

# PRACTICE SUCCESS BLUEPRINT



By Jeffrey Grossman, EAMP



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Jeffrey is available to speak on the subjects contained in this eBook. Feel free to contact him for information regarding speaking, teaching and coaching engagements.

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# Practice Success Blueprint

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## We are Healers, not Marketers

You have chosen a noble career path to help others regain their health and enjoy a better quality of life. Let me be one of the first to congratulate you! You are on the road to an extremely rewarding, prosperous career, and I honor you for choosing this ancient path of wisdom, spirituality and healing.

It's been quite some time since I began my private practice, and I can honestly say that I still feel excited and blessed to be in the position to help others find peace, health and happiness.

When I started my practice, I couldn't wait to employ all those wonderful techniques we were taught in school—acupuncture, gua sha, cupping, etc. I received tremendous results using these techniques. But I quickly realized that my education was lacking in one area: I didn't know how to effectively promote and grow my practice. After talking with other acupuncturists, I realized that the problem was a common one.



So, over my years of private practice I developed a marketing strategy designed to attract new patients and keep them coming back and referring new patients. I embraced the concept of patient education, which equates to growing your practice from the “inside out”.

Of course, you also need to grow from the “outside in,” with marketing, talks, classes, etc. But, through trial and error, I have discovered that a strategy based on educating new patients right from the start, reinforcing that education, and staying in contact with patients can provide the shot of Qi that most practices can use.

As a healer first, you probably want to spend as much time as possible focused on the healing aspects of your practice, and as little time as possible dealing with the business side of your practice. That's where I come in. My goal in founding Acupuncture Media Works, was to provide acupuncturists with the **most affordable, succinct and effective practice-building patient-education materials**.

Every acupuncture practice needs some form of practice-building and patient-education materials in order to create the level of understanding and knowledge patients require. After all, when patients understand the ideas behind your treatments, they're more likely to continue to receive care and to refer new patients to you.

This book contains some core concepts, ideas and materials that I have put to use in my own practice. By providing you with everything you need to create a marketing program based on patient education, we make it easy for you to focus on healing as many people as possible.

This way you can do the most possible good in the world. The material in this booklet can give your practice a shot of Qi to help it grow, thrive, and become the practice of your dreams.

In this eBook, I will share with you some practice skills that have taken me years to cultivate and refine. You'll learn how to set goals for your practice, grow your business, and develop the patient-education skills you need.

Feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions or questions. Email is the quickest form of contact.

Thank you! I wish you health, joy, peace and prosperity.

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## Why Marketing Matters

Marketing goes far beyond placing ads or distributing flyers. What if I told you that healing and marketing are one and the same? That the same skills and passions that make you a great healer can also help you market your practice? In fact, the truest definition of marketing encompasses **all contact** between you and anyone in your practice with everyone outside that practice:

- The Feng Shui of your clinic
- Scents or aromas
- Your demeanor
- How you answer the phone
- How you relate with your customers.



Whether you know it or not, you are marketing yourself every waking second of every day. The question is—are you doing all of this unintentionally, or with clarity, intention, and focus?

Combine your mission as a healer with the idea that marketing encompasses all contact with the outside world, and you'll soon realize that healing and marketing are one and the same.

### **The goal of your marketing is to:**

- Build rapport
- Establish trust
- Get new patients
- Apply patient education protocols
- Grow your practice

Done with clarity and intention, marketing helps you fulfill your life's mission because you'll be able to treat more people; more people equals more visits; more visits equals more money; more money provides a means to make dreams come true.

When marketing is done in an unclear or accidental way, it could be preventing you from doing the most good in this world.

In ancient times, practitioners bartered goods and services. As you may know, an acupuncturist was compensated for their work as long as the person remained healthy. When they became ill, it was the practitioner's responsibility to get them well again. That's health care at its finest! Unfortunately, that's not the way it is done today.



The complexity of our modern society has forced us to adopt a universal means of barter—money. Take away all of the emotions surrounding money, and what having it can mean, and you'll realize that it's a tool in the same way your needles are tools. Money is power. Money makes the world go around. So you need it, and in order to get it you need a steady flow of new and existing patients.

## Why is Education a Key to Success?

A practitioner of Chinese medicine teaches the Tao: the ways in which to live. As practitioners, we are trained to cultivate health for our patients in various ways. When you chose to study acupuncture and Chinese medicine, you also chose to become a teacher.



This medicine goes well beyond the insertion of needles. It includes adjunct therapies and techniques that can help patients regain and maintain their health and prevent illness. One of these techniques is patient education. When done correctly, patient education empowers your patients. They become excited about receiving care and become willing contributors to their own health. Their excitement becomes so contagious that they can't stop talking about it and you—and that translates into referrals.

## Patient Education

Patient education is the foundation for growing your practice. When the correct groundwork is laid, everything else can be built on top. When patients understand what acupuncture is, and what you have to offer, it is easier for them to share their experiences in an intelligent manner with their friends, family and co-workers.

Rest assured that your patients will be asked about acupuncture at some point during the course of their treatments. **That is precisely why clear and effective communication, by you, is so important.**



When your patients have the right words to say, they become fountainheads of information for you and your practice. It's pretty simple. Look at it this way, your patients are walking advertisements for you and your practice. You wouldn't want patients spreading wrong messages about acupuncture or your practice, creating misleading or erroneous advertising. Since word of mouth is the best form of advertising, it's in your best interests to make sure that advertising is accurate.

Now that you understand some basics of marketing and patient education, let's take a closer look at the business side of things.

The next section will discuss the practical details of starting—and marketing—your own acupuncture practice.

## Developing Your Goals

When opening up your new practice, you should understand a few concepts that apply to ALL businesses. The information in this section is designed to make it easier to start your practice—and set yourself up for success.

Let's start by setting a few goals.

- Where do you want to go?

Your goals are your intended destination. Without clear goals, you have no clarity about what you're working toward or whether you've achieved the success you seek.

Ask yourself:

- What would a thriving acupuncture practice do for you, your patients, and the world?

These are your true goals. Marketing will help you get there. There are three types of goals to keep in mind: internal, external, and commercial.

### Internal

Internal goals are what you give yourself.

- What does creating a successful acupuncture practice mean for you and your life?
- Do you seek satisfaction knowing that you have the opportunity to help others, a sense of accomplishment for having created a thriving practice, happiness at being your own boss in control of your own schedule, or having enough free time to participate in volunteer activities?

Knowing what you want will keep you on the right path, motivated and on purpose. Internal goals have nothing to do with other people, nor are they about money. We'll get to those next. For now, what are your internal goals for yourself and your practice? *(Use more paper if needed)*

On a scale of 1-10, how important are your internal goals? \_\_\_\_\_



## External

External goals are what other people give you and how you are perceived in the world: fame, recognition, being known as a specialist, being an authority figure, praise, respect, and so forth. These goals are the non-financial compensation you receive for doing the work you do. What are your external goals? Remember that we're still not talking about money. *(Use more paper if needed)*

On a scale of 1-10, how important are your external goals? \_\_\_\_\_

## Commercial

Commercial goals are all about money. How much money do you need to make in order for you to live your desired lifestyle? Add up all of your expenses—everything that makes your personal and professional life run.

Next, multiply that number by 10. This is the amount your practice will have to earn each year to give you the lifestyle you desire.

- Expenses \_\_\_\_\_
- Multiply by 10 \_\_\_\_\_

Why 10? Your practice has many expenses including:

- Rent \_\_\_\_\_
- Utilities \_\_\_\_\_
- Supplies \_\_\_\_\_
- Insurance \_\_\_\_\_
- Office equipment \_\_\_\_\_
- Marketing \_\_\_\_\_
- Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_
- Licenses \_\_\_\_\_
- Taxes \_\_\_\_\_

- Misc. costs. \_\_\_\_\_
- If you have employees, their salaries \_\_\_\_\_
- Taxes on their earnings \_\_\_\_\_

You need to make more than what you need in order to live happily and save for your future. What are your commercial goals, or rather, the total amount you need to make? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1-10, how important are your commercial goals? \_\_\_\_\_

## Resources for your goals

Congratulations! Writing your goals down is an important first step, one that is sometimes difficult to articulate. The next step is to find the money and resources to make your goals a reality. If you don't have enough money at the moment to achieve your commercial goals, here are some suggestions:

- Find additional resources, such as investors
- Scale back existing obligations to free up resources for your goals
- Scale back your own goals
- Go over your daily expenses and uncover simple money leaks. A money leak is buying a tall vanilla latte every workday. That's \$3.25 per day, 20 days per month, which adds up to more than \$780.00 per year. Consider that extra glass of wine with dinner for \$6.00. Is it worth it?

