

Leading Expert Reveals Secrets!

MARKETING FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINICS

**Physical Therapy Private
Practice Expert Reveals
Insider Secrets to explode
YOUR Physical Therapy
Business!**

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DEDICATION

If I were a private practitioner reading this book, I'd say "let's get to the meat right away, I don't want to waste time reading about the author, I want to know what this book can do for me, and I want to know now".

I don't blame you, but allow me to introduce myself..

Thanks to my wife Ritika Gulrajani, who will always be my best friend and the world's best physical therapist in my eyes. You motivated me to become a physical therapist, and for that (among other things), I am eternally grateful.

I'm grateful to my mother, Maya Chhoda, my brother Vinnay Chhoda and his wife Pooja, all of whom live in Mumbai, India.

As a nervous immigrant in the United States in November 2002 with \$1000 to spare, I worked tirelessly as a manager in a fitness center, trying to sell fitness memberships and earn my \$700 paycheck every 2 weeks. We were a 2 man unit – me and my boss, the guy who hired me.

One day, in 2004, my boss came up to me and said "Nitin, the gym is not doing well, one of us has to go. It

can't be me.” I remember chasing his car as he drove away, pleading to be given another chance at my \$350 weekly paycheck.

I thank him for NOT giving me a second chance.

It forced my hand, and I found myself waiting tables and personal training to pay the bills and pay my way through a graduate, and then a doctorate degree, followed by a physical therapy license and 3 internationally recognized websites providing marketing services to physical therapists.

The human resolve is powerful indeed, and as physical therapists, we are testimony to the fact. This book is dedicated to all the physical therapists who grind themselves to the bone while serving patients. I salute you, and hope to be of service to you always. We represent one of the most noble professions in the world – and I am proud to be small part of this global community of physical therapy.

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. Before I forget, I write a small blog for physical therapists at www.nitin360.com and provide physical therapists with a done-for-you physical therapy marketing system called

www.therapynewsletter.com and additional tools to market your practice at

www.physicaltherapymarketingtools.com

This book is an attempt to help our community market our services better. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me using the form on my blog.

Thank you, and have a wonderful day!

Nitin Chhoda, PT, CSCS

Total Activation Physical Therapy

SECTION 1

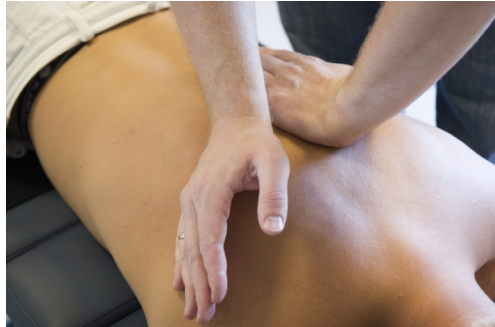
PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

AND FITNESS PROGRAMS

The United States is the most overweight nation in the world. Obesity rates continue to climb in each state, every year across the United States. Preventive, cash based fitness programs represent the need of the hour and a tremendous opportunity for physical therapists in 2009 and beyond. A well structured, cash based group fitness program has several benefits.

It can be:

- A low cost add-on for existing patients,
- An incentive for new patient populations,
- A maintenance program for past patients,
- A value added service endorsed by physicians and
- An extremely newsworthy service for the local media.



R. Scott Ward, president of the American Physical Therapy Association stated in his December 2nd, 2008 blog post (quoted with permission) "As much as half of the \$2.3 trillion spent on health care in the United States today does absolutely nothing to improve health-and could be dangerous as well - according to chief executives of some of the nation's top health care institutions who were quoted in the Washington post. One possible solution? A culture shift away from pricey high tech procedures to more conservative approaches such as physical therapy."

As a physical therapist, you are in the best possible position to design and execute a fitness program. Many personal trainers offer similar services and charge high cash premiums based on the perception of results they can deliver. As physical therapists, we can go above and beyond, using our expertise to partner with fitness centers and local health clubs. It's time for us as therapists to be the pioneers of fitness and health, improve our own lives, and the lives of patients in the process.

Walk The Walk, Talk The Talk

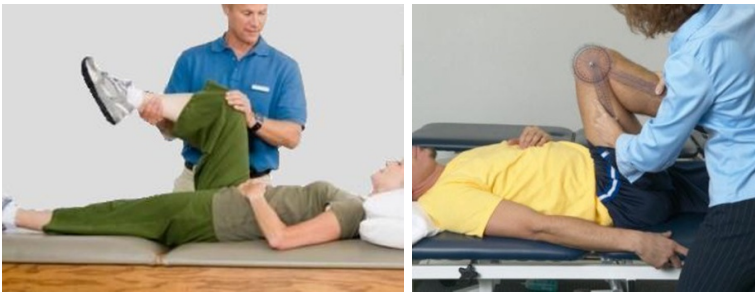
Improve your own fitness level and demonstrate health, vitality, energy and motivation to patients. If you don't do so already, take charge of your personal health and fitness. Start going to the gym 3-4 times a week and improve your own diet by consulting with a nutritionist, if necessary. My wife and I are both physical therapists and we go the gym together, 4-5 times a week. When doctors and patients see you as fit and healthy, it's easy to promote your fitness program. This is the single most important component of a cash based fitness program.



Start Offering Group Fitness Classes, Also Called 'Fitness Bootcamps'

A group fitness class allows the therapist to generate more revenue by working less. It also allows the patient

to pay less and get better results. There is a social support component in group training that is reinforced by accountability. When a patient is a part of a team, it is easier to adhere to an exercise and nutrition program. With the present condition of the economy, a low cost, high value program offered by a physical therapist is an ideal service.



The easiest market for a fitness bootcamp is to train women, since women seem to respond better to a group environment (the success of Curves, Lucille Roberts and Weight Watchers is evidence). Start your own fitness boot camp for women. If your clinic name is ABC, call it the ABC fitness boot camp for women. Conduct classes preferably early in the morning. An 8 am or a 9 am fitness bootcamp for busy moms works well, since it's a big, untapped market.



Consider a Corporate Wellness Program

Companies across the United States are struggling to lower healthcare costs. A healthier employee is going to be more productive and will cost the system less than an employee plagued by injury. Go through your local phone directory and find local companies with 30 employees or more. When speaking with administration, tell them about the financial benefits of the program. When speaking with the staff, help them understand the benefits of the program in day to day life. Corporate fitness programs are an affordable, profitable service that physical therapists can duplicate. The staff trains at work, and there are no overheads for the therapist. Two group

fitness workshops a week for one corporation are sufficient. The therapist can charge a monthly fee, based on the number of employees the service is offered to. A general rule of thumb is to charge \$15 per employee per class, regardless of how many show up for the session. You want to charge based on the number of staff members who have access to you, not on those who actually show up for the group class. Therefore, for a staff of 30 employees who get 2 ergonomics and general conditioning classes a week, charges should be approximately \$3500-\$4000 a month. 2 contracts with corporations in your area could bring in \$7000-\$8000 a month for your clinic with no additional costs, other than stationary and handouts.

Initiate A Group Fitness Program For Seniors

Educate the elderly about the benefits of exercise by making presentations at senior citizens homes, organizing community events at the local YMCA and mailing flyers to retirement communities. Engage the elderly in a light, enjoyable and functional exercise program at a cost of under \$10 per person per class and promote packages of 8 classes at a time, 2 class a week

for 4 weeks. The advantage with senior citizens is that there are fewer time constraints as compared to corporate fitness boot camps.



A great way to promote your fitness programs is with the use of a regular, patient newsletter, which will be discussed in upcoming chapters.

SECTION 2

YOUR WEBSITE MUST HAVE THE RIGHT MESSAGE

The number one reason for an underperforming website is content. Most physical therapy websites tend to be informational brochures that glorify the resumes of the physical therapist and staff. The patient is more interested in the specifics of treatment and the reputation of your clinic. Consumers have many choices when selecting a physical therapist and tend to ignore unwanted messages. Within seconds, your website must answer the patient's most pressing question: "What can you do to help me?" If your website fails to keep the visitor for more than 30 seconds, it may need a serious overhaul.

The right headline

Your website must start with a strong headline that identifies a problem that the patient faces. It must stir up the emotions of the visitor and offer them an immediate solution or an incentive to call your clinic. Let's compare some headlines.

“At ABC physical therapy, our board certified physical therapists will use over 10 years of experience to treat common conditions like arthritis, low back pain and shoulder dysfunction. We specialize in the treatment of a variety of conditions and specialists in pain relief”

A headline like this does not present a problem connected with the user on an emotional level, but it does provide a solution. If the same headline was to be rewritten, it would look something like this.

“Do you have aches and pains associated with low back pain, arthritis and shoulder injuries? Are you tired of spending another moment living in discomfort and suffering silently as the pain worsens? Look no further, because everything you've always wanted to relieve discomfort and live pain free is here at ABC physical therapy. We are passionate about patient care, and our 10 years of experience proves it”

Don't be too concerned about using too many words on your website. Use as many words as it takes to convey the right message. The patients who really need your services will read every word.

Instill an authentic sense of urgency and scarcity

A bird in hand is worth two in the bush. A visitor on your website is actively looking for physical therapy. This is the best time for you to encourage them to call you and set up an appointment. Never assume that the visitor will visit your website again and contact you, because they probably won't. “ I'll think about it and get back to you tomorrow” is the last thing you want to hear. The crowds that flood the local Wal-Mart on Thanksgiving day are fuelled by urgency and scarcity. Remember the last time you bought an airline ticket? Did you observe the urgency tactics?

Only four seats left!

Book before June 30th to get this price!

Limited time: free baggage allowance!

While this may sound a little gimmicky, it indeed instills a genuine sense of urgency in the reader's mind. As a physical therapist, its simple to instill a sense of 'limited availability' because your time is indeed scarce. When promoted properly, scarcity encourages the patient to

reach for the phone to schedule an appointment, instead of 'putting it off' for another day.

Call now for same day appointment

Free massage for the first 10 callers!

Only 9 spots remaining for our seminar!

Surprise bonus reserved for those who call before July 30th!

This helps you overcome the inertia of the prospect. A strong message can actually encourage the patient to call you immediately, which is not something they would normally do! Also, human beings by nature are not moved to take action, when they perceive abundance. If a patient feels they can literally walk into your clinic at any time and be treated, there is no element of scarcity or urgency. On the other hand, when the patient feels that they may 'lose out', their behavior changes completely and your phone starts ringing off the hook.

Implement these ideas and your website will become a powerful source of new patients. Your patients will see an immediate benefit in working with you and they will

spread the word for you. You can finally have a website that is geared for the patient and not the therapist. Give the patient what they want and your website will transform your practice.



SECTION 3

LEVERAGING YOUR WEBSITE AS A MECHANISM TO ATTRACT PATIENTS AND GENERATE NEW REFERRALS

Your website is a window to the world, and patients who are considering coming to you make an instant decision about your practice based on your website and the initial phone call they make to your clinic.

A successful website has several components that work seamlessly, chiefly content and tracking tools.

Take 10 minutes to analyze your website today. A few changes can make a big impact on your image, referral capabilities and profitability.

Important questions to ask are:

- Do you provide relevant, patient friendly information to visitors?
- Do you have a system in place to track visitor information and communicate with patients after they have visited your website?

Some therapists manage their own website while others outsource the task. In both cases, the emphasis is usually on design, good looking logos, expensive equipment and other factors, which the patient finds largely irrelevant.

The big question you need to ask, if you currently own a website is: “How do I improve the potential of my website to attract new patients?”

The 2 steps to a successful website are content and visitor tracking.

Do's and Don'ts of Content

Your website must have excellent information that is relevant to patients, and a conversion process that transforms them from website visitors into actual patients and even potential referral sources. Good content begins with an overview of information that is relevant to the patient, and appears precise and reader-friendly. Adhere to your area of expertise and give patients tips on what they can use. Good content enables you to connect with your audience, and includes an action-oriented message, combined with a sense of urgency. A simple, clear message that encourages visitors

to pick up the phone and call your clinic is the single most important parameter of success. Patient testimonials are another big part of the success of a website.



The patient must be able to contact the office, or schedule an appointment online at any time. The easier you make the initial contact, the more profitable your site will be. Our goal is to get the visitor who comes to your site to call or email you requesting further information about your services. A website must motivate the visitor to call or come in to your clinic. It should be optimized for the search engines and be reinforced by an activation process, triggered by phone calls from prospective patients. The biggest mistake

made by therapists is poor conversion rate from visitor to patient says James Ko, physical therapist.

The last thing you want is for the reader to leave your site without initiating contact with you. In most cases, you have less than 30 seconds to make an impression with your site. Even if the visitor leaves your site without contacting you, you want an "email stimulator" box on your site that encourages the visitor to provide you with their name and email address. This should be a simple form, asking for the visitor's name, email address and phone number, placed prominently, and attractively, on your website. Offer your visitor an ebook, a newsletter or some incentive to provide you with their contact information when they visit your site. It is critical that contact information should be easily viewable on all pages of the website, perhaps as a part of the website banner. Make it easy for them to contact you and leave their contact information behind. Your website should help you build a patient database, since hundreds, or potentially thousands of patients could be visiting your website each month.

