


# Choice

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# Acupuncture

## for aches and pains

In this issue:

Gentle exercise - best remedy

**36**




Fight depression

**40**



Social anxiety

**54**



**Your Health and Wellbeing Success Starts Here!**

Are you a health-conscious consumer, looking to come into the industry or looking for a suitable treatment? Find out what the experts say and read.

# The 'S' word



**Most people who are drawn to train as counsellors or therapists are motivated first and foremost by their desire**

**T**hey have no trouble giving their time and energy to help others, but many struggle to find enough clients to build a thriving practice - because they don't like to think of themselves as sales people.

## When I am qualified, they will come

I find it incredibly sad and frustrating when a fabulous therapist, who has invested their time in setting up a practice, has to return to employment on a full- or part-time basis - because of cash flow problems. Businesses fail not because therapists and counsellors aren't good enough at what they do - but because they aren't effective at generating prospects. Too many people set up their practice believing that 'When I am qualified, they will come'. Sadly, that is far from the truth. You will need to tell as many people as possible that you exist and to keep communicating that message as clearly as you can.

As MD of both the Coaching Academy and the Entrepreneurs' Business Academy, founded with James Caan ([www.the-eba.com](http://www.the-eba.com)), I know how important it is to build a network of clients. Building a business is not down to luck - it is a process, and a skill that can be learned like any other.

S is for sales - which leads to success - and the ability to provide a greater service to your clients. I want to help people in the caring professions to think of themselves as business owners as well as caring professionals.

### Ask yourself:

**How much do I need to earn per year?**

(And how does that break down?)

**What are my running costs?**

(Premises, bills, rent, living costs and so on.)

**How many clients do I need to make this work - per year, per month, per week?**

(People often don't know this.)

**How much do I need to allow for Tax and National Insurance?**

(Consider setting up a separate bank account to put the money aside.)

## Nailing your niche

A lot of therapists under-charge for their services or else start off with a scale of charges and then give too much of their time. Start with the end in mind. Ask yourself - what is your customer profile? Know your market and position yourself as an expert.

Being a successful therapist is not only about being professionally excellent, it is about 'nailing your niche' and running your therapy practice like a business owner: prospecting for clients, managing costs, and marketing *yourself* in an ongoing and cost-effective way.

If you are a specialist, it will be easier for other people to recommend and promote you. Very often you can charge more for your time because there are fewer people offering your service. The starting point is always a business plan. It doesn't need to be elaborate, but it needs to be very clear.

## Manage your time and your profit will follow

Any caring profession that involves working with people will also involve listening empathically to their life stories. No matter how compassionate you feel, you need to remember that you are running a business, and that your time and their story need to be carefully managed. Make sure you finish on time.

Consider offering a course of treatments,

**What is the market rate, and what is my scale of charges?**

(Do some market research.)

**Have I taken account of seasonal variations?**

(For example, December is likely to be slow.)

**Is this more or less than the number of clients I want?**

(Alter pricing accordingly.)

**How am I going to find them?**

(Target your marketing.)

rather than charging by the hour - and encourage payment upfront. That way, if someone doesn't turn up, you don't lose; or if you go into double time, you can charge for two sessions.

Otherwise, you could end up working twice as many hours for the same money - and many people do.

## A generalist seeks clients, and a client seeks a specialist

There has never been a better time to network for free and make yourself visible online. But your profile needs to be planned in advance. Don't mistake 'social networking' for being casual about your image. Everything you post online needs to send a consistent message about who you are and what you offer. If you want to be seen as a professional and you are charging appropriately for your services, it is worth investing in a professional website that reflects that professionalism. Remember that a poorly designed website will lose you business.

## Bev James' top 10 tips to give your practice the 'S' Factor

- 1. Develop a customer profile.** Identify who you want to draw through your door.
- 2. Nail your market niche.** Decide what you want to be known for - and market yourself accordingly.
- 3. Know your worth.** Work out how many clients you want and need to make a living - and develop a range of services and scale of charges that reflects that target.
- 4. Be customer focused.** Avoid using clinical jargon and always use language your clients will relate to.
- 5. Be an expert at what you do.** Make sure you are the best in your field so that people will recommend you.
- 6. Know the competition.** Analyse your competitors and make sure that you are competitively priced and better than them in some way.
- 7. Get noticed.** Use your website as your shop window. Make sure that it looks professional and reflects the quality of your service.
- 8. Think like a business owner.** Develop a business plan, a marketing strategy and a budget - and use them to develop your practice.
- 9. Take control.** Keep on top of your cash flow to ensure you are running your business, not reacting to it.
- 10. Get professional advice.** Don't struggle unassisted. There is a wealth of advice available on your doorstep. Get a business mentor, join a business network and consult your accountant.

**CHW**

© Remember: Therapy is the service that your practice provides, but every therapist needs to run their practice as a small business owner. Bev James is a Millionaire Mentor, Entrepreneur and Founder of the Entrepreneurs' Business Academy with James Caan. For details visit [www.the-eba.com](http://www.the-eba.com)