Balancing your commercial goals with your available resources is a critical second step, because it makes building a successful practice that much easier, and it's a good reality check.

## Time

As the Rolling Stones suggest, "Time is on my side..." Not quite, but it certainly keeps on ticking. If a week has 168 hours, and if you sleep 8 hours a night, as you should, you will have 112 hours per week available to you. That seems like a lot—but not so fast.

- Add up the number of hours you spend meeting your weekly commitments such as working, eating, exercising, commuting, reading, taking a few hours of down time, and spending quality time with your family and loved ones. \_\_\_\_\_

The idea with the "time" check, is to discover how many hours per week you will have available for your marketing needs. After meeting all of your commitments and taking care of yourself, how many hours do you have available to market your practice each week? \_\_\_\_\_

- Realistically, do you think this is enough time? Y      N
- If not, are you willing to rearrange your schedule to accommodate your needs? Y      N

If the answer to both of the above questions is no, then your reality isn't congruent with your goals. Sorry...but that's OK. This is not about blame or fault. It's about finding balance in order to succeed.

At a minimum, you should find 3 hours each week strictly devoted to marketing. Your time can be spent on anything from teaching a health class, doing a talk, attending a networking dinner, or holding screenings.

## Money

The good news is that there are lots of ways to market your practice for little to no money. The bad news is that you'll have to invest a small amount of money and time into marketing, which should not be confused with advertising.

The rule of thumb is that 10% of your gross monthly earnings should be used for marketing efforts. But that's difficult to figure out when you are just starting your practice.

- How many patients do you want to see per week? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much will you charge per visit? \_\_\_\_\_
- Add that up and figure out what 10% will be \_\_\_\_\_
- How much money do you think you'll need to market your acupuncture practice per month? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you have this much money available to budget? Y      N
- If not, can you raise this money from any sources? Y      N
- If not, can you find it elsewhere, i.e. money leaks? Y      N

If the answer to all three of the above question is no, your goals are still not balanced with your reality. But that's still OK.

Reality matches up when you know what your goals are and how much time, money and resources you have to market your acupuncture practice in order to achieve them.

As I said above, if you don't have enough resources and are not willing to make cuts in other areas of your life, then you need to go back and rethink the reality of what you want and how you are going to achieve it.

## Funding Ideas

Without a doubt, starting a practice will require money. The exact amount depends on many factors:

- Location
- Clinic size
- Features
- What you wish to offer
- Needles
- Promotional materials
- Herbs
- Misc.

All of this could vary from a few hundred to several thousands of dollars. This money should be secured **before** you open your practice.

There are many possible ways for you to fund your business, including:

- Your personal funds (savings, etc.)
- Small Business Administration loans (SBA)
- Personal loans/lines of credit
- Home equity loans/mortgage refinancing
- Venture capital
- Business loans or grants
- Borrowing from friends/family
- Cashing in investments
- Selling personal belongings
- Credit card financing

Every situation is unique. You may wind up using a combination of methods to obtain the money required to start your practice. Every one of the methods above will carry different advantages and risks that you should evaluate when planning your business. Here are just a few things to consider:

- **Debt:** Be careful of any funding strategy that relies on debt such as loans or credit cards. Should your practice not meet your financial expectations, you'll be stuck paying these bills. On the plus side, you will own 100% of your practice.
- **Investment:** Investors will most likely want a piece of your practice, meaning that you'll need to pay them a percentage of profits for as

long as you own your practice. The advantage, in some cases, is that you may not have to pay back the money if things go wrong.

- **Cash:** Cashing in stocks, withdrawing savings, and selling personal belongings carries the risk that you may end up losing more than you gain. However, you have the double advantages of not being in debt and not having to share your practice with investors.

Every situation is unique and requires careful planning. Be sure to consult with qualified professionals such as attorneys, financial planners, accountants, business coaches, and other practitioners before taking the plunge!

## Getting Your Practice In Order

Here is a quick checklist that will help you make sure you have most of what is needed to start a successful practice. This list may not be all-inclusive but should give you a great start:

- ☐ Rent/clinic location
- ☐ Phone, fax, cellular
- ☐ Utilities, gas, electric
- ☐ Computer/printer
- ☐ Patient accounting and scheduling software
- ☐ Web site, Internet access
- ☐ Accounting, bookkeeping
- ☐ Needles, needle trays, needle disposal service
- ☐ Cups, hot and cold packs, heat lamp/Electric stimulation.
- ☐ Treatment table
- ☐ Desks, chairs, lamps, shelves, file cabinets
- ☐ Herbs, tinctures, granules, bottles, plastic bags, scale, moxa
- ☐ Stereo, CDs, tapes
- ☐ Plants
- ☐ Appointment book
- ☐ Marketing materials (business cards, letterhead, etc.)

- ☐ Patient education tools/products
- ☐ Cleaning supplies
- ☐ Cotton balls/alcohol
- ☐ Books/subscriptions
- ☐ Clothes
- ☐ Postage stamps
- ☐ Credit card machine and services
- ☐ Continuing education (CEU)
- ☐ Malpractice, business, health, Life, and disability insurance
- ☐ Business license
- ☐ Laundry service
- ☐ Attorney fees

What else does your practice need?

A website!

## What is Marketing?

Now that you have a basic understanding of what it takes to start your practice, I'll discuss how to make it successful by implementing a patient-based marketing strategy.

In the beginning of this book, I mentioned that marketing encompasses ALL contact between anyone in your practice with everyone in the outside world. I suggested that your healing and marketing are closely related because your goal is to heal as many people as possible—and marketing you and your practice can make that possible.

Let's take a closer look at the three key components of marketing: all contact, office feng shui, initial marketing.

### All Contact

When I say that marketing encompasses all contact, that's exactly what I mean. To start and grow a thriving practice, you need to be

aware of the many direct and indirect ways that you come in contact with prospective, existing and former patients. To do this, you must pay attention to all five of the human senses, plus how you interact in the world around you:

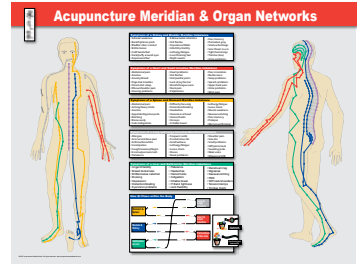
- **Sight**—How do people see you and your practice? Do you promote yourself as an acupuncturist in what you wear, i.e. “Acupuncture Works” T-shirt and clinical jacket with mandarin collar? Do you wear authentic Chinese attire? Do you ever carry around a small plastic meridian doll? (By the way, when I began my practice I did this for a while, and let me tell you, it got attention and new patients. It gets people talking and provides an opportunity to interact with them.) What does your marketing collateral (brochures, education cards, clinic forms, business card, Web site, advertisements, signs, etc.) say about you and your practice? Have you applied Feng Shui principles to your practice? Does your clinic décor and neatness inspire a warm, calm feeling?
- **Sound**—What do people hear when they enter your practice? Is there loud traffic, talking, music, or other noise that might interfere with the healing process? Can you create an acoustically pleasing environment that relaxes your patients with calming music, soothing water fountains, or a sound-blocking white noise machine?
- **Touch**—What do people feel when they enter your practice? Is your furniture comfortable? Is it too cold or too hot? Is there a draft? Is your waiting area too crowded with patients virtually sitting on top of each other?
- **Scent**—What do people smell when they enter your practice? Are there any chemical or unclear smells? Do you burn incense, moxa, aromatic herbs, cooked herbs or aromatherapy? If so, are the aromas strong enough to be effective without overpowering?
- **Taste**—What do people taste when they enter your practice? Do you have fresh water, juices, tea, or other beverages available? Do you use herbs, tinctures, or patent medicines?
- **Relationships**—How do you interact with your patients? Do you seek to form lasting relationships with them? Do you radiate concern for their health and well-being? Do you express concern for the health and well-being of their family and friends? Do you ask about their family and home life? Is your staff courteous and supportive? Do have specific practice and patient-education protocols that foster long-lasting relationships with new and existing patients?