Most sites seem like encyclopedias and make sense to the therapist and staff, but not the patient. Don't be verbose with the therapists' resumes, achievements and the mission of the clinic unless it relates directly to patient care.

Do's and Don'ts of Visitor Tracking

Tracking involves the science of analyzing your website traffic, listening to the customer by observing behavior and improving your site. Google provides an outstanding, free analytical tool called 'Google Analytics'. It can be implemented instantly, and provides you with information such as:

- The number of visitors to your site each day, time of visit, navigation path through your site
- Who referred the visitors, how they found your site



- ‘Goal tracking’ – what percentage of visitors clicked through to your contact page
- At which page did a majority of visitors ‘exit’ the site (your weakest link)
- Amount of time spent by visitors on individual pages and number of pages viewed
- Ratio of new visits vs. visits from repeat individuals
- Historical data, trend analysis and page to page / website comparison
- Comparison of the performance of your emails, ad performance
- Industry wide benchmarking, ecommerce analysis and much more.

This will give you a clear idea of what visitors are expecting from your product or service, and will allow you to focus more on pages that work, and modify pages that don’t. Too many therapists waste time, money and resources on what they think instead of focusing on what they need. Ask yourself “How can I make this

easier for my customers, and help them make sense of this information?”

Your website can now become your most powerful marketing tool. It's your window to the world, so put your best content forward and track visitor behavior. The results will open new doors of communication with your patients.

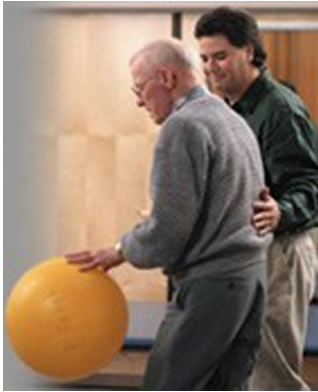
REFLECT YOUR PASSION IN EVERYTHING YOU DO

Are the patients and doctors in your area talking about you as a primary physical therapy provider?

When a patient reads your brochure, can they see and feel your passion as a provider?

After reviewing your marketing material, does your patient:

- Think you have a cause, a mission statement?
- Respect your credentials and expertise
- Consider your services
- Discuss you with family and friends?



If the answer is no, your practice may be getting too conventional.

Being predictable has its advantages. It's safe to conform to expectations and provide a service that people have come to expect. For a business, staying within the default comfort zone is easy and pleasant.

It's also the best way to let a practice slide into oblivion.

Your staff, pricing, location and service fit the 'norm' and everything you do is by the book. Sometimes, the 'right' approach in every aspect can be the wrong thing to do, from a marketing perspective. If you try and become everything to everybody, you will end up becoming a vague thing to most prospects. A successful

practice overcomes the inherent defensive mindset and embraces change.



In a recession, it pays to be unique.

Being different requires an investment of time and effort. It necessitates an unwavering commitment against all odds. If your passion shines through, you will make an impact and establish yourself.

Remarkable is as remarkable does. Start looking for ways to offer services with improved speed, efficiency and specialization to your community. Isolate the exact type of physical therapy your audience is asking for, conduct surveys and match their needs with your abilities and

passion as a provider. The best way to collect this information and make informed practice decisions is through your website.

Collect Feedback From Your Patients To Tailor Your Passion

Marketing material should be designed based on feedback from patients, not beautiful templates created by graphic designers or theoretical excellence by therapists. Understanding your patients thought process and decision-making process; their emotions, logic and trigger points is an invaluable tool to tailor your services. When patients review marketing material, they typically ask one or more of the following questions:

- What is the benefit this clinic can provide me?
- How can I contact them?
- How soon will they see me?
- Do they accept my insurance?

Does your material and website answer these questions? Ideally, you want live feedback from individuals who actually surf your site and review your material. Put together 2 control groups of 4-5 patients at your clinic

and have one group review your material in front of you. Observe what they read, if they seek more information about specific programs, and their tendency to go the next step; ask for more information. Ask them the following questions:

- What do you like about my website?
- Does the brochure provide you with useful information?
- Do my programs interest you?
- Is there anything specific you are looking for?
- What don't you like about this material?
- Does this material encourage you to contact us?



Wait for honest feedback and be prepared for constructive, perhaps even scathing criticism. At the end

of this research, you will have a clear idea about the needs of a majority of your patients.

Now, make the changes to your marketing material and website. Retest with the 2nd control group for a fresh, new, unbiased perspective. Test and retest strategies while alternating between both control groups. Observe the feedback that the new audience gives you, and feel free to test and retest. The single best way to improve patient communication from your marketing material is to constantly test and retest with your patient audience. Testing once a month for 20-30 minutes allows you to stay abreast of patient requirements and current events.

A mission statement and marketing material that is tested, improved and retested based on patient feedback will always result in more referral generation than content that is untested and built solely on the opinion of the therapist or web designer.

Make the changes and let the visitors guide you to unravel your true passion.

SECTION 4

MAKE YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE

‘VIRAL’

What does the word ‘viral’ mean?

It refers to an idea that spreads rapidly, improves awareness amongst patients and opens up new doors of emotional and social enlightenment.

If your patients knew you were offering a medically sound exercise program, complete with body fat analysis, blood sugar testing, blood pressure measurements and provided the services of a nutritionist, would they be interested and tell others?



If your patients found out you were offering a one-time seminar on “The 5 minute self-help low back massage”

in your clinic next weekend, would they spread the word and become walking billboards for your practice?

For an idea to be viral in the real sense, it should help the patient's condition and the service provider's profitability. The concept should be beneficial and commercially viable at the same time. A viral product empowers the patient to tell your story for you and become your own marketing representative. In addition, viral marketing is social proof, which carries the stamp of credibility. A patient is very likely to pay attention to the success story of another patient who has worked with you in the past.

Let's assume you conduct a seminar on low back massage (as mentioned above). The word spreads and many attendees manage to show up for the seminar. This makes the seminar 'somewhat' viral. But the therapist delivers a dry, tedious presentation. Unfortunately, the attendees don't enjoy the seminar. They walk away confused and dazed; they don't recommend the clinic to a single soul. They never become your patients.

The viral intent is crushed.

On the other hand, you conduct a great seminar filled with energy and passion. The patients understand, enjoy and apply the techniques they have learnt. You now have a winner. You provide a ton of patient-friendly information, 'pre-written' notes, practical tips, 'refer-a-friend' cards and ready to use appointment cards that patients can fill out on the spot. The therapist can offer incentives to prospects by offering free ebooks (which require a patient's email address). This allows the therapist to accumulate a list of emails, that can be used to provide timely, relevant information to patients.

Your seminar is transformed into a viral, patient-stimulating phenomenon ready to increase your referrals.

The seminar helped both sides. It increased awareness about physical therapy, the existence of your clinic, your positioning as a primary provider and most importantly, opened new doors of communication between therapist and patient.

It's important to differentiate between viral and traditional marketing.

Traditional marketing like advertising in the newspaper, radio and tv is not viral in nature, unless it includes a ‘call to action’, an incentive for the patient to tell friends and a reason to schedule an appointment. Keep in mind, not everything can become ‘viral’ in nature. It doesn’t matter if hundreds or thousands of people know about your service; it’s the right people that matter, not the volume of individuals you market to.

The essence of viral marketing is that the service or product should be ‘reproducible’. The more people use the product or technology, the more they like it, the more people that tell, which in turn means more people use the product.

As physical therapists, we provide a service (physical therapy), not a product. A service, especially one as skilled as physical therapy, is less viral than a product. It requires personal time and attention from the therapist, is not easy to reproduce, benefits one patient at a time and the patient (generally) lacks the incentive to tell others about the service.

In order to introduce a component of viral marketing into your practice, consider the introduction of a product to complement your service. Tip the skills in your favor by creating your own or promoting someone else's exercise DVD or a book on health and physical therapy. Creating a 'ready to use' home exercise DVD is extremely easy; all you need is a camcorder, a DVD editing software like Ulead and a DVD duplication service in your vicinity. You can also provide patients with a regular, patient-friendly informational newsletter that provides relevant, timely information on health and physical therapy.

Such measures will boost the public image of your clinic significantly. Your patients become your marketing representatives and tell their friends, helping you spread the word. Your reputation grows.

In essence, you can duplicate your marketing efforts with viral marketing.

Thankfully, our clinical skills remain our own.

SECTION 5

SHOW YOUR PERSONALITY

IN YOUR PRACTICE

Imagine your patient at lunch with a friend, 3 months after being discharged from your clinic.

Your name comes up during a conversation, since the patient's friend is looking for a physical therapist. The patient searches for words to describe you, and uses one of 3 descriptions to paint a picture:

- a) That therapist.. I can't remember his name, but I got some massage, exercise and electrical therapy.
- b) John was an excellent therapist, helped reduce my pain and I like his sense of humor!
- c) That therapist was a punisher, I dread the appointments.

The second choice reflects camaraderie; a strong, positive rapport between patient and therapist.

The more patients you have, and the more they get along with you as a therapist, the more successful your practice. With the right planning, you can use your personality to get more patients and improve

relationships with existing patients. This is personality driven physical therapy.

In order to get more patients, you need:

- d) Contact information of past patients who know you, like you and trust you as a therapy provider. As a therapist, you maintain relevant, professional contact with them to remain 'top of mind' for future physical therapy needs.
- e) The ability to reach a new set of patients through physician referrals, local media, public speaking engagements, websites and blogs.
- f) A patient base with the need for your services, the commitment to make and keep physical therapy appointments and a strong desire to improve functionally.

Most private practices ignore (a), work hard at (b) and have (c). For a successful practice, all 3 components should be in place.

The link between (a) and (b) is, quite simply, you; the practitioner. Physical therapy is the tool / service while the craftsman or technician is you; the therapist. One of

the best ways to achieve (a) and (b) and defining yourself as a therapist is by setting up your own physical therapy blog and posting video updates, not just text updates to your blog.

It's free to set up a blog, and can be done within minutes. Just search for 'free blogs' online, choose your own blog name, and you will be up and running. Blogs are generally favored by search engines, as opposed to static websites since search engines prefer dynamic content; information that is constantly being updated.

A blog is an online diary of your life, and can be maintained with 5-8 minutes a day with short entries between patients. It allows patients and visitors to catch a glimpse of your life and allows them to associate the professional therapist with a likeable human being.

Authenticity matters. It's important to be consistent, transparent and provide valuable information. Each one of us is a unique individual and has a story to tell. You must be interesting and present your personality with your blog posts.

It's not important to write a long blog post everyday. Short posts, 100-150 words once a week are sufficient as long as the information you provide is valuable and relevant to the patients. Avoid technical language and use the blog as a medium to unwind and communicate with patients. The first 3-4 weeks of posting may seem arduous, but once you get into the groove of writing blog posts, it will become a tough habit to break.

Using video and audio is the best way to add an extra dimension of personality to your blog. A digital camera or a handheld camcorder is sufficient. Once a week, have someone point the camera at you and follow these suggestions to capture your personality on video

- g) The camera should capture your head, neck and shoulder. Close ups are preferable, since they allow the viewer to better identify with you.
- h) Keep your head and neck steady, with a relaxed smile on your face while you look straight at the camera.
- i) Introduce yourself and the name of your clinic. Speak for 30-45 seconds (research shows longer clips result in a significant

reduction in visitor interest). Tell the viewer about your day in 2-3 sentences and then spend 20-30 seconds providing the viewer with useful, patient friendly information.

A sample script is:

“Hello, my name is John Doe from ABC physical therapy. I just finished treating patients for today. I had a wonderful day and hope you did too. This is a reminder about the importance of physical activity. Remain physically active, within the limits of pain and heed any restrictions established by your physician or physical therapist. Listen to your body and communicate any signs and symptoms of discomfort to health professionals. Physical therapy is intended to relieve pain and improve function, and we are always here to assist you. That’s it for today. Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day”.

Vary this script to suit your style and message. Change the message often and convey information about your practice, services and features. This video can be uploaded to the internet on various video sharing sites like youtube and easily made available on your blog or website.

Use a blog and video updates to reflect your personality and define your practice. The next time your name comes up in a conversation, patients will seem like raving fans.

SECTION 6

USING TECHNOLOGY

TO BRAND YOUR CLINIC

In a competitive economy, practitioners must think out of the box. A successful private practice is as much about marketing and relationship building as it is clinical excellence.

Patients today can find you in a number of ways; the physician is just one example of a referral source. They can look you up on the internet, in yellow pages, obtain referrals from other patients or even read about you in the newspaper. In a world driven by increased technology and decreased human interaction, the private practitioner is faced with a new challenge; limited attention span from patients. This also presents numerous options to reach a target audience, all of which are technology driven. The following strategies leverage the latest online and offline methods to promote your practice, build a brand and reach a newer, larger patient population.



1) Consistent, relevant communication with referral sources.

