connect with you, the more chance you have of them liking you and wanting to work with you.

Provide Proof: Include client testimonials, success stories, case studies, industry statistics or reports that demonstrate that your natural therapy can deliver the results you are promising.

Provide Value: Include articles you have written, links to other sites, resources, assessments, book recommendations, etc.

Use Compelling Headers: Most people scan websites. Use headers in each section of your site that clearly state the benefits to the reader. Bulleted headers with indented text underneath is great because most visitors read websites by scanning down the page and dropping into anything that peaks their interest. If you have lots of short interesting headers, then you are more likely to have them read your content.

Make Your Site Work for You

The big difference between a Level I website and Level II and III is that in the higher levels your website really starts “working” for you. And even at Level I I recommend you give visitors the opportunity to at least sign up for your free newsletter. Here are some of the many ways you can make your website work for you:

Have a free newsletter sign up. This is not an option, this is a must have so you can implement your Ezine strategies you learnt in the last module.

Use a free report/ebook/assessment as a give-away that also includes a free subscription to your newsletter. If your free give-away is of real value this will dramatically increase the growth of your newsletter list.

The more value you provide the more your website will work for you.

Test your order process. Is it working well? Are you maximising sales? Have you answered all of the questions a buyer might want to know?

Have you done search engine optimisation? Do you have the right keywords strategically placed on your site to increase the chances of being found by search engines? Are you listed in the main search engines?

Search Engine Ranking

Most people get very excited when their website goes live and they sit back and wait for the thousands of enquires that are going to overload them from their website. How do I know this? I was one of those people. I stressed and toiled over my first website (which isn't even live any more) and thought I'd be inundated with people. Then someone told me I'd have to optimise it for search engines and then started talking about spiders crawling through it. Let me tell you I have enough trouble with spider webs at the cute house, I sure didn't want any appearing on my website!

These days the spiders are very smart and discerning, different from the ones that seem to pick any corner in the cute house and begin to spin webs. Search Engine spiders are looking for certain criteria and are constantly trying to determine if your site is legitimate, is meeting the criteria entered by people searching the web and is providing value for the reader.

What is really scary is that this happens in a milli-second so you have to have the red carpet rolled out and ready for a visit from these royal spiders or they simply move to the next site.

Things they specifically look for are:

Domain name has some relevance to your content.

For example www.margaretgill.com didn't rank very well for ages until I realised my name wasn't mentioned on the home page. It wasn't until I included a testimonial that started with "In the 12 months I worked with Margaret Gill" that I got to number one in google. DUH! These little tips really make the difference and when choosing the name of your business the first thing you need to consider is how that name will rank in the search engines and will people type it in as a search string.

How many years you have signed up for your domain name

Many dodgy fly by night websites are only up for a few months and then they move on. Search Engine's love web sites that have been around a while. When you purchase a domain name, always ensure you pay for it for at least two years.

Key words match content

You need to ensure that the words you have as key words on each page are repeated in the text on your page. For instance, if you have acupuncture as a keyword, make sure you have that word in the text and preferably in your domain name too. This is when it gets really powerful and your search engine rankings start to soar.

Site Maps

Search Engines love data that is logical, structured and easy to understand. A site map helps the spiders quickly see what your site offers and the relevance to the key words and domain name. Remembering that this process is totally automated and occurs very quickly, if you can make it easy for the Search Engine to rank, then it will be able to store and retrieve that information really quickly.

Text

Ensure your site is very text friendly. The general rule is, if you can't cut and paste the text, a search engine can't find the text. A friend paid big dollars for her beautiful site which turned out to be a big jumble of jpg files. All the text was imbedded in photo files which of course a search engine isn't the slightest bit interested in. It made it almost impossible for her to change the text on the site too because she needed to have someone to convert the text to images and load the image.

Keeping Your Site Up to Date

While you don't need to change your website every week, it is important that it stays fresh and alive. Once you have launched your website be sure to review it carefully every couple of months.

Do you have new testimonials you can add?

Is all of the information accurate?

What changes or additions would you like to make in the future?

Having an obviously outdated website is almost worse than having no web presence at all!

