

TODAY'S PRIVATE PRACTICE

The Marketing Cycle

The key to getting clients and referrals is giving people the opportunity to know, like and trust you. This happens more readily when you have a process in place. This process is called The Marketing Cycle.

There are four stages to The Marketing Cycle:

1. Filling the reservoir of contacts
2. Following up
3. Getting presentations
4. Adding clients/gathering referrals

1. Filling the Reservoir

We fill our reservoir of contacts (prospective clients or referral sources) by meeting people through the course of our business, such as telephone contact with clients' PCP or previous therapist, or through outreach strategies like networking or speaking.

Your goal is to keep adding to the reservoir regularly.

Other ways we can fill the reservoir include:

- Networking
- Referral building
- Public speaking
- Writing — for magazines and newsletters
- Promotional events
- Advertising
- Publicity (being interviewed in the newspaper or a magazine)
- Internet marketing

2. Following Up

It's important to follow up with people you meet who seem interested in your services. Some people will be ready to become a client or referral source immediately, but many will need time and additional contact. Remember, they need to know, like and trust you. So, see if you can set up a time to have a conversation. In this conversation, you will find out more about his/her needs, tell him/her more about what you do and see if there is a match. This conversation is also referred to as a presentation of your services.

Some people will not be ready for this. Others will not be ready to become a client or send you referrals regularly. So, you want a system in place by which you can follow up with contacts, and remind them of your services on an ongoing basis.

People often need to hear about you several times before they are ready. Following up can be done through a periodic newsletter, which helps keep your name in front of people so they don't forget you, or through further conversations over lunch, coffee or the telephone. Following up can also happen through sending out information pieces about your services through brochures and announcements.

3. Getting Presentations

Actual presentations can be formal or informal, and can happen in person, by telephone or by mail or email.

For example, you may set up a lunch with a professional who sees people in your target market. During lunch, you demonstrate an interest in his/her business, and ask him/her more about it and the types of clients who are ideal for him/her. The professional reciprocates and asks you about your practice. You give a brief overview of your services (presentation) and who your target group is (the profile of your ideal client). When talking about your services, be clear about the value you offer. Speak to the benefits of your services that your clients receive.

Be sure to follow up. If things go well, you will want to build a relationship over time. So, regularly remind them that you are out there, and thank them for referrals.

4. Adding Clients

Sometimes making a presentation will result in a person becoming a client or making a referral to you. If not, you may need to make another presentation or continue following up with them as long as it seems worthwhile.

What the marketing cycle looks like for your practice will depend on the type of services you provide and what is natural for you.

What needs the most work at this point in your practice — filling the reservoir, following up, getting presentations or adding clients? Are you stuck in any of these areas? If so, make this the focus of your efforts for the next few weeks.