How consistent should you be? You want to strike a fine balance and be consistent, but not overbearing. On the other hand, you don't want to 'fall off the map' and be forgotten by referral sources that can generate thousands of dollars in revenue over the course of a lifetime. The most common mistake is to communicate too little. You need a plan to communicate on a regular, timely basis. Not once in 3 months or once in 6 months, but once every week or every other week is acceptable, especially with patients.

What should the communication consist of? For patients, the communication should be an informational, patient friendly handout, flyer or newsletter that provides

the patient with valuable take-home lessons on health and physical therapy. For physicians, a faxed version of a newsletter is helpful. Physicians can provide this information as a resource to their patients.

Communication is best when performed face to face, because the patient is able to associate a human face, voice and personality to the message. This is best achieved with public speaking; conducting a workshop once a month on-site is the best option. Recent innovations have also made it possible for you to conduct live video broadcasts, where patients can see you and provide comments by phone / within a text-based chat box while you are speaking with them live. All these efforts will bring the patient one step closer to knowing you, liking you and trusting you as a leading physical therapy provider. **Resources like ustream.tv allow this kind of video interaction at no cost.**

The next option is voice, without a face-to-face meeting. Offer a free teleclass (which is easier to market than ‘conference call’) on different topics like low back pain, posture, biomechanics, deep breathing etc) once a

month. Several services on the internet provide free teleconferencing services, and also provide the added benefit of recording your phone calls, which can be archived or remastered to create patient education audio CDs.

2) An interactive approach, online and offline, to obtain visitor contact information

If a patient searches for “physical therapy (your town name)”, does your clinic show up on page one? If it does, the patient will start viewing your clinic with a positive impression.

To achieve this, make sure your pages are optimized for your main keywords. Your keyword “physical therapy (town name)” and its variations like “(town name) physical therapist” should be present naturally throughout the content, and in the title tag of your web page. You should also strive to obtain links from other sites/pages on the internet related to your site. Display several pictures and include video testimonials of satisfied patients.

Any discrepancies in the site can lead to a negative perception. Pages like ‘under construction’ or ‘not found’ are unacceptable for a private practice. Your phone number should be present on each and every page,

patients should be able to read articles that add value, skim over your resume and pick up the phone to call you.

A website rich with video testimonials, audio messages and live chat boxes also encourage the visitor to interact with you. Engaging a stranger (in this case, the website visitor) is the first step to convert them to a prospective patient. A prospect, in turn, can be converted to a patient using the step 1 – consistent communication over time. You need to, ideally, create a series of emails that go out to the patient over a period of time in order to establish a reputation of consistency and quality.

Your website is not the only marketing tool on the web. Various social networking sites like twitter and facebook allow you to connect with individuals in your area. The goal should be to communicate with several individuals at one time, and several doctors (doctors meetings) if possible as well. Public speaking and communicating with local chambers of commerce to set up such meetings, is invaluable.

All these methods are based on time and technology leveraging, the essence of 21st century physical therapy marketing. Think outside the box and watch your practice flourish.

SECTION 7

POWER OF THE PATIENT

APPRECIATION DAY

One of the best ways to promote a physical therapy private practice is to consistently market your clinic. Marketing strategies can be both offline and online. The best offline marketing strategies allow you to leverage your time by allowing you to reach out to several people at one time. The best online marketing strategies create a new wave of patients that find you on the Internet and reach out to you for their physical therapy needs.

Here is a secret that many professions have been using for a long time. Offline and online strategies should ideally culminate in an event that generates an incredible amount of hype for your clinic.

So how do you get the patient's attention in a world that getting busier by the day? The best way to create a tidal wave marketing for your clinic is to announce a 'patient appreciation day'.

So what is a patient appreciation day? Essentially, it's a big party that you throw for your patients, where the

patient, his or her family, their pet poodle and everyone else they want to bring is invited. You provide lunch or dinner, some light entertainment and a fun relaxed atmosphere in which you can interact with all your patients in an informal environment outside of physical therapy.

Fundamentally, it is a day in which you appreciate all your patients for their excellent recovery and give prizes to patients who have shown the most recovery and referred their friends to your clinic.

The ways to make this event successful are:

- Announce a whole range of prizes, most which can be sponsored by local businesses, to the most outstanding patients, graded by compliance and extent of recovery, as judged by you.
- Have the whole event captured on video. Acquire the patient's permission to gather pictures, video and audio testimonials that can be used on your web site and marketing brochures.

- Invite key people from local businesses like massage therapists, accountants, attorneys and community leaders to learn more about your practice and the initiatives you take for your patients.
- If you have some connections in your town, and have treated a restaurant owner, a local celebrity, the mayor or some key decision maker in your town, ask them to come along and bring all their friends.
- Make the event as entertaining as possible, by including events like lotto, a movie screening or a stand-up comedy routine. Remember, everyone is there to have fun and toast to you and the success of your practice.

The secret benefit to an event like this is the referral incentive you can subconsciously instill in all the attendees. Besides, the implicit appreciation of your practice, you can get on the stage and hand out prizes to patients who have referred other patients. When presented in a warm, open, appreciative and fun manner,

this will be perceived as a powerful practice building tool as opposed to an unethical practice. The success of an event like this is all in the presentation.

The words and phrases that you use to describe the event and the quality of your product or service will transform this promotional event into an annual phenomena. Persuasive statements such as " I would not be standing here today, if it were not for all of you", " I am glad the pillars of the community are here to celebrate our success together", "Your satisfaction is our business", Physical therapy is an investment in your future" and "This event is dedicated to all those special people in my life" can help bridge the gap between a tacky promotional event and an energetic crowd puller.

The very act of promoting the patient day, in and of itself, is a referral generation exercise for your practice. Use a combination of print, word-of-mouth and online advertising mechanisms to make this an event the town will remember. With the right approach this can become an annual event that results in a massive surge in your practice.

Running ads in local newspapers is effective, but is the old school way of doing things. Engaging in online promotion mechanisms like optimizing your web site and having your own physical therapy block is an important component for new age physical therapy marketing. Connection between you and your patients by using the benefits of audio and video marketing cannot be understated. Use a digital video camera to capture short video clips lasting 30 seconds to one minute, put them up on video sharing websites and host them on your web site or blog. Give patients the opportunity to get to know you better and attach a face and a voice to a name. The internet allows us the opportunity to leverage time and reach out to scores of people with a single, concentrated and planned effort.

In today's world however, we cannot undermine the importance of one-on-one personal, relevant communication. Speaking of old school, there's one strategy most therapists have forgotten. It works like a charm, especially when promoting an event like the patient day. We all know that the best way to get a surge in your physical therapy private practice is to reach out

to old patients. Most private practices have hundreds of old patients in their database. The single best thing you can do to grow your practice is to pick up the phone, speak with these patients and educate them about the benefits and the value of your brand of physical therapy. Just collect the phone numbers of five to 10 patients you've had a good relationship with and call them to invite them to patient appreciation day. For best results use a call script, which provides a step-by-step outline of what you can say during the phone conversation. If you can repeat this process five days a week you will be reaching out to 15 to 20 old patients every week. You see the results within two to three weeks with new patient referrals, RSVPs for the patient appreciation day and enhanced credibility for your practice.

SECTION 8

BILLING AUTOMATION FOR

PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

Although most physical therapy practices are alien to it, the strategy of automation is used by most successful businesses. Automation is the incorporation of a streamlined process that allows businesses to save time, increase productivity and slash unnecessary costs. It is a mechanism that allows the physical therapist to sleep comfortably at night, knowing that the procedures inherent to running a practice can continue in a seamless, consistent fashion in the relative absence of human intervention.

Automation is convenient and necessary today. We live in a world that increasingly resists manual labor, and the investment of time. Automation of business practices allows the incorporation of consistent, predictable processes that add value to the patients, providers and third parties.



Recurring credit card charges-automation billing

If your practice is not already accepting credit cards, then the time to start is now. Another mechanism of automated billing is called electronic funds transfer, abbreviated as EFT. Your practice automatically debits the patient's credit card or checking account a preset amount every visit. The basic principle behind the automation of billing in a physical therapy private practice is consistency of income. Most major businesses adopt the strategy and are extremely successful. Think about your cell phone, internet or cable TV bill. Imagine for a moment that these companies were attempting to bill your card manually each month, or requesting you each time for your authorization. These companies know

better, and require you to authorize automated billing as soon as you do business with them. As a consumer, you're conditioned to agree and don't think twice about it. If these companies had to bill you and wait for payment each and every month, they would soon be out of business. If they can do it, why can't we? As a profession, we are light years behind automated billing. In fact physical therapists languish at the other end of the spectrum. We treat, complete paperwork and wait weeks to get paid, while other products and services of a lesser value bill in advance without a hint of discord from clients.

The incorporation of automatic credit card billing will transform your practice. As far as possible, encourage patients to keep their credit card information on file with your clinic. The patient's credit card is charged for the co-pay. The patient can be charged a cancellation fee of \$10-\$15 for no shows or last-minute cancellations. In this manner, the physical therapist or the receptionist no longer has to function as a 'bill collector'. The responsibility to settle the bill now rests with the patient. Another advantage of automatic billing is the

opportunity to provide memberships to a monthly wellness program at your clinic.



The principle behind successful automated billing is the involvement of patients in systems of therapy not sessions of therapy. Enroll the patient in an open-ended wellness program as an extension of a close ended, finite physical therapy program. With the right amount of skill and salesmanship, you can bridge the gap between the physical therapy covered by insurance and the wellness

program that the patient truly needs by presenting the option of an affordable cash-based exercise program. Offer a unique, monthly physical therapy coaching program which includes, in addition to physical therapy sessions, unlimited e-mail and phone consulting with you. Most patients who purchase this program are unlikely to take advantage of the unlimited coaching component, but will be glad to know that they have unlimited access to their physical therapist. You can transform yourself from a physical therapy provider into a complete wellness provider, providing general information on health, fitness and lifestyle management.

The use of automated billing in cash-based fitness programs boosts compliance and guarantees that you will work with high-quality patients. It's time for practices to evaluate, incorporate and embrace automated billing to ensure a successful, stable and growing practice.

SECTION 9

TOP MARKETING MISTAKES

BY PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

For most physical therapists, marketing is a challenge. We went to physical therapy school to become expert clinicians, not marketers. This makes sense, because primary goal as physical therapists is to be good clinicians and provide outstanding patient care.

In the real world, we come face-to-face with glaring deficiencies in our marketing skills. We learn as we go along, make expensive mistakes, invest thousands of dollars in expensive seminars, copy our competitors and past employers and try different strategies to market practice without knowing exactly what works best. The mistakes we make may not be apparent in the short term, but can cost us significantly over the long run.



- a) 'Controlled communication' with patients and prospects.

Patients should be considered as a mass of individuals looking for direction. As a physical therapist, you must constantly remind patients about the importance and the need for physical therapy. They are extremely likely to forget about your services. Out of sight is out of mind. The average patient will forget about you as a physical therapist, or their need for physical therapy intervention unless they are reminded about the benefits of physical therapy two to three times a month. This reminder can be in the form of e-mail communications, phone calls, letters and public events or seminars. Most physical therapists consider this form of consistent patient communication as a tedious, exhausting and expensive process. This cannot be further from the truth. Contact with patients can be a powerful, inexpensive and automatic marketing process that can significantly leverage your efforts to reach the maximum number of individuals in the least amount of time.

Do not be complacent and assume that you patients will always remember you and come back to your clinic.

There are competitors and other businesses (including other professions) that are standing by to sway the patient away from your clinic. This may be happening right under your nose and you may not know it. If a patient is made to feel ignored or disrespected, all it takes for them is one phone call to switch providers. Patients are easily lured away.

- b) Inability to manage repetition, quality and frequency of communication.

The average prospect or patient must hear about your clinic and receive high-quality, relevant information from your clinic at least 10 times before they consider you to be a primary provider. I recommend two to four 'contacts' each month with your patient list, so you can control and gently sway the masses in your favor. Consider an e-mail newsletter, printed report, downloadable audio interviews with other physicians, information packed voice broadcasts to patients, seasonal greetings, birthday wishes, gift cards for your most valued patients, and courtesy phone calls made by you or your receptionist. With the right type of planning,

it's easy to identify at least a dozen events and occasions that justify some form of contact every year.

c) Relying on one form of media for communication

Don't just rely on the phone call to communicate with your patients. If you have a patient or a prospect list, communicate with them. Using different forms of media to communicate with the same list on a regular basis, and you will notice different prospects and patients raising their hand to ask for your services. Different types of media connect with specific individuals in the same target market. E-mail has been found to connect with the younger, more tech savvy audience. The traditional phone call works well with middle-aged and senior individuals. A fax is an excellent way to get through to busy professionals and company executives. Regular mail, postcards and flyers are effective for all individuals, but tend to be the most expensive.

d) Leveraging the list of existing patients

One of the least expensive ways to boost patient referrals is to call your patients. By calling patients once a week, you build a strong personal relationship with each

of them. Each patient feels like they are special, and they reciprocate the feeling. It takes less time and effort to generate a referral from an existing patient or a past patient, as compared to a referral from a cold prospect. You are communicating with the narrower market, one that has already used your services and knows you or your clinic on a personal level. In addition, these patients will have a need or no somebody you has a need for the services that you provide. Physical therapists should spend less time and money chasing new business and new patients, and more time working on the base of existing patients.