- **Emotion**—How do your patients feel and think about you and your practice? Do you ask for testimonials? How can this information help you improve your practice and your healing abilities?

These are some of the many questions you'll want to ask yourself and your staff over and over again. Place the patient first in your thinking and feeling, and use that viewpoint to plan exactly how you will present yourself and your practice to them.

## Office Feng Shui

One powerful way to put this idea into action is to make your clinic as pleasant—and educational—as possible. After all, the time your patient spends sitting in your waiting room is the perfect opportunity to educate and inform them about acupuncture and your practice.



**Educating** your patients is a multidimensional project, and doesn't stop when the patient leaves your treatment room. Everything from décor to reading materials and product placement can affect your patients' relationship with the healing process. Before you even treat them, your patients need to know that your business is legitimately concerned with their health and vitality.

Preparing your space does not need to involve heavy expense or a large chunk of your time. Keep it clean and simple, and then let the environment you create help to promote and grow your business.

Take a moment to look around your office and ask yourself the following questions. Then put some of my simple suggestions to work to make the environment, from waiting to treatment room, a place that not only educates your patients, but also promotes health and well-being.

- What do your patients see?

When they walk in the front door, are they greeted with plants that have restricted Qi flow, outdated products, or empty brochure stands? It's easy to keep things simple and clean. Display only those products and materials that promote your current business, keep plants and flowers trimmed, watered and happy, and never let your brochure racks and business card holders stand empty.

*TIP: Consult books on Feng Shui to help you design your space and lay out materials.*

- What do they read?

Don't display magazines where articles and advertisements that reinforce the "symptoms = drugs" scenarios. Instead, display magazines



about Yoga, Health, Spirituality and Nature, which promote healthy lifestyle choices and support the “health = no (serious) symptoms” scenario. Books on these topics, as well as Meridian Exercises or Energy Medicine, are great too.

*TIP: Stay current. Don't forget to get rid of old, outdated magazines.*

- What can they share with others?

Place literature, educational materials, recent articles and studies in a visible location. While your patients wait, they can read through education cards such as “Acupuncture and Menopause” or “Acupuncture and Depression.” Everyone knows someone who can benefit from what we have to offer. Education cards are an excellent and effective way to introduce people to a new way of relating to health and wellness.

*TIP: Create packets of information based on specific topics such as pain or allergies, which include education cards, articles, studies and other literature. Attach notes encouraging your patients to take them home and to spread the wealth to family and friends.*

- What do your walls say?

Hang framed posters that promote acupuncture and Chinese Medicine. How about a Meridian Chart displaying meridian pathways and organ networks, or a poster explaining the Safety of Acupuncture? In this way, you can beautify your walls while also educating your patients.

*TIP: Don't forget to change them often. After all, change is good and it keeps your office fresh, new and exciting!*

Now that you've created a space where your patients will feel welcome and relaxed, you can concentrate on marketing efforts designed to attract new patients.



## Initial Marketing

Your initial marketing should focus on finding your ideal patients and reaching them directly. Don't worry about trying to reach everyone. Just focus on that small segment of the population who want exactly what you have to offer. We will discuss how to identify your ideal patient later (*see step four of four-step process designed to help you figure out what makes your practice unique*).

The next step is to determine how you would like to reach your potential patients. Check off the opportunities that appeal to you:

- ☐ Talks/lectures
- ☐ Health classes
- ☐ Teaching
- ☐ Screenings
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Advertisements
- ☐ Radio/talk shows
- ☐ Articles/writing
- ☐ Press releases

Now ask yourself, "How much do I have to spend per month?" The least expensive ways to promote your practice externally are through talks, lectures, health classes, teaching engagements, and screenings. As a rule of thumb, you should have a minimum of two marketing promotions running every month.

## Why You?

Open your local phone book and you'll find that you have lots of competition from other acupuncturists, healers with various backgrounds and modalities, traditional doctors, and more. That's the bad news. The good news is that every acupuncturist is unique and offers something different. No matter how much competition you may have, you can still find a few ways to stand out from the crowd.

Below is a simple four-step process designed to help you figure out what makes your practice unique.

### Step One: Benefits

Begin listing every benefit that patients can receive from your work as a practitioner. Keep the following things in mind as you work on this list:

- Remember to list benefits, not features. What's the difference? A feature is a "bell and whistle." A benefit is what the patient receives from the feature. For example, the fact that you always use new sterile needles is a feature. The extreme rarity of infections or other complications is the benefit. Be shameless! List every benefit you can think of, no matter how obvious, silly or boastful it may seem.

Keep these questions in mind:

- What do I have to offer?
- What do I do, or offer, that is different than other acupuncturists?
- What kind of image and atmosphere do I want to project?
- What kind of patients do I want to attract?
- Where do I want to be in 3, 6, 12 months and in 3, 5, 10 years?
- How can I be extraordinary as an acupuncturist?
- Any special training or skills?
- Do you specialize?
- Do you offer great prices and/or package deals?
- Do you speak certain languages?
- Do you practice TCM or 5-element acupuncture?

When you're done, sit back and take a long look at your finished list. The list is all the good you are willing to contribute to the world. Hopefully this is a long list.

## Step Two: Competitors

After completing your benefits list, your next step is to examine your competition. Open up the phone book or your local health pages, and keep your eyes posted for flyers and business cards from around town. Look for anyone in the field who treats the same or similar conditions and ailments that acupuncture can address. Each of these businesses will present benefits to their patients, including some that you may offer.

Look at your list from step one and cross off each benefit that your competitors also offer. You'll probably find yourself crossing out most of your list. That's OK.

As you do this, you'll start to see benefits that your competitors offer that you don't. These fall into one of two categories:

- Something you forgot. If you do indeed offer the benefit but forgot to include it on your list, don't worry about it, and no need to put it on your list anyway.
- A competitive advantage. If one of your competitors offers an amazing benefit that you don't, then you need to decide if: you are capable of offering that same benefit, and if so, whether you want to or not, and decide whether that benefit represents a barrier to your own success or if it's something that you can use to distinguish yourself. If the former, you need to rethink your offerings. If the latter, rejoice! By filling a different niche with your own, unique offerings allow you to stand out from the crowd.

By the time you're done with this step, you will most likely have just a few items left on your list. On to the next step.

## Step Three: Your Unique Practice

Take a look at the list of items that survived Step Two. You should be able to pick out three to five distinct benefits that you alone offer. If not, rethink your offerings until you can come up with at least three to five benefits that are unique.

They can be as simple as "I have a quiet space for people to relax after treatment," "the Qi in my waiting room is so soothing and calm," "I add Reiki to my treatments," or "I make my own blend of organic herbs."

These three to five benefits are what separates your practice from other acupuncturists and healers. They are what make you unique and special. They make you stand out from others and will help to drive

patients to your practice.

Your marketing efforts should revolve around your unique benefits. In business, we call unique benefits your **competitive advantage**.

### Step Four: Your Patients

The unique benefits that you uncovered in Step Three offer clues as to who are your ideal patients. They will be the people who resonate the most with your unique benefits.

#### Who are these people?

Try to discover who your ideal patients are for yourself. The more labels you can apply to them, the better. Take a look at the traits below and write down information describing the types of people you'd like to attract to your practice. Look at traits like:

- Age \_\_\_\_\_
- Gender \_\_\_\_\_
- Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
- Income \_\_\_\_\_
- Location \_\_\_\_\_
- Religious/spiritual beliefs \_\_\_\_\_
- Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_
- Hobbies/interests \_\_\_\_\_
- Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
- Health status \_\_\_\_\_
- Education \_\_\_\_\_
- Sexual orientation \_\_\_\_\_

*For example, you may find that your practice is best suited to younger, yuppie executives who may have high blood pressure caused by work and domestic stress and who love to fly kites.*

Knowing who your ideal patient is allows you to market directly to those specific people without wasting your time and resources on the rest of the world. The idea is to market to that very select group of people who want what you and you alone have to offer through your unique benefits. This is called nanocasting—the opposite of broadcasting.

