

TODAY'S PRIVATE PRACTICE

Developing a Marketing Plan

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Where do clients come from? They come from having a set of simple, effective marketing strategies, and marketing consistently.

In my coaching work with other therapists, we often work together on tailoring a marketing plan specific to their own situation. An interesting phenomenon happens when they get serious and focused on consistent marketing; they get results in unexpected ways. Prospects they talked to three months ago suddenly call, saying they are interested in working with them. Someone they meet seems like a great prospect. They get a referral from someone they don't even remember. But, these are not accidents. They are the results of effort put into marketing. They are the result of meeting people and developing skills in articulating services. Although sometimes the results seem accidental, they are connected to consistent, planned marketing efforts.

A marketing plan consists of an agenda of actions that gets you clients, combined with the tools, information and skills you need to help you fill your reservoir of contacts, follow up and get presentations.

These actions include things like:

- Sending a mailing
- Meeting people in your target group
- Going to a networking event
- Contacting groups or organizations about speaking
- Writing an article
- Attending a professional meeting
- Having lunch with a referral source
- Contacting potential referral partners
- Sending an item of interest to a colleague
- Making follow-up calls
- Distributing fliers to organizations
- Doing something to get your name in print

Marketing tools, information and skills are the success ingredients that facilitate and increase the effectiveness of your actions.

These are things like:

- A description of your services
- A succinct, well-articulated statement of who you are and what you do
- Business cards
- A list of appropriate networking venues
- Networking skills
- A list of possible speaking venues
- Information pieces such as brochures
- A contact management system, preferably on computer
- A newsletter
- Target market research
- A presentation script or talking points
- Biography sheet
- Web site
- Personal mailing list
- Speaking skills

What are the missing ingredients for your marketing efforts? What tools, information or skills do you need to develop to move you forward?

With a good plan and the right tools you are better positioned to see success in getting clients. The magic formula is selecting a set of simple, effective things to do and doing them consistently. Then, outline an agenda for your marketing actions. You make the best selections when you take into account who you are.

So...

- Know and use your natural talents.
- Find your paths of least resistance and focus on these.
- Expect some fear and awkwardness at first — it's natural.