SECTION 10

PRICELESS PATIENT GIFTS

When was the last time someone you worked with gave you a surprise gift?

Did it feel good?

Chances are, you were impressed and told some friends about it.



What if you impressed patients with gifts, and they started talking to their friends about you?

Patients love getting souvenirs from clinics, particularly if the souvenir has a high perceived value. The key is to keep your budget to a minimum, but over-deliver to your patients by providing a perception of value. A few

dollars spent on gifts can become a great way to brand your clinic and stimulate patient to patient referrals.

- 1) Interview some of the top physicians in your area, in an effort to provide patients with an information audio CD

If you don't have a monthly patient newsletter or an audio CD that you provide patients, now is the time! You probably have a network of physicians and healthcare professionals who refer to you. You can use this as leverage to improve your relationship with them and provide additional services to your patients at no additional cost.

Consider interviewing these practitioners and providing your patients with an informational interview format audio CD. This is pretty simple to do. Communicate with a referral physician you wish to interview and tell them that you're setting up an interview program and you'd like to have 20-30 minutes of their time. **Inform them that you plan on recording the interview and making it available to your patients as a free informational audio CD.** You will rarely get an

objection. All the physician has to do is to send you a biography of themselves and answer the phone at a particular time and talk to you. All you do is talk to the practitioner about the subject that they specialize in. You can interview an orthopedic surgeon specializing in knee injuries, a bariatric surgeon specializing in liposuction or a general physician. Ask several questions that are relevant to patients and empower the patients with valuable information. Then at the end thank your practitioner profusely for their time and mention their clinic location. **Do this once a month with a different practitioner and your patients will really benefit and perceive you as the expert, even though you're just asking the questions!**

So how do you conduct a phone interview and record it at the same time without investing in expensive equipment? It's simple, you can download free programs on the internet that record your voice, when you make an outbound call from your computer to the physician's office. You will need a headset and a microphone that connects to your computer. The software automatically allows you to record the conversations automatically to

your computer as an MP3 file. At the end of the phone call, just copy your conversations to a regular CD and provide it your patients! Your patients can now listen to the interview on their computer or on their CD players!

2) Health and Wellness Magazine Subscriptions

Some of your patients like to read magazines on health, fitness and physical therapy. As long as the magazine is health-related, consider getting a magazine subscription as a gift for some of your patients. This is an unusual strategy that has worked wonders for my clinic. Some patients want to eat healthier and want great recipes, get them a healthy recipe magazine, or Gourmet. The unique thing about a magazine subscription is that it allows you to remain in the patient's mind. **Add a magazine subscription to a personalized bi-monthly e-mail newsletter and you have a winning combination.** Patients are hungry for information, specifically the right information. Over a period of time, they will consider you to be the primary source for physical therapy in their community.

The key to building patient value over a period of time is to be in constant contact with patients, without being physically present in front of them. This is the challenge we struggle with as therapists on a day-to-day basis. Fortunately, the solutions are available and easily applicable. Most magazine subscriptions are inexpensive.

3) New exercise tools and therapeutic exercise handouts.

Every three to four visits, I like to introduce a little variation in the exercise routine of the patient. I can introduce an exercise ball, some dumbbells, a medicine ball, balance disk, etc.—anything that will enable them to get results faster and promote functional independence. The key is to teach the patient how to use this new tool and use it independently at home. **Most patients enjoy learning new exercises with new tools. In such cases, I surprise some patients by allowing them to take the new tool home! Most of these tools cost less than \$10.**

4) Field trips, picnics and barbecue parties. (\$5)

Everyone loves a get-together, especially if it's organized by someone they like and respect. Most patients enjoy social events like field trips. **Such events foster relationships with patients, plus they are fun!** There are several types of field trips. This can be a picnic or an outing at a park, a trip to a baseball game for your baseball clients, a local hockey game for your hockey kids, etc. Try to get a group rate for tickets and offer your patients a discount, so your cost is less than five dollars per patient. Your patients can meet you at the venue, and you don't have to be concerned with the logistics and transportation. What matters is the thought, and the social component behind the event.

5) Birthdays. (Free, under \$15)

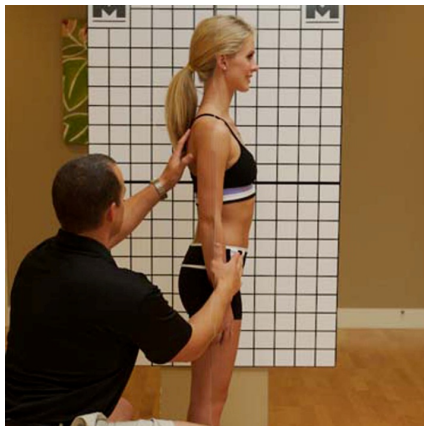
Two pieces of information that every physical therapist should start to gather from patients is e-mails and birthdays. As I mentioned before, the e-mail is a critical component of e-mail marketing. Birthdays are self-explanatory, and almost always ignored by physical therapists. Everyone loves getting presents, particularly your patients!

During the treatment process, try and determine what would be a good gift for the patient, and make a note of it in your diary. As a general rule, spend less than \$15 on the gift. Even if you or a member of your staff doesn't have the time to buy a gift, a simple phone call works wonders. **On the big day, call them and wish them a happy birthday. This is an absolute winner. Most of their family members might forget, but not you!**

SECTION 11 **LEVERAGING YOUR TIME AS A** **THERAPIST**

Most physical therapists do not have the time to market their clinics. They consider it tedious and frustrating and revert to what they do best; patient care.

Regardless of the type of practice you work in, the process of acquiring a patient and generating referrals is a multi-stage process. It is normal for us to gravitate towards the things that are of special interest or seem comfortable to us. The truth is, when you spend time with a single patient as a physical therapist, you are not really leveraging your time. In a successful practice, the entire process of referral generation is time leveraged and semi-automated.



A System Is Critical

The best way for a practice to grow is by creating a steady system of acquiring new patients, managing the system to separate, identify, and encourage qualified patients and reinforce communication with those patients using an outstanding follow-up system. The best physical therapist in the world can struggle to acquire and treat patients in the absence of such a system. The first step towards the creation of a systematic private practice involves an understanding of the process of the referral in itself. When a patient walks into your clinic seeking therapy, the new business is a result of a system not necessarily a random event.

Imagine driving hundreds of miles in extreme heat and humidity along the desert. The processes of fatigue, boredom and thirst have you yearning for a diet soda. The moment you see a rest stop, you immediately pull over to get something cool and refreshing to drink. This sale was generated as a result of a combination of factors which constitute the pre-sale events.

When a patient walks into your clinic, a similar sequence of events has already occurred in the background. The culmination of these events (patients' injury, pain, frustration, physician referral, patient referral) has resulted in the patient standing in front of you.

Obtain information and leverage technology

There are valuable lessons to be learned here. The end goal of physical therapy marketing should not be the patient referral itself, but a recruitment of the patient or the prospect. Most physical therapists advertise their services to the patient and the community with the intention of getting new patients immediately. With such a strategy, they are alienating prospects, potential patients and relatives from their practice. They inadvertently eliminate non-patients from their scope of marketing. Many prospective patients can be transformed into patients and referral generation sources through effective follow-up and communication sources. The key lies in obtaining the prospects contact information, even when they are in the early stages of 'buying' physical therapy. Once you have your prospects contact information, the key is providing them significant value and information over a period of time. The two important systems you can put to instant use to

leverage your time and engage in mass patient outreach include internet marketing systems, web-based marketing solutions and mass-calling voice broadcasting systems.

The best web-based marketing tool is a specifically designed single page website that provides the visitor with precise information that is of value to them. Make your best information available to the visitor in exchange for their name, email and telephone number. For example, you can ask your patients to visit a website like www.healmybacknow.com (fictitious) to download a free audio program or a free e-book on low-back pain after they provide you with their contact information.

Voice broadcasting systems to past patients is an excellent way to generate new referrals and leverage your time significantly. Calling old patients is a time tested strategy that works. Record a warm, heartfelt, 30 second message that can be broadcast to several patients at one time. When patients hear your voice, they tend to know you, like you and trust you. The biggest advantage of voice broadcasting campaigns is the ability to track results immediately. Try a script like this.

“Hello Jack, this is Sean calling from ABC Physical Therapy. We wanted to touch base with you to let you know that it was a pleasure working with you, and we are glad to

have been able to help you reach your functional goals. In an effort to provide the highest quality of physical therapy services to our community, we recognize the fact that patient referrals are our number one source of new business. We ask that you refer us to your family and friends, so we can extend to them the same quality of care that we have provided to you. For more information on referral prizes and exclusive never-before-advertised services for past patients, please call us at (555) 123-1234 or email us at support@abcphysicaltherapy.com”

SECTION 12

THE COST OF LOSING PATIENTS

Imagine having an army of patients singing your praises every single day! Envision a band of raving fans, walking, talking human billboards who promote your practice at every social occasion they attend. A social sales force that transforms the image of your business from obscurity to stardom.

The presence of such team members can transform your practice, while their absence can sink it.

A tribe of raving patients is possible and takes months of planning and effort. The results are worth their weight in gold.

The real asset of a physical therapy private practice is its relationship to past and present patients. The ability to engage, captivate and influence the patients healthcare decisions while email, phone, regular mail contact is a priceless asset.

It is important to treat your patients as a gated community. Imagine yourself as a farmer guarding a herd of cows. As a therapist, never ever take your patients for

granted and surround them with a wall of information and credibility describing your practice. In a competitive economy, coupled with declining reimbursement rates, many businesses and professionals are standing by to steer patients in a different direction away from your practice. A patients' attention should be treated as solid gold. Conversely, patients who are made to feel unimportant or under-appreciated may be lured away from your clinic.

Creating a sense of tremendous value with your patients begins the personal contact and is reinforced with alternative modes of communication, spread strategically throughout the year. These 'communication points' can consist of email, least desirable to a phone call (most desirable) during the period after discharge.

A word of caution: not more than two weeks should go by without a communication point with each patient. This allows the patient to subconsciously associate with you and build trust in you. The regular communication points help foster quality of service, proximity of location, consumers' preferences and the referral

generation of that particular patient. The most preferable form of contact is a personal phone call from the therapist to the patient. This is ideal during birthdays, wedding anniversaries and major holidays. An email/postcard can also be followed up with a phone call or vice versa.

Why not just use email? Isn't it free?

The problems with traditional email include bounced email addresses, low deliverability ratios (not all email recipients open their email), delay in checking emails and the general non-personal content within the email. It is worth the investment to call the patient or send a hand-written postcard. This allows the patient to hear the words you speak and manually open the packages you send, creating a better social connection.



If you believe you cannot write or do not know what to say, then think again. There are only four key pieces of

information you need to provide your patients during each communication point.

- 1) who you are (an introduction or a reminder)
- 2) what you can do to help them
- 3) why they should listen to you
- 4) how they can be helped by you (contact information)

For example, *'Hello this is Mark from ABC physical therapy. I have exciting news for you today. For a limited time, we are reopening our low-back pain prevention workshop to a handful of people. This will teach you some insider strategies to take care of your lower back. To register before spots fill out, please call 555-423-1234 or email support@abctherapy.com.'*

When you set up a patient-centric communication point like this, the patient recognizes your sincerity, effort and energy involved. Regardless of the mode of delivery (email, regular mail, phone call), patients will now look forward to receiving communication from you. Not only will they read the email (instead of deleting it), they will

forward it to their friends and function as human billboards for your private practice.

A successful physical therapy practice identifies, obtains and nurtures its past and present patients. It is time for everyone to start doing the same in their practice.

SECTION 13

THE ART OF DIFFERENTIATION

Growing a successful physical therapy practice takes a lot more than just good clinical skills. The rule of success is simple: give your patients more than what they expect. They will come back to you and will also refer their friends and family. They will tell their physicians are wonderful you were, which will trigger a wave of new referrals.

It's important to note that the patient should perceive you as an expert. The fact that you enabled the patient is to recover from his or her injury and achieve functional independence is related, but entirely separate manner. The point is, clinical success is a measure of not just how well you serve the patient's, but also about your public perception. In other words the patient has to actually believe that you did a great job, even if you did not do your best.

There are several ways to form a perception. Some might say that perception is reality. When you walk into a McDonald's, you don't expect too much in terms of ambience and customer service. You probably hesitate to

spend more than a few dollars on a meal. However, let's say you walk into a fine Italian restaurant. Your perception of the quality of the restaurant is now shaped by the decor, plush granite countertops at the bar, comfortable leather couches, candlelit tables and dazzling smiles from the servers. In such a situation you wouldn't hesitate to spend upwards of 50, even \$100 on a meal. Your tip would probably exceed the cost of the entire meal at McDonald's.