## Attracting New Patients

Once you've determined who your patients are, you're ready to begin reaching out to them. There are many ways to meet prospective new patients, such as giving lectures, offering free health screenings, attending health fairs, or through referrals. Whatever way you first come into contact with a potential patient, your goal is always the same:

- To educate about acupuncture and what it can do for their health
- To help patients decide to seek treatment with you

There are two types of potential patients:

- Those who say “No, I'm not sure that acupuncture can help me”
- Those who say “Yes, I think this is the right choice for my health care needs”

There are two steps needed to convert those “No” patients to “Yes” patients. I call this process the Green Lights Toward Acknowledgement, and the two steps are Acknowledgement and Agreement. When you have acknowledgement, you can reach agreement. When you have agreement, you have a solution for their health concerns—and a new patient.

### Green Lights Toward Acknowledgement

#### Acknowledgment

The first step is for “No” patients to acknowledge that they have a health concern. When you encounter a “No” patient, they are basically saying that they do not have health problems, or that if they did, acupuncture wouldn't be helpful to them. The initial goal is to ask questions and listen. When you understand their concerns, then you can begin to inform and educate.

Many people may think that their health concerns are too minor to mention. On the other hand, they may have a serious health issue that they don't realize could benefit from acupuncture care. It's your job to let them know that a health concern can be as simple as stress, insomnia, headaches or wrist pain, or as complicated as IBS, PMS or peripheral neuropathy.

Once a potential patient acknowledges their health concerns, you can begin to discuss the solution.

#### Agreement

The next step is to get your “No” patients to agree with your solution to their health concerns. There are many reasons a potential client may not believe that acupuncture can help them. They may not

think anything will relieve their condition, or they may not realize that acupuncture care can be used as a complement to traditional medical care.

Whatever their reason, address it with an open and honest discussion. The goal here is to help your potential patient see that acupuncture can help, and that they don't have to live with their health concerns, however small or large they may be.

Ask the potential patient this:

- If you knew that acupuncture could help you leave *<input health concern(s) here>* behind, and live a healthier and happier life free of *<input health concern(s) here>*, wouldn't you want to know?"

When your patients say "Yes," two things happen:

- They acknowledge that they have health concerns
- They agree to taking the necessary steps toward wellness

Now that your potential patient is open to working with you to achieve better health, it's up to you to help them take the next step. If you can, make them an appointment right then and there. If that's not feasible, there are other ways to ensure that they make a first appointment. Give them a Health Pass for a first consultation, provide them with educational materials, or simply ask if you can call them later to make an appointment.



Present yourself professionally, be open and understanding, and make it clear that your top priority is to help patients attain good health, and you'll have a thriving practice in no time!

## Building Lifelong Relationships

Buildings have them. Martial artists and Tai Chi practitioners also have them—a solid foundation on which to build. The foundation of any private practice is built upon a steady flow of new patients. To grow a thriving practice, you have to build and foster every single patient relationship in such a way that your current patients will want to continue to work with you—and also refer new patients to you. This may sound simple, but it's a crucial concept that should not be overlooked if you want to succeed in practice and reach your goals. How do you go about creating these relationships? Read on...

### The Fox and the Prince

The classic children's book *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupéry contains a chapter in which the prince meets a fox. The fox desperately wants a friend but is wild and must first be tamed. He instructs the prince to visit each day at the same time. During these visits, the prince is to do nothing but sit quietly and observe the fox. Each day, the prince is to draw ever nearer until he is close enough to touch the fox, at which point the fox will become tame. Over time, the prince succeeds and the fox and the prince both gain a new friend.

This story illustrates what marketing is all about: building trusting relationships over time through ongoing contact. This is achieved by guiding prospective patients through a series of protocols that create trust and rapport and inspires patients to continue care and even refer others.

You can assume that the prince and the fox went on to share many adventures. Likewise, someone who has taken the step of patronizing your practice is far more likely to do so again if they have a positive experience right from the beginning.

One way to ensure that this happens is to take yourself out of the equation and focus on giving, not taking. The more you give, the more you will receive. Everything you do in your clinic must have a real perceived value for your prospective, active and inactive patients.

### Keep the Circle Active

Think of marketing as a relationship circle. This circle begins with meeting a new potential patient, either through an ad, screening, lecture or referral, and ends when that patient refers other patients to you and keeps on coming back to you. And around and around you go... Is it that easy? Well yes and no. You need to have clear and specific protocols in place in order to keep the circle moving.



## Process

The importance of having clear and effective practice protocols in place cannot be overstated. By using these protocols for every patient visit, you'll maximize patient education.

Think of each patient visit as an opportunity to both educate the patient and market your practice.

You should now know that marketing permeates your entire practice. Most people see marketing as a series of "things to do". This approach is like running down the aisles in a supermarket grabbing random ingredients, only to return home and wonder why you can't cook a specific meal. This can be very costly—and not as effective.

What if you took some time to plan your menu for the coming week before going shopping? Your supermarket visit would be guided by this higher purpose and you would select the ingredients needed to prepare certain dishes.

Approach your marketing in the same way. Decide what you want your long-term results to be, and then design each component of your marketing to contribute to this vision as a whole. Each piece of marketing you do is like a piece of wood in a house that contributes its share to the overall structure. Add or remove any piece from that structure, and it will be incomplete and off-balance.

Acupuncture Media Works, LLC, offers a complete practice-building patient-education system to help make this process easier. Our education cards, booklets, brochures, postcards, posters and forms are designed to help you:

- **Educate new patients** simply and succinctly about what acupuncture is and what it can and cannot treat, and answer any questions or objections potential patients may have about starting acupuncture care.
- **Dispel common fears and myths** about acupuncture and build trust and rapport.
- **Conduct a thorough screening** and present a clear report and care plan to your patients so that they see the benefits of continuing treatment with you.
- Show patients how acupuncture can alleviate their specific condition(s).
- Create long-term follow-up for maximum patient health and compliance.

## The Initial Visit

The initial visit is important because it's your chance to introduce new patients to acupuncture and your care. It is also the first step in building your relationship with them. But, the second visit is even more important, as it is the time when you give your Report of Findings.

The initial visit is when you gather the patient's medical history and all diagnostic criteria: tongue, pulse, abdominal diagnosis, ashi points, etc. This is when you should go over the "3-Minute Acupuncturist" script with them. This will help you explain what acupuncture is, and what it can and cannot treat. It can also help you dispel common myths and soothe any fears.

Keep your communication during this visit very clear and succinct. If questions should arise, assure your patient that you will try to answer everything during the next visit, when you present them with their individualized Report of Findings.

After they leave, mail a "Welcome" postcard right away to welcome your new patient to your clinic and to a whole new paradigm of health care (more on the "Welcome" postcard to follow).

## Report Of Findings

A Report of Findings is imperative to private practice. It is a synopsis of all the diagnostic criteria you gathered from their initial visit. A Report of Findings is usually given at the second visit and includes: what you found, what meridians/organs are out of balance, what you are going to do, how long it will take, a re-evaluation date, self-care recommendations, and any do's and don'ts you want to suggest.

Your Report of Findings should clearly illustrate a pattern of disharmony, a clear picture of the specific meridian/organ imbalances, and help set a course of treatments and time line of care. Your patients will take notice when you place all the pieces of their health puzzle together in this simple and organized way.

Over the years, I have had my fair share of blank stares when discussing organ system imbalance. So when I discuss my Report of Findings with my patients, I recommend something I call KISS: Keep It Super Simple. As practitioners, we receive extensive schooling and have the capacity to recognize underlying blockages or imbalances. But for patients, too much information may be confusing, so keep the discussion simple and concise.

When discussing things like liver Qi stagnation or spleen Qi deficiency, I just mention the organs that showed up as out of balance, "spleen, liver, kidney, etc..." I know what the underlying problem is, but all I want to

get across to them is a pattern of disharmony without going too deeply into theory.