Do you have events you can add such as workshops or teleclasses?

Have you written articles that can be included?

Have you interviewed people in your target area and can have the audio available for people to listen to?

Can you include your newsletters that you have so diligently written over?

Do you have a YouTube clip you can include?

Have you started a blog or forum you can include a link for?

Common Mistakes

Below are the five most common mistakes I see therapists make with regard to their websites. Don't let these happen to you!

Mistake #1: Too much about the therapist. Nothing about the visitor!

You know a therapist has made this mistake when the homepage is all about them and doesn't speak to the reader. Avoid this mistake by focusing on the problems your potential clients have and the results/benefits your therapy can provide

Mistake #2: Being all things to all people

This happens a lot when therapists launch their website before identifying their WHO and WHAT. They are not specific about the results or benefits their therapy provides and the copy doesn't really speak to the reader because they didn't have a certain client type (WHO) in mind when it was written.

Mistake #3: Never Evolving to a Level II or III Website

Many therapists websites start at Level I and never progress to Level II or III. This is a shame, because as your business grows you almost always have more value you can provide to your website visitors. Remember, the more value you provide and the more you position yourself as an expert the more effective your website will be.

Mistake #4: Going Too Big in the Beginning and Not Updating

This is the opposite of Mistake #3. It is the therapist who has initial plans for a very extensive and comprehensive site, but it never gets completed. Pages say "coming soon" for months. Or if the initial site gets completed it is too big of a task to keep up to date. Be sure to only bite off as much as you can chew! A basic site will serve you well for at least a year while you learn and understand how to drive visitors to the site. Then you can start adding the hoots and whistles but like me you might keep your basic site and focus on the back end of the system so you can sell products and services on the site.

Mistake #5: Doing it Yourself Instead of Having Your Site Professionally Designed

I am a big proponent of getting professional help for the overall design of a website. Too many therapists don't truly consider the true "cost" in terms of time, quality and opportunity cost when they do it all themselves and end up with an ugly looking unprofessional site that people click away from quickly.

Resources

Web Developers

David White, a friend who doesn't officially "do" sites anymore but with the right amount of pressure might still help out. <http://www.whiteadvice.com/>

Pommymike, another friend who builds basic functional sites. He will keep it updated for you or you can update it yourself. www.pommymike.com Warning he a bit quirky as you might expect from a friend of mine but he is 100% reliable and will deliver a good looking, functional site for you on a budget.

When you are ready to step up to the big league I recommend Gihan at First Step Communications <http://www.firststep.com.au/> A site will cost around \$3,000 - \$5,000 but it will be fully optimised and good to go.

Web Hosting

My preferred supplier is MD Web Hosting. It costs me \$9.90 per month and I host 3 sites for that price = BARGAIN! Their help desk are excellent and have solved all my problems eventually. You can also buy domain names from them too. I am an affiliate so please use this link if you sign with them because they will give me café money (not why I recommend them that is just a bonus) <http://www.mdwebhosting.com.au/myaccount/aff.php?aff=282>

Domain Name Providers

MD Web Hosting basic .com around AUD\$15 for one year. <http://www.mdwebhosting.com.au/myaccount/aff.php?aff=282>

GoDaddy.com who are outrageously cheap for .coms (usually around US\$8.95 for a year) and are very easy to use. I buy my domains at GoDaddy and host them at MD simply because I find GoDaddy the easiest to use. I have heard a couple of horror stories about them losing domains but I have never had any trouble with them. <http://www.godaddy.com/>

Shopping Carts

I use and highly recommend 1shoppingcart as do many of the information experts around the world. I find it easy to use and highly functional. <http://www.1shoppingcart.com/app/?pr=1&id=81707>

Help with Copy

If you need help with your copy or any editing of your copy you might like to call Kristin Lee +61 (402) 250 409, she is a freelance journalist who has helped me in the past. She is also a researcher for the Great Outdoors so is sometimes hard to get hold of.

My next steps are:

The concerns or challenges I have about launching my website are:

My strategies to overcome any concerns or challenges are:

Gratitude Sheets

This week I am grateful for:

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