The lesson here is simple and valuable. Perceptions are formed first and foremost based upon appearances. A patient is not going to see instant results in terms of pain relief, improved functional independence in the first visit. However, the patient makes his or her decision to work with you based on the appearance of your clinic, and professional conduct.

Your ability to be confident in your services, deliver them in a timely and efficient manner and create a tremendous perceived value should create an

intangible perception of grandeur. When you do it right, patients will be clamoring to work with you.

Don't do the same thing that everyone else is doing. If your competitor sells physical therapy, make sure that you offer something above and beyond that instantly differentiates you in your local community. You can market your clinic as a “therapeutic wellness and physical therapy center”. That is likely to get patients interested in your services.

Remember, in most cases, patients can always go to another physical therapist. Your goal is to establish yourself as a service provider who goes above and beyond. You can dominate your marketplace only if you begin to differentiate first.

Begin by asking yourself three questions:

- 1) What special services do I offer that allows me to provide more value to my patients?
- 2) What is it that I do at my business differently that creates value in the eyes of my patients?
- 3) How do I isolate and promote these differences?

Differentiating your physical therapy practice in a competitive environment with declining reimbursements may not be enough. The true measure of success of a physical therapy clinic is not to rely on a handful of physicians for referrals. The differences highlighted earlier are, in fact, your unique selling points.

With these unique selling points comes a target audience. The biggest mistake that most physical therapy practices make is trying to be everything to everybody. If your clinic offers physical therapy, there is nothing that separates it from the crowd. In fact, the message of your clinic is more likely to get watered-down in the humdrum of everyday life. It's going to be hard to get noticed.

Let your patients and experience guide you towards the development of a niche physical therapy program. Survey your target audience and ask them, which magazines and newspapers they read. This is the foundation of your marketing activities. Promotional activities such as mailers, newspaper ads, radio or television spots, or brochures must be thoroughly analyzed and planned before they are launched. This planning increases the chances that your marketing will reach its targeted audience, and get noticed in such a way as to promote action.

A word of advice: Don't try to do this on your own. Outsource the important task of marketing and brand recognition. Most successful physical therapy practices have someone who assumes a leadership position regarding marketing, or there is a definite procedure in place that ensures its implementation. It's important for you, as a physical therapist, to be aware of the basics of marketing. However, the nitty-gritty's should be left to a marketing person.

Reliable and effective marketing person is the backbone of a successful physical therapy clinic. Marketing success has a lot more to do with all of the many little things your business does on a routine basis than it does with the great big public programs that you implement. Marketing should not only be geared to new patients but also to existing (old) patients. To be truly successful, 30% - 80% of your new patients should be referred by your existing patients, maximizing such referrals must be a major component of your marketing program. All of your systems contribute to the determination of whether you fulfill the promises you have made.

SECTION 14

THE POWER OF PATIENT TESTIMONIALS

The physical therapist of the 21st century will command patient loyalty using strong patient testimonials. In successful clinics, the brand awareness and clinic reputation is so powerful that patients flock to the clinic, despite minor inconveniences. As a branding tool, there is nothing more powerful than a patient testimonial for your clinic. Successful practices require minimal ongoing marketing, other than maintaining occasional contact and following up with key physicians, while relying on the strength of its growing patient testimonials.



To get a new patient is more challenging, from a marketing standpoint, than to nurture an existing patient.

The rules of patient testimonials are simple: Do a good job and give them what they want, and they're more likely to give you a testimonial and refer others to you. The best strategy is to obtain a testimonial from the patient on the day of discharge.

To earn a patient testimonial, there are 3 things to remember:

1. Treat and heal like you always would, but go above and beyond the call of duty.

Patients come to your clinic to recover from pain or improve function. As therapists, that's something we can definitely help the patient achieve. Social skills and patient interaction are a different matter. Take the effort to talk to the patient, get to know them and make them feel unique. Simple gestures like a handshake, a smile and a pat on the back can add value to the visits. End the visit by saying, "Glad you could make it today! I hope you are feeling more mobile now than when you walked in." This is a great way to finish up the treatment with a good vibe. Aside from the therapist, it is also important for the receptionist to be friendly and professional.

Other strategies to use include:

- Calling after the first treatment visit to ask if the patient is in pain, or requesting additional feedback. Ideally, the therapist should make the first call. The office staff can be trained to call henceforth, and once a week thereafter.
- Providing the patient with a newsletter / handout describing do's and don'ts after the visits.
- Assisting patients with the general information pertaining to the purchase of home, exercise tools, nutritional supplements and dietary suggestions to lose weight, if applicable. A therapist can provide general information without overstepping state guidelines.

2. 'Instant recall' must demonstrate genuine care and compassion for patients.

In tough times, the one thing that will help your practice more than anything is the patient's 'instant recall' of your clinic or a particular therapist. For example, if the patient has a bad experience with a manipulation technique, they

may associate the pain with the therapist, and when the next prescription for therapy comes around they may choose to go elsewhere. As a therapist, strive to make every experience of the patient a positive and beneficial one. To exhibit a genuine sense of compassion and warmth for your patients, you want to be more than just the therapist they see twice a week at 4 pm. Try some of the following strategies:

- Mail cards on special occasions like birthdays, Thanksgiving, Christmas and the new year. When a patient makes significant progress, give them a handwritten card to acknowledge their achievements; this will reinforce the patient's efforts. A more compliant patient is a more successful and loyal patient.
- Solicit feedback from the patient at regular intervals. Patients like to be considered a part of the decision making process. It gives them a sense of empowerment, as opposed to feeling like guinea pigs on a treatment table. Be honest and ask sincere questions such as "Are you

progressing as well as you expected?” and “What can I do to improve your results?”

3. Request patients to provide a testimonial.
Using the right template, choose the mode
the patient is most comfortable with.

Some patients may be comfortable with written testimonials, while others will not hesitate to provide audio or video testimonials. Keep a ‘testimonial folder’, a digital camera, a camcorder and an audio recorder ready at all times. The best time to get a testimonial is after a “successful” discharge. Ideally, video testimonials are most preferable, followed by audio, followed by written word.

Use the following template to obtain patient testimonials.

To:

From:

Subject: Thank You For Being A Valued Patient!

<Your Clinic Name > Voluntary Patient Survey

We Value Your Feedback About Our Clinic And Services! Your Feedback Helps Us Serve You Better!

We at <Your Clinic Name > strive to offer the best experience in physical therapy. We sincerely value your feedback and listen to everything you have to say. Your honest appraisal, positive or negative, will help us improve our standards. If you want to remain anonymous, that's fine. Please take a few minutes to provide your feedback and / or testimonial. Feel free to add additional information in any form.

By providing us with this testimonial, you understand that you are granting <Your Clinic Name > permission to use your first name and last name ONLY in this testimonial. We promise not to share, rent or exchange any other personal information with anyone.

- 1) What did you like most about the clinic and your therapist?
- 2) Do you have any success stories you'd like to share, giving you an opportunity to enter our "Monthly Testimonial Contest" for a chance to win a FREE T-shirt / hat / sports water bottle?
- 3) Would you consider us to be the leading providers in the community?
- 4) Would you recommend us to your family and friends for their physical therapy needs?

Thank you!

<Your Name>

<Your Clinic Name>

<Your Clinic Number>

SECTION 15

CONSISTENCY OF PATIENT CONTACT:

THE ART OF NURTURE

- Clinical skills are the foundation for success in a physical therapy practice.
- In a competitive, patient driven environment, it is imperative to improve a patient's knowledge of what physical therapy can do
- A therapist should educate the patient consistently within and outside the clinic.

As therapists, we have been conditioned to treat and heal patients. At the end of the treatment process, the patient is usually grateful and brings a home made cake, a gift or a handwritten card, which we proudly display in our office.



In most cases, the relationship ends at this point; patient discharge.

For a savvy private practice owner, discharge represents a foundation for building a relationship that grows with time. It's an ideal opportunity for the therapist to get the patient's permission to provide valuable, relevant information in a consistent manner. To be successful, a clinic must educate and empower the patient, and the best way to achieve this is to communicate with the patient post-discharge using a consistent, information driven mechanism

An empowered patient is a well treated patient. Consistency of communication and the quality of information disseminated to the patient set the foundation for a long standing patient relationship, which can be worth several thousands of dollars per year for the clinic.

Consistency of contact begins with personal communication during the visit and phone / postcard / email follow up after the visit. By educating your patients, physicians and local media to recognize your clinic as a local authority in your field/specialization of therapy, your clinic will instantly

set itself apart from competitors. This will also increase your potential to command cash-paying programs?

In order to establish and consolidate the position of your clinic as the primary provider and to build a steady and predictable flow of high-value patients, your clinic must offer a broad range of services and 2-3 specific programs that enable you to stand out against competitors. Examples of such programs include vestibular training and fall prevention for seniors, pre- and post-pregnancy physical therapy, injury prevention for athletes, fitness and lifestyle management programs, etc.

A regular source of communication with the patient community is mandatory. If you don't make an effort to stay in the patient's mind, they will gradually forget about you, or visit another therapist. A good practice not only retains patients, but also enables them to refer other patients. Communicating with patients and doctors can be done via phone calls (time consuming but effective) or personal contact (door-to-door marketing, extremely effective but labor intensive). Some therapists use direct mail options like postcards (expensive and targeted, with variable response rates). In the 21st century, more and more therapists are using email and the internet as a form of marketing. This is instant, measurable and generally free. As a clinic owner, it is important to find

the single most cost-effective method of marketing and communication to maintain contact with the patient post discharge. The intent is to transform the individual from a patient into an ardent fan and a powerful referral sources.

Ideally, such a method should lead to a constant, reliable stream of patient referrals that grows each month. This will allow the development and execution of cash-based niche programs that are independent of insurance reimbursements.

Old school marketing, the kind that involves the therapist going door to door soliciting doctors has now been replaced by therapist to patient marketing. As a clinic owner, your goal is to be first and foremost in the minds of patients and be considered a leader in your community. When patients perceive you as the provider of choice, they will ask their physicians for a referral directly to you. In the new age of physical therapy marketing, patients are the primary referral sources. A patient should know your clinic, like what it has to offer, and trust the staff enough to ask for a direct referral. The way to achieve this is to give them information about your clinic and your brand of physical therapy. As a private practice owner, you must create a unique identity

for yourself in order to stand out as a respected physical therapist and community leader.

Sending a mailed, faxed or e-mailed newsletter is the quickest, easiest and least expensive way to promote your name in the local community. You get an opportunity to brand your clinic's identity and conclusively establish yourself as the expert therapy provider in your local community. You should write a fresh newsletter to your patients, friends, family, physicians and any other referral sources every other week for best results. Whether it is standard care or a niche program, the public will look to you as a source of meaningful information and seek your services for physical ailments.

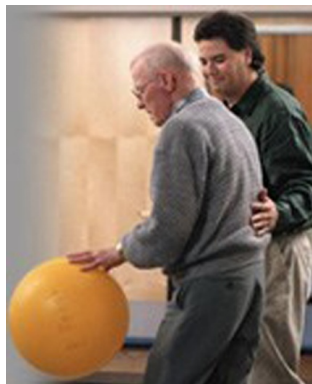
SECTION 16

NUCLEAR PHYSICAL

THERAPY MARKETING

Evolution and unpredictability is an important component of success in a private practice. The mindset of a successful private practitioner is one that embraces constant change and chaos. Most managers try and maintain a sense of stability and predictability (stagnation?). This is not the best way for a private practice to grow.

In order to succeed in a private practice, it is important to challenge the way business is done and build a 'foundational fan base'. Business of the future will rely on social components that withstand harsh economic climates, on 'tribes' of customers who will stand by you, refer more customers and flock to work with you.



In the cases of physical therapy, this begins with patient education and is associated with direct access. I am not talking about awareness of a patient's ailment, but their knowledge and awareness about the profession of physical therapy. This is a great way to build awareness about the profession, and about your own brand. Patients are the single biggest sources of referrals for the private practice of the 21st century. During each visit, tell patients about the scope and benefit of physical therapy and educate them about the results they can expect. Don't thrust the patient into a quagmire of modalities and therapy, but help them understand what is being done, why it is being done and what to expect. Use your skills to get the patients the right results and condition the patients to rely on and respect the profession. This will help you build a large base of satisfied patients, instead of the transient patient who will forget your name within a few weeks of discharge.

Start by improving the patient's understanding of what physical therapy can do for you, and in the process, get recognized as an opinion leader in your

community. As a manager, you should be a 'supportive salesman' to the patient, enable them to understand the benefits of therapy, and become an indispensable part of their lives.

By educating your patients, physicians and local media to recognize your clinic as a local authority in your field/specialization of therapy, your clinic will instantly set itself apart from competitors. More patients will come directly to you.

Awareness is critical

The psychology of a new patient is intriguing. Why does a patient complain about a \$20 co-pay yet the same patient spends upwards of \$60 to \$80 on dinner? What motivates a physician to bypass you as a therapist and seek medication or even surgery?