During your Report of Findings, there are four important questions that you will need to answer, whether or not your patient asks them. They are:

1. What's wrong with me? Patients want to know what is causing their symptoms. As a practitioner, you will need to answer this question to ease their minds. When you do so, it is extremely important to preface any conversation about specific organs with "The information I am going to share with you today is strictly according to the theories and concepts of Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). So, if I say that your heart is out of balance, please, don't run out of here thinking that your heart is messed up. Remember, I am not making a Western diagnosis. Everything from here on out is in terms of TCM. Does that make sense? Good! During your exam I found a few things that are out of balance..." I can't tell you how many patients might leave the clinic thinking they had a heart condition if you didn't make this distinction. Please, don't let this happen in your practice.
2. What will you do to help me? Patients want to know not only "if" you can help, but also "how" you will do it. You may find that a case may be too difficult to treat. Your patients will deeply respect your judgment if you suggest this and refer them out. If you are going to take their case, remember that acupuncture is foreign to them, so it will be important to convey how you will provide their care.
3. How long will it take? This is important, as it will create a time frame for both you and your patients. It will let them know how many visits they can expect, which will allow them to schedule the necessary time and money.
4. How much will it cost? It is important to include this in your Report of Findings so that patients will be able to budget as appropriate. Be sure to include potential costs of adjunct therapies such as herbs, tui na, electrical stimulation, etc.

These are simple questions that require direct answers from you. The more answers you provide, the more at ease your patients will feel. Weave your answers into your report.

The greater your patients' depth of understanding about the type of care they're receiving, the more committed they will be to following their entire treatment plan. That equals more visits, which translates as more income for you. Patients who are educated about their treatments are also more likely to refer new patients to you. And referrals are the backbone of a thriving practice.

We have developed a Report of Findings form that minimizes your writing, organizes your treatment plan, clearly illustrates a pattern of disharmony, measures patient progress, and presents clear guidelines for care. It is well organized, colorful and easy to use.

## Presentation is Everything

One way to ensure that your Report of Findings is even more valuable to your patient is to present it in a professional, visually interesting format. Recently, I had an experience that underscored how important presentation can be.

A few months ago, I went to see a doctor. I realized that this was a dual opportunity. First and foremost, I was there for my health. But it was also a chance to learn and observe how other practitioners present themselves.

- On my first visit, like most practitioners, the doctor gathered all diagnostic criteria and gave me an initial treatment.
- On my second visit, I received my Report of Findings. At this point I thought, “This is just what I do for my patients.”

As a patient, I felt satisfied and comfortable with the information presented, and as a practitioner, confident that my practices were equal in professionalism to my doctor’s.

My doctor’s professionalism was further confirmed when she pulled out a beautiful, full-color folder, with wonderful illustrations and definitions. Inside the folder was my Report of Findings presented clearly and succinctly. She carefully reviewed the contents of the folder with me—from the images on the front and the definitions on the back, to the multiple brochures and charts inside. I felt as if I was receiving a gift to support my healing, which left me feeling exceptionally cared for and special.

I was inspired! I went to work on creating a 4-color Presentation Folder that you can use to present your Report of Findings and educate your patients. The front is beautifully illustrated with images that represent the Body, Mind, and Spirit. On the back, you’ll find definitions of common terms in acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Inside the folder, include educational materials such as “Acupuncture in a Nutshell,” “Steps of Care” and “Questions and Answers” brochures, and an education card about their condition. Also be sure to include business cards and Health Passes that they can hand out to others, as well as the Report of Findings, and Care Plan and Financial Policy.

Witnessing my patients’ appreciation when they receive these special materials enhances my happiness in knowing that I am contributing to a greater, calmer and more educated world—one patient at a time.

## Always Follow-Up After the First Visit

When I check my clinic’s voicemail, I often receive messages like this one:

- “Hello Jeffrey, I just wanted to say that it was so sweet what you did for me last night. No one in the past few years has done for me what you have. Thank you!”

What my patients are thanking me for are simple acts of kindness. After every initial visit I call my patients to check in with them. Here’s what I say:

- “Hello (*patient’s name*), I was calling to follow-up to see how you are doing. I make it a point to call each new patient to check in and see if there are any questions that may have come up since our initial contact. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Otherwise, I look forward to our next visit on (*date of next visit*).

This call serves a few purposes:

- It can help alleviate any fears
- Answer any questions that arise that may not have been asked during their visit
- Let them know I care and that I am excited to work with them and support their health care goals

It doesn’t stop there. Not only do they receive a follow-up call, they also receive a “Welcome” postcard in the mail. A few days after their initial visit, I make it a point to mail them a specific postcard. Here’s what I write:

Dear (*patient name*),

It was a pleasure meeting with you on (*date of their initial visit*), and I want to welcome you to our clinic.

Most patients seek out acupuncture care for a variety of health concerns. My goal at this clinic is to help you achieve and maintain your health care goals with this safe, natural, drug-free, and holistic health care system.

The trust and confidence you have placed in selecting me as your acupuncturist is most appreciated. I am grateful to have this opportunity to work with you and I want to thank you for investing in your most valuable possession: your health! I look forward to seeing you again at your next appointment.

Yours in Health & Wellness,  
(*Sign and print your name*)

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Make sure you add your contact information to your welcome postcard!

You'll be amazed at how appreciated your phone call and mailing will be. So much so, that your patients will be glad to refer friends and family members to you, simply because they know how much you really do care for their health. Get into the habit of making the calls and mailing the postcards on a regular basis, and over time, watch your practice grow!

## Activating the Inactive

You have probably invested a lot of time and energy getting the patients that you have and have had in your practice. The patients you have worked with but are no longer seeing are **a gold mine**. Why? Because they have already taken the step of coming to you in the past and are already well acquainted with you and your practice. You both have spent time getting to know each other and building a relationship. It would be a waste of time, energy, and money to just let them slip away into a dusty inactive file.

It is important to keep in regular touch with all past and present patients. This can't be stressed enough. Your inactive file is, or will most likely be, larger than your active one. The more these patients receive information from you or your clinic, the more likely they are to reschedule and remember you when a new health issue comes up. This book includes sample letters that you can mail to past patients. Use them as templates for your writing. It is best to use a fold-over postcard (*HIPAA compliant*) and simply handwrite your message.

A seasonal newsletter is another great way to reactivate the inactive gold mine. Four times a year, you have an opportunity to disseminate information about you, your practice, acupuncture, or anything else your heart desires. Use seasonal newsletters as a soapbox for your practice.

Other ways to keep in touch include: birthday greetings, special events at your clinic, classes that you have taken, promotions, new research, etc. There are many great reasons for you to regularly send something to your past and present patients.

Sending out reminders regularly will give you the chance to successfully reactivate seemingly lost patients. They'll thank you for remembering them and for wanting to keep them in tip-top shape and you'll thank them for the continued business—a classic win-win.

Your past clients are a gold mine! Don't let the gold rush drift away.



## The Best Form of Advertising

Word of mouth is the best form of advertising. In private practice, that translates as referrals. Every patient is the center of a network:

- Friends
- Family
- Coworkers
- Other associates.

Take a moment to think about all of the people you know and have in your life. How many can you think of? 50...100...200...or more!

Multiply that amount by your total number of prospective, current, and past patients. That's the amount of potential business you're losing by not actively seeking referrals.

Inevitably, patients will tell friends and family members about their experiences with you. That is exactly why it's so essential to give each patient a clear understanding of his/her treatment. This way, when they talk about you, they are doing so in an educated way.

Patients who like your services will tell many other people how great you are. They do this because they know you, trust you, and are feeling better, thanks to you.

Healthy patients = Happy patients

Happy patients = Referrals

The best way to get referrals is to ask. It is never a bad time to ask for one, but there is a great time to ask for one—when a patient tells you that they are feeling an improvement.

When patients come in and tell you, "Wow...I feel great...what did you do?" you should jump on this as a chance for them to spread the good word. For when they are feeling good, they are more receptive to telling others. In the back of the book is an example on how to do this in a professional, yet direct way.