The reason is a lack of awareness about the benefits of physical therapy. Most individuals do not know what physical therapy is and what it does.

As a private practice owner, you must define physical therapy and, more importantly, define your own brand

of physical therapy in order to stand out as a well-known physical therapist. You must create an identity for yourself in order to succeed as a private practice physical therapist.

Diversification or Nullification

Don't get bogged down by offering just general physical therapy services. Your clinic must offer a broad range of services and 2-3 specific programs. Examples of these programs can include fall prevention for seniors, pre- and post-pregnancy physical therapy, injury prevention for athletes, fitness and lifestyle management programs, etc.

Your goal should be to dominate physical therapy services for your zip code in your community. Make sure your business is listed in the yellow pages. Register your business with the local business center in google by visiting <http://www.google.com/local/add> so that your clinic starts to show in the local listings.

Start talking to local businesses in the field of health, wellness and physical therapy. Talk to other physical therapists with non-competing programs, and

conduct seminars with them / write online articles / start a blog.

Hire an experienced web developer to build or reorganize your website, and capture your visitor's name, email address and phone number when they visit your website. The web is growing everyday, and now provides tools that enable you to evaluate your visitors and change website content in the blink of an eye, to provide relevant information to your target market. For example, a free tool like feedjit can tell you, live, which city and state your visitor came from and how they found you. This information is updated every 3 seconds.

Cold calling physicians, sending direct mail to doctors and patients are strategies that have been used with great success. However, the world is changing at lightening speed and we must learn to keep up or be left behind. Big companies and corporations can afford to spend thousands of dollars on advertising and marketing personnel, but the small business owner does not have

that kind of a budget. The small business owner must find simple, automated ways to communicate with patients, gather feedback and execute new, cash based niche programs independent of insurance reimbursements.

This is the physical therapy practice of the 21st century. It's not conventional, but is full of possibilities. After all, life is most fun when it's (slightly) unpredictable.

SECTION 17

PRICELESS PATIENT CONNECTIONS

You don't have to reinvent the wheel to create a priceless connection with your patient; you just have to follow some basic principles. You don't have to be the first person to come up with a great idea to market your clinic; you just have to do the simplest thing the right way.

If a competitor uses some of your marketing ideas and uses them against you, are you losing patients, or on to something so important that it's time for you to refine and improve your own ideas? On the other hand, if you 'borrow' someone else's ideas, are you going against the rules?



In a world that is changing at lightening speed and becoming busier than ever before, the line between marketing techniques and ethics is razor thin. Clinics are fighting harder than ever before to get patients through the dinner, especially in an environment of increasing copays and declining paychecks.

A successful entrepreneur does not try and reinvent the wheel, he just turns it slightly in his favor. He does not change the wheels and put in new ones, but polishes and aligns the existing wheels so they look better and function better.

To build a patient connection that lasts for years, you don't have to spend a fortune on advertising and outspend your competitor. You need to find a way to reach more patients and doctors while decreasing your marketing costs. Don't try and find new and expensive ways to market, improve on existing ones. It takes less time, effort and money to take an existing idea and refine it instead of building a new idea and testing it out. Existing ideas that can be improved result in the most successful innovations ever.

For private clinics, getting referrals from doctors is the cornerstone of all marketing efforts. Traditional means include cold calling physicians. The strategy has now evolved into lunches, phone calls from marketing representatives, websites, search engine optimizations and inservice presentations.

These are great ideas, but they build connections with physicians, not patients. There is a way to build a connection with a physician, enhance relationships with other physicians and boost patient loyalty at the same time. It's an old technique applied to the profession of physical therapy.

The Physician Interview

Seek interviews from physicians for a newsletter / health tip for patients. Take a closer look at the physicians and health care professionals who refer to you. With an interview, its possible to improve your relationship with them and provide additional services to your patients without spending a dime.

Consider interviewing these practitioners and providing your patients with an informational interview on an

audio CD. The process is simple. Inform a referring physician that you're setting up an interview program and you'd like to have 20-30 minutes of their time. Inform them that you plan on recording the interview and making it available to your patients as a free informational audio CD. You will rarely get an objection. All the physician has to do is to send you a biography, and answer the phone at a scheduled time, and talk to you. Just make sure to talk to the practitioner about the subject in which he or she specializes.

For example, interview an orthopedic surgeon specializing in knee injuries, a bariatric surgeon specializing in liposuction, or a general physician. Ask several questions that are relevant to patients and empower the patients with valuable information. At the conclusion, thank your practitioner for his or her time and mention the practitioner's clinic location. Do this with a different practitioner each month. Your patients will benefit and perceive you as an expert, even though you're just asking the questions. The interviewing doctor now becomes a new source of referrals.

So how do you conduct a phone interview and record it at the same time without investing in expensive equipment? Simple. Download a free program called Skype on your computer, and then make an outbound call from your computer to the physician's office. You will need a headset and a microphone that connects to your computer. This can be purchased for less than \$20 in any electronic store. In addition, you can purchase a program like PrettyMay for less than \$25, which integrates with Skype automatically and allows you to record the conversations automatically to your computer as an MP3 file. At the end of the phone call, just copy your conversations to a regular CD and provide it your patients. Your patients can now listen to the interview on their computer or on their CD players!

Identify the doctors you can speak with and schedule 1 interview a week, starting today. You may not be reinventing the wheel, but will slowly turn it in your favor.



SECTION 18

PATIENTS – YOUR NUMBER

ONE MARKETING WEAPONS

We live in an age of consumerism. Most consumers have everything they need, and almost everything they desire. For the most part, physical therapy and wellness needs of the patient have been taken care of by your clinic or its competitors. To launch a new and successful physical therapy program, the marketing message has to be precisely targeted to a select audience. Most patients have what they need, need quick solutions and are unlikely to start looking for new programs (especially in this economy), unless the specific benefits of the program are explained in a fourth grade style. For example, a balance and for prevention program cannot be marketed to high school athletes. The program with the right intentions and the wrong marketing approach will be largely ineffective. In fact, we live in an age where the traditional approach of creating a program and marketing it via traditional advertising no longer works. How many times has your clinic created a new program and promoted it aggressively only to uncover a lackluster

response? As practice owners, we must start attention to the specific needs of the consumer.

In the coming years, physical therapists in private practice will realize it no longer pays to market to the general public. With the emergence of performance based reimbursement and the APTAs “Move Forward” branding campaign, the emphasis for differentiation has already begun. Innovative approaches, including specialized physical therapy for targeted audiences are no longer the deviation from the norm. In some cases, they will be the only option left for survival. In the old days, businesses succeeded by word-of-mouth publicity. Today, the power of new technologies (email, cell phones, internet, press releases) allows a well-designed, precisely planned program to become an overnight success in a large patient population. Think of it as a word-of-mouth promotion program on steroids. This is a step-by-step strategy to create, test and implement an innovative physical therapy program.

- a) Identify the type of patient you enjoy treating and realistically examine your own clinical skills.

Do you go through the motions with some of your patients? If there are some cases that you enjoy treating more than others, take a close look at your interests and clinical talents. Do you prefer treating orthopedic, pediatric or neurological cases? Is there any particular region that you prefer treating? What types of cases you get the best results with? Do you possess a unique and specific set of skills that are the physical therapists do not? Acquire feedback using patient surveys to determine patient satisfaction. Identify trends of high performance versus low performance with different types of cases.

- b) Examine your patient profile and provide them with a spectacular solution.

Complete a patient inventory. Which are the most common cases seen in your practice? Which age group contributes to a significant chunk of your practice? Identify the deep frustration and the burning needs of your primary audience by conducting in person, phone and written surveys. You must go above and beyond fulfilling the needs of your patients, since most consumers are jaded customers unwilling to pay

attention. Being predictable is being ignored. It's important to provide a powerful solution that forces the client to sit up and take notice and tell his or her friends. Today's consumer depends on feedback from their network of friends and family. This is a single best way to capture the time and attention of prospective patients.

c) Precision, position and promotion.

Your physical therapy program should be easy to explain in under 10 seconds. The title of the service should clearly convey the benefits to a stranger. The description of the program should include powerful words that encourage the stranger to schedule an appointment, and undeniably establish your expertise and credibility. The following are some variations of “old school” versus ‘new-age’ words to promote your program.

Comprehensive versus “Everything from ____ to ____”

High-quality versus “Your all in one _____”

Total versus “Everything you've always wanted in a ____”

Competitive versus “We have rewritten all the rules in _”

The way you describe your message is more important than the strength of your message. A message that is conveyed well will get others to say the things that you cannot. Your patients will now start talking about your unique program and services and spread the word in the community.

If your audience takes the time to listen to your product, but does not respond, it's time to make wholesale changes or move on to a new program.

d) Measure your results, improve the program

The number one goal of your new physical therapy program is to get your phone ringing off the hook. A well-designed marketing program transforms patients and human billboards that do all the selling and promotion for you. When your program is created, test it with your internal pool of patients. With good feedback, you can roll it out to the community using press releases in local newspapers, local web-based communities like yahoo groups, face-book and twitter and leveraging the business connections from the local chamber of commerce.

The right program convinces your prospects to become patients, even before they have picked up the phone to call your clinic. Patients may have the choice to see any physical therapist, but you will be the one they need.

SECTION 19
REVENUE MULTIPLICATION:
THE ART OF BOOSTING
INCOME PER PATIENT VISIT

I played babysitter for a day. When my good friend had to leave for a sudden business trip, he reached out to me to take care of its two kids for the day. Sarah and James are pretty noisy, and each has a voracious appetite..

It's no surprise that we landed up at McDonald's to feed Sarah's never-ending sweet tooth. While fumbling in my pocket to pay for the two chocolate milk shakes, I was asked, "Would you like fries with that?". The bill went from \$3.99 to \$5.49. I just witnessed a 37% increase in revenue for McDonald's, based on a simple yet unhealthy sales strategy. This single phrase adds millions of dollars to the McDonald's bottom-line each year.

That got me thinking. Why don't we as physical therapist upsell our services and generate additional revenue? After all, our services promote health and human function. Shouldn't we be the ones 'upselling'?

In a competitive economy like this one, clinics have to find a way to get more patients, or increase revenue per

visit. Given the dual problem of declining reimbursements and fierce competition, it can get quite challenging to bring in more patients.

With some of the strategies mentioned in this article, you may not need to add a high volume of patients to your caseload. If a clinic can find ways to increase revenue by \$10-\$20 per patient, the jump in the bottom line can add up.

Traditionally, patients have been unwilling to spend anything beyond their copay. It's not because the patient's don't want to buy our value-added services, we just need to learn how to sell such services to them! In many cases, the patient is likely to invest about \$10-\$15, when presented with a cash-based service that has a high perceived value. The patients who come to you already have faith in you and your services. In fact, they are already in a buying mode. As a therapist, all you have to do is to provide them with what they need and at the right time.

1) Increase The Prices Of Your Cash Paying Programs

Just do it, add 10% to the prices of your cash paying programs today. A small percentage of patients will object, but the extra profit from other patients who are happy to pay the slight increase will more than cover this. It's very easy to raise the price of your cash-based program, as long as you create the perception of significant value. Spend some time explaining the benefits of your cash-based program to patients. Explain to them how it differs from programs offered by other providers. Use phrases like, “access to our high quality of care”, “powerful benefits of our program” and “the benefit for you in your day-to-day life”. Emphasize benefits, not features. Present your clinic in a comprehensive and positive manner, and make it appear that your service is so unique that there is no other product or service it compares to.

2) Cross Sell and Up Sell Other Services

There are always other add-on products or services you can recommend to your patients, similar to the McDonald's approach of ‘would you like fries with that?’

Ideally, a successful clinic should have more than one source of revenue. Reimbursement from insurance companies should be a part of the revenue stream. Consider providing a 'membership' to your clinic for patients who would like to come in and exercise on their own. Request the patient to sign a release of liability form, since they will not have the direct supervision of the physical therapist during the course of their membership. Arrange for automatic billing of the patient's credit card. This can be as simple way of adding \$20-\$30 a month from each patient. Hire a nutritionist to visit your clinic two to three times a week and encourage your patients to consult with the nutritionist for healthy meal planning. This is an instant source of cash-based revenue for your clinic. You can also recommend over-the-counter nutritional supplements, if you feel comfortable. You might even form a strategic alliance from a massage therapist, who will function as your employee in your facility.

Cross selling is easier said than done. It's as simple and effective mechanism to boost revenue, but is overlooked by most therapists. I suggest you make a checklist so you

and your staff remember to offer the cross sells and up sells to patients early on in the treatment process.

3) Package Deals – Silver, Gold And Platinum Packages
Like McDonald's, offering the cash paying patient a #1, #2 or #3 with different options of service can be a very successful strategy.

Once the patient is discharged, you can give them multiple options to keep coming back. You can offer a combination of fitness training, nutritional coaching, massage and training journal – a complete package to guarantee the patient's continued success. If you can present the package well, the patient will find it irresistible. So much so, that they will buy it even if they don't see the immediate need for it.

The strategy can also work well when you're testing out new services, before you actually roll them out as full-fledged services.

4) Extended Payment Plan

If you are selling a cash-based program worth several hundred dollars or more, consider offering your patients

a payment plan. Register your business with an online merchant like authorize.net, which gives your clinic the ability to accept credit card payments and direct debits and from the patient's bank account. Having payment terms to allow the patient to make bigger purchases can dramatically increase what a client is willing to spend. Patients should be able to break their investment into monthly payments, just like their mortgage or car payment. With this approach a patient that might not have been able to invest a lump sum of several thousand dollars can get the services and products they want and only have a monthly investment of a couple of hundred dollars.

5) Focus on A-Grade Patients

A-grade patients are the ones that don't complain, pay full price, tell you how wonderful you are, give you great feedback and then tell all their friends (who likely will be A-grade clients as well) how great you are. Identify these patients and nurture them like your own family. Provide them with exceptional service and make sure they are the first to know about any new offers or programs, any new deals... they will love it and purchase more often.

Just choose a couple of these suggestions and implement them in your practice. The next time you go to McDonalds, you can tell the server how upselling has increased your monthly revenue. Just skip the fries.

SECTION 20

TRANSFORM YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE WITH THE RIGHT WORDS

To be a truly successful physical therapy practice, you must set yourself apart. Without the right marketing, most of your patients won't hear about you, and your clinic will be resigned to oblivion. In the age of consumerism, every patient is bombarded daily with marketing messages from using different forms of media. This has reached a saturation point. Consumers are more likely to ignore your message, especially when it does not seem important to them.



Your existing and past patients value your messages less and less over a period of time. The

problem is compounded when your messages do not solve the current problem faced by the patient. Even when your message cuts through the noise, patients are less likely to take action. The average patient is so overwhelmed with information and misinformation, that they are less likely to refer your services to their friends, unless the benefit is obvious and powerful. It takes a lot of effort, and more importantly the right words to move patients to take action. In this new age of physical therapy marketing, you must be able to create a unique, brand of physical therapy, convey the message with the right words to a precisely targeted audience. With the right words, your phones will never stop ringing.

The “headline” or, “attention” grabbers draw your patients toward your practice. This is a specific comment designed to promote your practice and stimulate curiosity. An ideal headline is a glorified truth not any empty overstatement. It should appeal to the emotion triggers and propel the patient to pick up the phone to call you. Don’t make this message too intellectual, because you want the patient to take action as opposed to simply nod in agreement. With The right

headline, the reaction you want to illicit is “I *have* to call them”. Some examples of a strong headline include

A major breakthrough in _____

You owe yourself a _____

Not just another _____

They don’t call us _____ for nothing.

What they never tell you about _____

How many times have you said to yourself? _____

Anyone who knows _____ will tell you

Discover the real truth about _____

In the next six weeks, you could be _____

Get all the facts about _____

Don’t make these _____
mistakes when you _____

The best kept secret in _____

Use precise language to outline the benefits of your services and convey the most important advantages for the patient. It's important here to use language that patients understand and identify with. Avoid the temptation to describe or praise your own practice. Patients hear less than 5% what is important to you and 95% what is important to them. You must be able to convey, in less than 10 seconds how you will relieve pain, improve function. Always speak with the patient's perspective in mind. Patient centered language reinforces your clinical efforts and boosts patient compliance, enhancing the standard of care.

Some examples of descriptions and benefits include

We were the first to _____
in our community.

_____ is just a partial list of our services for you.

Everything you have always wanted in a _____

We have rewritten the rules with _____

The States most respected _____

Discover how easy it is to _____

_____ is what we have always done better than any other provider.

The kind of _____ you have only dreamed about.

We have taken great pains to _____

We give you the power to _____

You are in control

The choice is yours, _____or _____

Once you can understand your audience, cater to their specific needs and desires with the right phrases. With the right words, you can position yourself as a leading physical therapy provider in the community. Strike a balance between “marginal hype” and statements of fact. In an effort to avoid an excessively dry and boring tone, don’t overcompensate by using strong words like excellent and instant relief, which can impact your credibility. With the right expressions, you function as a gentle, but persuasive coach and proponent

of your service. You are steering the patients toward your services without creating unnecessary hype. With the right combination of clinical skills and patient centric terminology, your patients will become referral machines and generate the hype for you. Comments like "they are excellent", "they can give you instant pain relief" and "I had an outstanding experience with my physical therapist" are the powerful closing statements that clinch public opinion in your favor. The words you use can turn strangers into patients and patients into referral sources. The words used by these patients to describe your practice can build you an army of raving fans.

SECTION 21

LESSONS FROM HOUSEHUNTING

Tuesday is a day off for me and my wife Ritika, who is also a PT. She went househunting today while I was clearing up stuff in our home office.

The apartment is too small for us now, and we are planning on buying a home in Morris County, NJ.

She called me at 3 pm today, bursting with enthusiasm..."I think I found a great house"..

I almost fell off my chair and said "Really? What did you like about it?".

"I just loved it, it's a townhouse with 3 bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms, a 2 car garage and a finished basement..."

I delved deeper. "What about the taxes and monthly fees?"

"They are not a problem, but now that I think about it, there was no gym, and this is a 14 year old house.. I did see another house that was newer, with a gym and a clubhouse..

On second thoughts, let's just keep looking"

And we filled up our schedule with 3 homes to check out next Tuesday.. our next househunting day.

The lesson? Give patients a 5 star experience.. even if you excel in clinical areas (which I am sure you do), do not give patients the slightest chance to look elsewhere for physical therapy... Be the best 'physical therapy house' for them that you possibly can... Offer continuous, progressive value and fill the patient experience with powerful, positive vibes each and every time.

SECTION 22

BANJO, THE SCRUFFY HAIRSTYLIST

My hairstylist is a scruffy guy called Banjo.

Yes, I have a hair stylist. If you saw me in person, you'd probably agree I need one.

Each time I go to him, I have to wait in line, even when I have an appointment.

The guy works magic with his hands. When I am done, I feel like my head was unscrewed, serviced and reattached. Oh, my hair looks different too.

He always has me singing his praises, as do all his other clients. It doesn't matter that he looks funny and talks with a strong Brooklyn accent "I woaaaaalkeed my doooooag Aarthur today"

What matters is the results, and the feeling he gives his clients with each session. Everybody remembers him, and he has a strong relationship with past and present clients. Last week, I got a call from him saying "Hey Nitin, where you been? When you coming in".

I scramble for my schedule, in embarrassment, asking
"Are you available next Thursday at 4 pm?"

Do you have this type of connection with your patients?

The question is, are your patients raving about you? Imagine having an army of patients singing your praises every single day! Envision a band of raving fans, walking, talking human billboards who promote your practice at every social occasion they attend. A social sales force that transforms the image of your business from obscurity to stardom.

The presence of such team members can transform your practice, while their absence can sink it.

A tribe of raving patients is possible and can happen in weeks, not months. The results are worth their weight in gold.

The real asset of a physical therapy private practice is its relationship to past and present patients. The ability to engage, captivate and influence the patients healthcare decisions while email, phone, regular mail contact is a priceless asset.

It is important to treat your patients as a gated community. Imagine yourself as a farmer guarding a herd of cows. As a therapist, never ever take your patients for granted and surround them with a wall of information and credibility describing your practice.

In a competitive economy, coupled with declining reimbursement rates, many businesses and professionals are standing by to steer patients in a different direction away from your practice. A patients' attention should be treated as solid gold. Conversely, patients who are made to feel unimportant or under-appreciated may be lured away from your clinic.

Creating a sense of tremendous value with your patients begins the personal contact and is reinforced with alternative modes of communication, spread strategically throughout the year (just like the phone call Andy made to me).

These 'communication points' can consist of email, least desirable to a phone call (most desirable) during the period after discharge.

SECTION 23

ANAIDAISM – THE CHOCOLATE

INTERRUPTION

Trust me, you don't want to be solicited for business when you are out for dinner in a nice place and eating a big chunk of chocolate.

I worked hard all week, and tend to get giddy like a little girl, when its time to go out to a fancy-pants place and catch a movie (or a Broadway show, we live 20 minutes from midtown Manhattan).

I don't know about you, but all I want to do is RELAX on Saturdays and put my feet up.

Well, that was the goal, when my wife and I went to this super-cool place called "Max Brenner" in NYC last week.

This young server came up to me, while my mouth was full of 80% cocoa chocolate and asked "Sorry to bother you, but would you be interested in joining a special 'chocolate membership' where you can enjoy future meals at a 30% discount"

"Thanks, I'm good. Perhaps next time?"

Just like that, she had been brushed off, never to be seen or heard off again.

Maybe, if she said; "May I have a moment?", I'd say, out of common courtesy, "Sure!"

"Hi! My name is Anaida. I have a special one-time offer today. You can get a whopping 30% discount each time you come back, so you can enjoy more and more chocolate! To take advantage of this, all you do is fill out your information and drop it in the little red box before you leave. Thanks and enjoy that chocolate - boy, that looks good"

I would have filled it up and made a beeline for the red box, sure.

When you are soliciting for new patients, how do you make sure to avoid the chocolate-loving-Anaidaism?

How do you know what to say and how to say it?

There are only four key pieces of information you need to provide your patients during each communication point.

- 1) who you are (an introduction or a reminder)
- 2) what you can do to help them
- 3) why they should listen to you
- 4) how they can be helped by you (contact information)

For example, ‘Hello this is Mark from ABC physical therapy. I have exciting news for you today. For a limited time, we are reopening our low-back pain prevention workshop to a handful of people. This will teach you some insider strategies to take care of your lower back. To register before spots fill out, please call 555-423-1234 or email support@abctherapy.com.’

All we need to do is keep it simple, and the results are bound to be as sweet as the chocolate I was enjoying that day.

SECTION 24
PHYSICAL THERAPY MARKETING
REVEALED BY DR. LARRY BENZ

Nitin C: Today, I have the privilege of interviewing Dr. Larry Benz, PT and pioneer in private practice in the United States. Larry is the founder of physicaltherapist.com, evidenceinmotion.com and I can actually go on and on about his resume, Larry has been on the APTA advisory and on practice and the board of physical therapy specialty. He is the recipient of a number of business and physical therapy awards including the Kentucky physical therapy outstanding physical therapy award and the Ernst and Young entrepreneur of the year award. Larry, I'm so happy you took the time out from your busy schedule to speak with us for a few minutes today, thank you again.

Larry: You're welcome. Glad to be here.

Nitin C: Our topic for today is what physical therapists in private practice can do to improve their business using

the internet. A lot of PTs in private practice are recognizing the importance of a website and what it can do for their practice. What advice would you give to a PT in private practice who is looking to use the internet as a medium to get more patients or offer more relevant information to patients?

Larry: Well it's a great question because I think the internet is a great way of obtaining new patients but what I think, physical therapists have to gain a greater understanding is the fact that consumers are leading the way. They are skeptical, demanding, they want access, they want twice the transparency, they want unlimited choices and they want high quality. What you have is a little bit of age compression. You have certainly from the middle age of your baby boomers on up, they might not be as savvy as the younger set in terms of building access information on the internet. But they are paying attention, they are listening. The younger set from what I

would call a sort of a four year old on down to the generations after that, they have a genuine distrust of healthcare providers right now. They are going into information and finding things about you. Whether that would be in the social networks you travel in, the services you provide and who is recommending you to others. The enabling technologies whether they be everything from ratepts.com to networks such as FaceBook, Twitter and other blogging services, people will find out about you. They will self-diagnose and they will seek out your service.



Everything starts off with your basic website. What is my company and what do we stand for, what are the services we offer, what are the timings or the convenience factors. That's the basics, and most PTs kind of use their website as how-to or general information and they kind of end it. What they don't understand is, they can use various mediums within the internet technology to create more memorable experiences for their patients resulting in engaged experience, which further results in patient-loyalty which further results to word of mouth marketing, the best kind of marketing that exists.

Nitin C: So you are saying that the internet actually empowers patients to get more information, which is a good thing but we also ought to be cautious as therapists to provide people with the right information and should be internet savvy ourselves, correct?

Larry: That's exactly correct and not only savvy but *in tune* to what the patients are saying about us. I saw a

provider who happened to be a friend of mine few weeks ago, and just some of the basic internet searches that I get routinely delivered to my inbox, and so I called him and said, this is somebody making a comment on your practice, you might want to call them. But it occurs in kind of a multi dimension, where you got people saying about you, you've got the information you are trying to get to patients and in between is additional information or value add that you can provide for your patients being your resource for your expertise, on exercise, on healthy behavior.

Nitin C: It's interesting you say that, because the APTA has the new brand beat campaign, its tempting to do exactly that and educate such therapists to do that, but here's the interesting thing, Larry, I've been a PT for a few years now and you've been in the game much longer, do you believe that the traditional model of referral generation which is, talk to a physician, build a

good relationship, which is an important model no doubt, do you feel it's becoming less important and the ability to reach patients directly either through public speaking or mechanisms like direct mail, or even the internet, which is just one medium, is gradually increasing? What is the future of physical therapy referral generation? Are we heading more towards reaching patients directly and placing less importance on traditional modes of referral generation?