## Information is Power

We live in the information age. It's important to stay abreast of breaking news and information as it pertains to acupuncture, health and healing. Keep your eyes open to gather and analyze as much information as possible about:

- Your competitors
- Patients
- Marketing
- Your practice
- Your healing arts
- Research
- Studies
- The latest advice on medications and potential side-effects
- Any other information that you can find that can cast you, your practice and acupuncture in a positive light and provide some educational insight to your patients.

Actively disseminate the information you come across to every patient (yet another reason to keep in touch). When your patients have a question about health in any form, they will probably turn to you to provide insight, advice, or direction about where to seek help.



## Your Marketing Engine

You now have a lot of good information to help kick-start your practice. So far, you have outlined your goals and made sure you have enough resources to achieve them. You should have a good idea about what you need to set up your practice. You should know that marketing encompasses all contact with everyone who is not part of your practice. You have also discovered the unique benefits that will set your acupuncture practice apart from the crowd and you know that the key to practice success is to build lifelong relationships with your patients.

So...what's next?

### Planning Your Marketing

Marketing plan. These two words strike fear in the hearts of most business owners. Believe it or not, a complete marketing plan is easy to do. I am going to make it as simple as it gets for you. Write down the following information:

- What unique benefits do you offer your patients that no one else does? If you did the exercise we outlined above, you already have the answer to this all-important question.

- Who exactly are you marketing to? Remember, the more labels you apply to your ideal patient, the better. You can then market to a smaller, targeted audience.

- What is the purpose of your marketing? In other words, what specific action do you want the people who see your marketing to take, i.e. call for an appointment, come to a health class, visit your clinic, call for more information, etc.

- How exactly will you market to your clients? Will you use brochures, mailings, radio and TV, articles, newsletters, health classes or other methods? Remember that there are dozens of ways to market for free.

- What exact niche are you aiming to fill? Yes, you are an acupuncturist, but your personal interests and passions combined with your competitive advantages will steer you to one or more specific areas of practice. Specializing in a small niche means that you will have fewer competitors.

- What is your practice all about? Whenever people see, hear, or interact with your business, what will they think? They're going to think something about you, that much is certain. So it is best to have them think good thoughts. What are your fee structures, policies and procedures? Your practice and demeanor should reflect that of a balanced, healthy and well-groomed practitioner as much as possible.

- How much time and money will you spend on your marketing? Aim to spend 10% or even 20% of your revenue on marketing. Most acupuncturists consider themselves healers above all else. Marketing may not be your forte, but the simple plan outlined above can provide you with the basics needed to kick-start your practice and get your feet on the ground. It will help create a clear vision and reinforce your purpose as a healer.

A plan, even a simple one, will expose any areas where you may be falling short in your organizational methods and clinical procedures, and provide you with the opportunity to reinforce those areas before they become neglected or out of control.

### How Will You Spread Your Message?

If you know who your ideal patients are, you can determine exactly how to market to them directly.

- What specific marketing methods can you use to make them

aware that you're in business and bring them into your practice? When answering this question, think long-term. Marketing is like planting a seed that requires lots of water, fertilizer, and love before growing into a tree that can produce fruit. Sporadic or inconsistent marketing is akin to cutting the seedling down before it has a chance to bear fruit.

A marketing rule of thumb is that you need to reach each prospective patient an average of **9 times** before they decide to schedule with you. Consumers are paying attention to any given marketing message once for every three times it is presented to them. You must therefore send your message out **27 times** before you can realistically expect a great return.

This does not necessarily mean that you should be sending the exact same promotional material 27 times.

It is important for prospective patients to see:

- Your name
- Your clinic name
- What you do...**27 times**

This can be anything, as long as it features your name or practice. When they finally decide to seek out acupuncture care, your name will be the first one they think of.

For long-term practice growth, concentrate on low-cost, innovative ways of spreading your message and getting your name out. There are many ways to market your practice. I've listed 19 of my top tips below to help get you started.

# 19 Marketing Tips to Help Grow Your Practice for Life!

## 1. Strive for 200!

Set a goal for yourself and hand out 200 or more business cards a week. During an average week you come across many people, in line at the grocery store, at the video store, gas station, on the street, at the bank...Just ask if you can give them a card, and ask them to share it with someone they know who may be able to benefit from your care. Also, place a business card in every bill and piece of mail that you send out. You never know! And by handing out 800 business cards a month, you're bound to see some growth in your practice.



## 2. Send a letter of introduction

Send a letter to local chiropractors, personal injury lawyers, massage therapists, physical therapists, and any other type of therapist you can think of. Include a short bio of yourself, the type of care you provide and the fact that you want to network with other therapists. Let them know that you are interested in what they do and you would love to send some people their way. Ask them out to lunch or tea. Attempt to mail out at least 50 new letters a month and don't forget to include a follow-up date when you will call them to make sure they received your letter and answer any questions. Remember to place business cards inside!

## 3. Send a press release to your local paper

You can announce just about anything. See the bonus section for a sample press release. If you're new, let people know that you are in business and your doors are open! If you've been in practice for awhile, let people know what you have been doing:

- Teaching
- Presentations
- Continuing education classes to expand your knowledge
- A new addition to your office
- A new clinic
- Open house



## 4. Get active!

Become known in your community as a volunteer. Help out at your local food bank, nonprofit organization, homeless shelter, senior center aid, or other agency. Let your community know that you have a willing and caring heart and want to give back to them. You can even mention this in your press release.

### 5. Talk it up!

Conduct a free monthly or bimonthly health talk. This is a great way to get people in and really interact with them. Advertise this to your existing and inactive clients. Tell them to bring a friend, and let them know that if they bring 3 people, you will give them a surprise, or maybe even a free treatment. If you can't do this at your treatment space, try the public library, a yoga studio, or dance studio.



### 6. Join Toastmasters International

This is the best tool any person can use to learn public speaking skills, especially if they are in private practice. It will provide you with the confidence, experience and organization needed in order to give an effective and powerful talk! You may even get a few clients out of it.

### 7. Join your local Chamber of Commerce or Rotary club

These are people who are all working and living in your community and their purpose is to support and help people in the community. If you become involved with these type of groups, they may help to grow your practice with referrals.

### 8. Write an article for your local paper

If you have a local new-age or health oriented paper, these are your best options. **Strut your stuff!** Inform the public about what it is you are doing and the far-reaching effects that acupuncture and Chinese medicine can provide.

### 9. Send a letter to your active clients

In the letter, tell them that you value your relationship with them and would love to fill your schedule with people just like them! Include in your letter:

- 3 certificates (health pass or gift certificate) that will entitle the bearer to a free consultation and possibly a treatment (if that is what you want to offer). Possibly offer a stress reduction treatment.

Suggest to this patient that if they hand out ALL 3 certificates to family members and/or friends, they will receive a free treatment from you.

### 10. Send out monthly birthday postcards

Send postcards to your active AND inactive patients. It feels good when someone remembers your birthday. They will be surprised and happy to receive a birthday blessing from you.



### 11. Attend local street fairs

You can rent a booth and display all your wares and literature, or you can stand on the corner and hand out flyers and business cards. If your time is precious, hire a student to hand them out for you.

### 12. Hold a monthly health screening

Try holding it at a nearby supermarket, food co-op or bank. Be sure to bring enough literature to give away with your name on it. You can also offer a free consultation certificate. Remember to get their name and address so you can mail them some good information.

### 13. Keep in touch through snail mail

Send monthly newsletters, “time for a tune-up” postcards, letters of introduction, or articles you just published in your local paper.

### 14. Send them email

If you collect email addresses on your intake form, send a weekly or monthly “hello.” This can consist of what is happening at your clinic and what you have been doing in practice, i.e., what classes you are taking to improve your skills, or what events you may be sponsoring or speaking at. This is also a great way to send “tune-up” reminders. If you have your own website, don’t forget to include the address in your email.

### 15. Offer a discount

Offer a discount or your services free-of-charge once a month to seniors, students or people with a low income. Don’t forget to send a press release to your local paper when you do so. It’s free publicity AND you will get more people coming in.