Larry: Again, a very pointed question, I think it revolves around the generation of patients that you are doing. Let's take a typical, outpatient physical therapy clinic which is some sort of orthopedic, who see the garden variety, low back pain, neck pain, shoulder pain, knee pain, that practice has to have a multitude of strategies for accessing their patients. They have to have some traditional marketing because there's a boat-load of physicians who don't know about us. They also has to

have a consumer driven strategy because information now is getting to a point, consumers want to access information before they make their choices. Let me give you a couple of examples. The FDA, they know and understand that 75% of their time, the patient asks the physician for a certain drug that they saw on a TV commercial.

We need the same kind of information to build our practices and more importantly, build our profession. We need patients asking for physical therapists. We need them asking for specific PTs when they directly access their position. On the flipside, we need to create enough information overload so that it's a natural reaction when a patient says "You know, I've just hurt my shoulder. I've got an ache and pain. I need to access my physical therapist." We need to create such kind of binary type plan. The physicians need to hear and know and understand us, consumers need to build a access

information about physical therapists and in between that, we need to provide a mechanism or better communication between the patients and the therapists.

Patients will seek us through their sort of self-diagnosis or information that they get and we can argue whether that's information or misinformation, but the bottom line is, they are obtaining it then seeking services. It's sort of opposite of what the past generations did which is, they got diagnosed by a practitioner, then maybe sought information of their condition afterwards.

Nitin C: Correct. Well said.. One of my favorite authors is Seth Godin. One of the things he talks about is transitioning an individual through various stages; calling them relationship stages from a stranger to a prospect, from a prospect to a patient, and from a patient to a referral generation source, and from a referral generation source to a raving fan. I find it very interesting because I feel that most of what we as therapists do, is we treat the

patients within the clinic and when they are in the clinic, they are with us but when they go on, they go on. I believe that if a website is structured correctly, if it is interactive, if it obtains a patient's name and email in exchange of a free report, or a free ebook on low back pain can be used as a tool to keep in touch with patients via email and transition them through the relationship stages that Seth Godin and other experts talk about. Do you believe in a strategy like this or have you seen it work in your clinic or other clinics?

Larry: Oh yeah, we take a very patient-centric approach, very service oriented approach and we do that because we believe that it retains patients. We also believe that it adds value to them and that's kind of what our model is, we want to add value to whoever, whenever, wherever, however.. And with patients, they are enhancers and so, if you follow up with an email after seeing a patient that provides them with specific links, or specific resources

about their condition, it's a Wow factor, what we call in our customer service program. It's amazing, it's a zinger. You then follow up routinely with that patient with a multitude of mechanisms, maybe they subscribe to your newsletter, maybe they want to follow you on twitter because you know you are going to provide them physical therapy links. Perhaps that patient will follow up with you at a patient reunion, or some other enhancer experience. We firmly believe the best marketing strategy is what we say in the south, "milk your own cows first", meaning you take your patients and create ambassadors, evangelical missionaries for your business and likelihood of your profession and you do that by creating those memorable experiences. Patients in general may not remember your name or where they met you, but they will remember how you made them feel. What we have an opportunity to do everyday is touch, educate and counsel our patients. And, we can enhance that experience using mediums that the internet allows us to

do, whether its email, whether that be video or social networking where we are resources for them, where we are an asset to their medical experiences they may need in the future.

Nitin C: Another well known marketer, Dan Kennedy, is known as the ‘mail marketing guru’ across the world. One of the things which he said I find pretty interesting is, he says, build a herd of customers. When he uses the word herd, he says that there’s always a competitor looking to get our patients or influence our patients to go to theirs instead of coming to us as physical therapists, so what I’ve gathered from his learning is that we, as PTs need to be learning to build a wall around our patients that keep reminding patients that instills in them, a belief that I am the physical therapist of choice. It’s all a part of brand building and maintaining communication regularly with patients either via emails or phone calls. Do you agree with that?

Larry: Absolutely, there are a number of other ways too. You have direct contact, patient reunions, a database where you remember their birthday, or you get their email where you get a sort of permission marketing concepts that's as good and ascribes to and ultimately you create a tribe of them, a multitude of patient ambassadors that are really there to create your evangelical campaign that not only spreads the word, but keeps you informed of what's going on in the community, and hold you accountable for a level of service that is high and is always continuing them to improve.

Nitin C: Larry, for a PT who doesn't know much about search engine optimization (SEO) but wants to appear on page 1 of google for his local search term, lets say, I'm in a town called Hackensack and have a physical therapy clinic in the same town, what do you recommend? Should I aim to appear in the search

engines for the term ‘physical therapy Hackensack’, and if so, any tips on how PTs can achieve that?

Larry: Let me answer your question in a couple of different perspectives. I think its worthy to have some level of SEO consultation by somebody you trust or somebody that has been recommended that has a reputation as a noted expertise because all of us now in today’s world, everybody’s an SEO expert. The analogy would be several years ago, one of the best advices people would say is you need to have your name in the phonebook, you need to have it bold, and on a page that says sports medicine providers and physical therapists and rehab. SEO is really doing that to web searches. So you have to have an SEO function, either by default, meaning you have no function, you wont show up anywhere, or you spend a multitude of dollars and engage somebody you trust so that you get to those top-level searches. That’s one perspective. The second

perspective is kind of interesting to me, because last year, in the US, there were 300 long tail searches on Google about healthcare and only 50 million short searches. So, for example, long tail search might be something like “I hurt my back while gardening”, a short one would be “low back pain”. The large health media corporations, the revolutionary health, the health centrals – they are very good at the short tail. Low back pain, you are going to go to a local clinic, not a large chain. Because its such a regulated industry though, the stuff you see on physical therapy as it relates to the low back pain, frankly is crap, as its one of the most generic, downsized basic information because they have liability as a very regulated industry. The flip side is, if I enter a search term, “low back pain for gardening”, I’m going to come up with a million different hits and they are probably going to be PT providers that might have been on their website, they might be chiropractics or maybe another profession and is a very broad and dispersed industry on

long tail searches. That's where I think we can have an impact on the SEO side in equation coupled with a formulated strategy on your web for "What do I want people searching for me for? Is it expertise? Is it just in low back? Is it just in Spine? Is it all things Sport medicine? Is it pediatrics?" Or whatever the case may be for your practice, buy yes, I think you need to have a dual strategy, one is simply, I need information so people can access me just like putting it in the phonebook, and secondly I need SEO expertise because I got some legitimately good information on my website, I got to make sure it shows up in some of the long tail searches.

Nitin C: The interesting this is. Google is mainly now an off-page web search engine. What that means is, it does matter what you put in your website. There was a time a couple of years ago, I remember a time, because I've done a lot of SEO of my old sites in the good old days before I started having another consultant or company

do it, the days of making sure that the keywords are there in your page are almost over. Google now wants to know how many people now are linking back to your website, Google wants to know how long a visitor stays on the page, Google can track that, and track how many people visit your website, and a person actually takes actions on your website, like clicking from one page to another, seeking out your contact info, so all of these things indicate that the more credible your website is in terms of patient engagement and outside referrals, the higher your rank in the search engine. Is that something that you've been following closely?



Larry: Oh yeah, we have a multitude of sites, I mean we have the largest social networking site in industry based site in my physical therapy space. We also have a blog, which we know from Google analytics is the largest PT blog in the US. We have our evidence in motion site and physicaltherapy.com site. So we track Google analytics extremely closely. We also have lot of other measures, like well, how much time a user is spending on their site, how did they get to our site, where did they get off from our site, and we are actually spending a lot of time analyzing the information and trying to take advantage of

it, not only from a marketing perspective but even more so how can we add value to the multitude of physical therapists that are out there, looking for resources that offer a lot of incline and conversational oriented, in a collaborative atmosphere in lot of free items. We don't claim any expertise at this time.

Nitin C: Do you believe that as PTs we need to become more internet-savvy or do you feel there's already a large section of PTs that are already internet-savvy? I would be curious to know how many PTs in private practice might want to sign up for a course on internet marketing for PTs for example.

Larry: Well, you raise a lot of issues there; first thing I would say is I think PTs and everybody in healthcare, practitioner wise are very late about technology at large. And as it relate to anything internet-techie wise, I think it's a very small percentage, but again, I would say that our younger generation of therapists are much more

savvy than the baby boomer PTs that are still there. So its another one of their lessons that they better get with the program or the program will get with them.

Having said that, I think there are a number of elements to it. You raised the idea of an internet marketing course that you can take over the internet. I think that's a great idea. I don't know what the levels of interest would be there but there are some good educational sites that are offering traditional CEUs of the internet. It's around for a while but the thing that concerns me is the whole method of really providing CEU credits within the PT domain. It's different in every state. We don't have a universal standard like physicians have and that makes it very difficult. I'm very fond of the techniques for example, I think PTs if they look up a systematic review in the internet and they read it, and integrate that into their practice, which would be the whole purpose of reading it to begin with, ought to receive educational

credit for that. They do in the physician sector. I'd rather drive and prove my practice by driving people to read systematic reviews and read the internet enabled tools that we have including traditional CEUs such as examining a course on internet marketing, or participating in online education. One of our companies, evidence in motion is the largest in US in terms of residency training from an APTA credential residency in orthopedics and its because I think we deal with channel partners across the country and our therapists are able to access the didactic portions of it online. We still have traditional weekend courses but it becomes a more friendly, balanced kind of way in training and education. I suspect that programs such as that will thrive in the future.

Nitin C: I tend to agree with you, Larry. In terms of using the internet to market themselves, are you a big proponent of hiring SEO companies to optimize your

website, or do you believe a PT can do/should do most of the SEOs themselves?

Larry: I don't know any PTs that can do the SEO themselves. Though I'm sure there are some, you're probably one of them. I think its an expertise that they have to see.

Nitin C: Sure, and one final question. Do you think that PTs tend to get it wrong when it comes to setting up their website? I've noticed many sites that have a lot of technical information that are loaded with information that makes sense to PTs but makes it very difficult for a patient to get relevant information, schedule an appointment and find out some quick tips on pain relief or get access to patient handouts. Do you believe that we as PTs should improve the 'patient-friendliness' of our websites?.

Larry: I don't think there's a question about it. It's a delicate balance between having an optimized site, that's

feature-enriched, yet again streamlined so that it's very simple to use. I think the current in thinking in success are those sites that aren't extremely busy but yet have some advanced features. The analogy that I'd like to use is southwest airlines website. It is dummy-proof. You go there, make reservations, check in online, its simple yet really optimized behind the wall. Very feature-rich. Contrast that with other travel websites or airlines where a number of keystrokes and the number of clicks and the things you have to go through are very very complex and really lead to a lot of jumping-off. What we need to do in PT is have a number of resources to enrich our patients and encourage them and bait them coming in as a resource yet we don't need to perplex them, we don't need to make things more complicated than what the need to be.

Nitin C: I think this has been an amazing interview. Do you have any closing comments for PTs who are

considering using the internet and using websites to market themselves better before we wrap up the call?

Larry: I think there's a lot of fear, because they are not intuitive to do it, therapists to do it. Yet there are resources put there, resources like yourself and you become your own resource in expert like getting your hands around it and digging deep into it and doing it aggressively because I strongly believe that consumers are winning the battle of healthcare. They are seeking information first and then they are seeking you, and if you do things right as a PT, they'll seek you for both, information and you personally fear your expertise.

Nitin C: That's well said Larry, again Thank you for your time, I greatly appreciate it and there's a lot that we can learn from this interview and from your websites.

Larry: Oh thank you, I appreciate the compliments, have a good day.



AUTHOR BIO

Nitin Chhoda, PT, CSCS lives with wife Ritika Gulrajani, DPT, CSCS, OCS in New Jersey and owns Therapy Newsletter and Physical Therapy Profits, 2 companies dedicated to the growth of physical therapists in private practice.

Nitin and Ritika are licensed physical therapists and fitness professionals in New York and New Jersey. Their mission is simple: To improve the lives of 100 million individuals with the principles of their holistic wellness philosophy called Total Activation. The couple practice what they preach by exercising regularly, eating balanced meals and staying in touch with cultural roots from their native country, India.

Born and raised in Mumbai, India, Nitin moved to the United States in 2002. An avid writer since the age of 10, Nitin enjoys reading political thrillers, watching crime dramas and researching the field of health and wellness. He will complete his Doctorate in Physical Therapy in 2009 and tour the United States to spread the awareness of Total Activation.

Nitin is active as a health and wellness speaker, physical therapist, community leader, radio and television authority and fitness boot camp specialist in New York and New Jersey.

Nitin Chhoda

Visit www.nitin360.com for Nitin's blog on physical therapy and private practice marketing.

Nitin is also the founder of www.therapynewsletter.com, a done-for-you newsletter marketing system for physical therapists, used by physical therapists across the globe to boost referrals, increase patient loyalty and build a better reputation with physicians.

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