### 16. Personally call each new client after the initial visit

It will let them know that you truly care for them and it will give you the opportunity to answer any questions or concerns that have come up for them. Not too many other health care practitioners do this, so you will surely stand out in their eyes and hearts.

### 17. Send them gifts

Send your clients an inexpensive gift: a magazine subscription (to a health-oriented magazine) mug, magnet, or something that lets them know that you are thankful for them referring new patients to you. You don’t have to do it with EVERY referral, but maybe after they send in two or three new patients.



## 18. Get personalized items

Print up inexpensive notepads with your name, address and phone number on them. You can even include inspiring quotes. Everyone needs a scrap piece of paper sooner or later.

## 19. Survey says...

If you are about to open up a new clinic, conduct a “medical” survey at the nearest supermarket, jumbo store, co-op, or other store. In your survey, ask the participants to answer these five simple questions: Do you have any medical problems? Have you ever had acupuncture treatments? Do you know what acupuncture is? What kind of health care have you received in the past year? Would you go to an acupuncturist to receive care if you knew it would help? Don’t forget to have a place for their name, address, phone number and email address. Then invite them to your grand opening! You’ll be able to open your doors with people just waiting to come in.



## Working with the Media

Media coverage is a great way to grow your practice. While you can send press releases at any time of year, Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day on **October 24** provides an excellent opportunity for you or your organization to garner local media coverage. In a competitive news environment, attracting the media can be a challenge, and even the most well-orchestrated media approach may not be successful. But, the effort is definitely worth making.

In working with the media, there are a few guidelines you should follow:

- **Contact your local media outlets** to find out who is the best person to receive your news release and the best way to send it (i.e., fax, email, regular mail), and be sure to get the correct spelling of that person's name. In most cases, you will be instructed to send your release to an editor or producer who covers health news. You should also ask if there is someone who coordinates a calendar of events listing and send your release to that person as well. Remember to include all potential outlets (radio, television, newspapers, etc.) in your outreach efforts.
- News releases should be sent at least **one to two weeks** in advance. Earlier is better if you are trying to get an event included in a calendar listing.
- You should feel free to make a **follow-up call** to your media contacts after your release is sent. It is best to call before noon since most media outlets are on deadlines in the afternoon. Be polite.
- A sample **news release** is included in the "Bonuses" section of this book to help guide you. Your news release should be printed on your letterhead.

## Open House Success

Another great marketing tool is the open house. Consider holding one on **Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day on October 24**, or schedule one per season or anytime you want to reach out to the community. Think of it as a way for your patients, new and old, to get to know you—and to introduce you to their friends and family.

An open house also gives your neighbors the opportunity to get a sense of their surroundings, and meet and greet you and your staff in a relaxed setting. It not only serves as an excuse to have fun and spread a lot of community good will, but it also connects you to people on a personal level.

How to conduct an effective Open House:

- **Send a press release.** As soon as you can, send off a press release to your local newspapers and magazines. Press releases should contain the following information: Title of event, location, description (a short synopsis of the event), date, time, short bio of you and your practice, and contact information. The press release should be one half page.
- **Call your patients.** Make a list of your top 50 patients, those you currently see and have seen in the past. Give them a call and personally invite them to the event. Make it simple and straightforward. “Hello, (patient’s name), I am calling because we have a very special event coming up. It’s in honor of patients like you and Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day. I want to cordially invite you, your family and friends to our Open House. It’s on (date). Do you think you can make it? Great! I look forward to seeing you and meeting your family and friends.”
- **Create and mail flyers.** Create an 8-1/2 x 11” flyer on colored paper promoting your event, and mail it to your entire mailing list. On the flyer make sure to list all Open House activities including food, entertainment or a brief talk, and ask them to RSVP by a specific date. Knowing the number of attendees will help you to plan the menu accordingly.
- **Hire fun.** Call your local comedian, clown, magician, balloon maker or band and invite them to participate. You may be able to negotiate a trade—their services for yours. In exchange for a reduced rate, offer them the opportunity to display their personal business cards and flyers in and around your clinic. And don’t forget to ask them to invite their friends!
- **Present your practice well.** Clean your office and use Feng Shui to create a harmonious clinic environment. Make sure that you

have plenty of brochures and other educational materials with your contact information on them.

- **Provide healthy food and drinks.** If you wish to have the food catered, consider asking for a discount in exchange for helping to promote their business.

## Time Your Marketing Efforts

Create an annual calendar of your marketing plan. You should have, at a minimum, three hours of marketing efforts each week. For every week, list the specific things you are going to do to market your practice and what you hope to achieve with that marketing.

Keep track of your budget, as well as your response rate, because you need to know how effective your marketing effort is or isn't. One way to do this is to have specific offers (such as offering a free tincture of herbs or a half-price massage) or discounts during a particular month. Don't forget to include an expiration date with any offer. This will create a sense of time urgency and will help your marketing efforts bear fruit sooner rather than later.

## Seek Kindred Partners

Take out a map and draw a circle that extends 10 miles in radius with your practice at the center. Everything that falls within the inner circle is where you should begin to seek like-minded business people and other healers who can help you grow your practice. Depending on your circumstances, you may want to build a referral network with gyms, health food stores, therapists, social workers, traditional medical doctors, spas, intentional communities, retirement communities, hospitals, martial arts dojos, coffee shops, civic and social clubs, and even other acupuncturists, to name just a few.

When you are out in your daily travels, pick up business cards from people who can support what you do through referral and whom you can support with referrals, too. For each possible referral, ask yourself how you can help each other be successful. In what ways can you share advertising expenses, marketing efforts and business-building ideas?

## Hold Network Appreciation Dinners

One great way to get referrals and have fun doing so is through a Network Appreciation Dinner (NAD). Host a dinner and invite the people whose business cards you've collected, as well as other professionals in the community. Provide a good meal and a venue where everyone can schmooze over food and have a few minutes of undivided attention to talk about themselves and their businesses. This type of event lets you get to know other health care providers in the area, and increases your chance of receiving their referrals.

### Seven Steps to a Fun & Effective NAD

- 1. Create your guest list.** Visit your local health food stores, gyms, yoga studios, bookstores and other places where you can gather business cards. Also check out local bulletin boards, yellow pages, and the internet, for practitioners in and around your town. Invite doctors, massage therapists, naturopaths, chiropractors, herbalists, yoga instructors, and others who you think would make good additions. Remember, when you conduct a NAD, it is best to choose one practitioner from each modality. So, if you pick up four business cards for four different chiropractors, only invite one to this NAD and save the others for future events.
- 2. Send invitations.** Draft and send a personalized letter to each of your contacts inviting them to your event, explaining what your NAD is, why you chose them and what is on the schedule: food, networking, and the opportunity to give a 3-minute introduction to themselves and their practice.
- 3. Plan a healthy menu.** You can order food from a local restaurant, cook your own meal or even have a potluck. To make things simpler, consider ordering from a favorite restaurant that serves healthy, organic, wholesome food.
- 4. Provide a soapbox.** When your guests arrive, allow them time to chat and network with each other for fifteen to twenty minutes before dinner. Before the meal is served, ask each practitioner at the table to give a brief 2-3 minute introduction about themselves: who they are, what they do, how they do it and why they've chosen to do it.
- 5. Sign them up.** When the guests arrive, ask them to fill out a sign-in sheet with their contact information and whether they have any interest in learning more about what you do. For example, you could ask whether they're interested in coming in for a free treatment or an in-depth consultation. You may even suggest doing a trade of services. This is a great way to make additional contact and to get an idea of whether or not they are health professionals you'd refer your patients to.

6. Ask for referrals. When it's your turn to speak, remind them that you brought them together in order to build a network of healing professionals. Express your interest in making professional connections in order to build a strong referral network and let them know why they should refer patients to you.
7. Don't let them leave empty-handed! Have plenty of marketing materials available with your name and contact information on them. You may also be interested in providing a Presentation Folder package for them to give to the patients they refer to you. In the package, include:
  - Your business card.
  - A short letter of introduction that states what you do, why you do it and what you can do.
  - Brochures such as "Acupuncture Questions & Answers," "What is Acupuncture?" and "Acupuncture in a Nutshell."

Remember, when planning and conducting your Network Appreciation Dinner, the best way to succeed is to relax and have fun!

## Putting Your Marketing Plan into Action

Having planned your marketing, it's time to take a deep breath and launch your effort. You might be tempted to throw everything you have into a massive effort. Don't succumb to this temptation! Start slowly with a few marketing efforts and build gradually by adding new methods over time.

## Keep It Up!

Remember what I said earlier. Your marketing message should be sent to each prospective patient 27 times before they'll schedule an appointment. Patience, consistency and faith are traits to cultivate while waiting for your marketing efforts to pay off.

Don't worry about being slick or catchy. Market with integrity and from the heart and you will succeed. The worst marketing efforts, if done consistently, will always outperform the cleverest schemes that aren't done consistently.

## Keeping Track

As I hinted above, you'll eventually find that some of your efforts are rewarding you handsomely, others not so handsomely—with some being outright failures. How will you know this? By constantly measuring how each marketing campaign is working. Having a consistent marketing campaign and clearly defined protocols for establishing and growing relationships with patients will allow you to see exactly what is working.

## Improving

Over time, you'll want to drop the marketing efforts that aren't working, keep the ones that are, and introduce new ideas. If you've been consistent and have measured everything you're doing, you'll have a very clear idea of what changes you need to make and even what new things to try. Remember that it may take some time to find the formula that's perfect for you.

Once you have that magic formula, stick with it through thick and thin. Think about some of the legendary brands and products in our culture. How long have they been around? Years? Decades? Longer? You get my point: If it's working, don't mess with it!

## Bonuses

This section contains a few bonus materials that you can put to immediate use to help grow your acupuncture practice.

### Sample Press Release

---

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Full Name]  
[Phone-number]  
[Date the release is sent]  
[NAME OF PRACTITIONER/ORGANIZATION]

#### FREE LECTURE ON ACUPUNCTURE AND ORIENTAL MEDICINE

[City, State]—It is estimated that as many as 43% of Americans have used or are currently using some form of complementary or alternative therapy such as acupuncture or Oriental Medicine. In recognition of this fact and in support of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day, [Name of practitioner/organization] is sponsoring a free lecture.

WHEN: [Date, time]

LOCATION: [Street address, room name/number, etc.]

DESCRIPTION: [Include here a brief description of the program, specific topic(s) to be discussed, and any registration information]

[Insert paragraph about practitioner/organization]

Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day, officially observed on October 24, is part of an effort to increase public awareness of the progress, promise, and benefits of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day is supported through a unique international partnership of organizations in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The partnership includes professional associations, research organizations and educational institutions.

*Source: Used with permission from the NCCAOM*

## Asking for referrals

When a patient expresses that they are feeling an improvement, it's a great time to ask for a referral. Here is a simple outline to easily guide you through the process. The reason I decided to use it was that some practitioners, myself included, when beginning a practice, have a difficult time asking for referrals. Use this as a basic outline to gather your thoughts and then add your personality to make it your own.

- **Patient:** You know, it's been over two months and I haven't had one migraine!
- **Practitioner:** That's wonderful! Your file says that you missed an average of three days every month due to your migraines. Have you missed any over the past two months?
- **Patient:** No.
- **Practitioner:** You even mentioned that your sleep was disturbed. Is that better too?
- **Patient:** Yeah. I forgot about that one.
- **Practitioner:** Well, that's great. It's nice to hear that you are responding so well to acupuncture care! Say, I was wondering if you would do me favor?
- **Patient:** Sure!
- **Practitioner:** I really enjoy working with you and, if I could, I'd like to fill my whole practice with people just like you! How would you like to help others?
- **Patient:** Tell me how.
- **Practitioner:** Well, you probably know other people who may be suffering from problems like you were. Can you think of anyone?
- **Patient:** Definitely!
- **Practitioner:** Wonderful! I have these three health passes that I would like to give to you so you can share them with your friends and family members. If I give them to you, can I ask you to hand them to people you know who are in need?
- **Patient:** Of course.
- **Practitioner:** Great! I only have a few right now. So, if you will hand them out, I would love to give them to you so you can help me help your friends and family. What do you say?
- **Patient:** Lay them on me. I'll hand them out tomorrow!



## Three-Minute Acupuncture Speech

You need to have a well-prepared mini-lecture explaining acupuncture. “The 3-minute Acupuncturist” script is the quickest and easiest way to explain the what, why, and how of acupuncture. Think of it as Acupuncture in a Nutshell. It’s good to have a canned speech in your pocket.

Use this script during your initial visits, screenings, talks, or whenever anyone asks you about acupuncture. Feel free to embellish the basic script and add your personality to it after you get comfortable with the following basic sample:

“Hello, Mr. Smith. Today I am going to share with you a brief overview of acupuncture. Acupuncture has been around for the past 5,000 years. It has helped millions of people move from a place of pain and discomfort to a place of health and well-being, something we are all looking for.

Thousands of years ago, practitioners of Chinese medicine mapped out a series of pathways within the body called meridians.

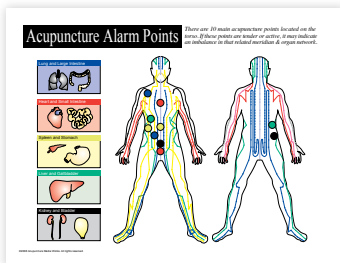
*(At this point, show your patient the front side of the Qi Meridian Flow Chart and trace the pathways up and down, pointing out the organ system connections as you go.)*

All of these lines are your meridian pathways. They travel throughout your entire body, connecting every organ and gland. Together, these pathways and your organs form what we call your Meridian and Organ network, through which flows an essential energy called Qi.

Does this make sense?

Imagine Mr. Smith, that there is a little person here (you can use a plastic meridian doll for this), who is over 100 years old. All of a sudden, they pass on due to natural causes. Inside of him or her is still every organ, tissue and cell. But right now they seem to be missing something. A spark.

Qi is that spark that animates and brings life to the body. It’s a substance that provides energy, nourishment, and support for every cell, tissue, muscle, organ, and gland. Imagine a river, Mr. Smith. Rivers travel throughout our entire planet carrying water that provides sustenance and nourishment to all plants, animals, and people. What do you think would happen without that water?



*(Your patient should answer something to the equivalent to the lack of water=death.)*

Meridians are like great rivers flowing inside each and every one of us.

*(Show your patient the other side of the Qi Meridian Flow Chart that displays the Flow of Qi Inside Body, and trace how Qi flows from one organ system to the next.)*

As I said earlier, Qi flows within these pathways, activating, enlivening and vitalizing your entire being while providing the power to accomplish everyday activities.

Mr. Smith, what do you think would happen if a dam were placed over one of these areas?

*(Your patient will probably answer that they are not sure, or that it would block the flow.)*

Well, the flow of Qi would be restricted and blocked.

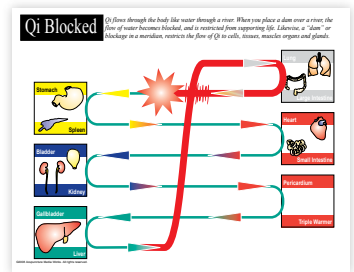
*(Place your finger or a pencil over the line, creating an imaginary dam.)*

That means that everything downstream will not receive proper support and nourishment required to keep the body and mind healthy and flourishing. Can you see that? If Qi becomes restricted or blocked, an imbalance will occur. Eventually, our health and well-being can become compromised. Does this make sense?

*(Your patient will probably answer in the affirmative.)*

Mr. Smith, my goal in this clinic is to discover where Qi has become restricted, blocked, and out of balance. Once we uncover this problem, we will then use certain methods to remove the blockage and facilitate the free flow of Qi. Over time, your body may return to a state of balance and ultimately health and well-being. I am here to help you move from a place of pain and discomfort *(if that is what they are coming in to see you for)*, to a place of health and well-being. May I answer any questions for you?

That's it, a simple, straightforward, and to the point introduction to acupuncture.



## Sample Letters

I remember those days when I would stroll out to my mailbox and find a hand-addressed, postcard with my name on it. Wow, a postcard for me!

Today, we are inundated with emails and other electronic files. These are great, but lack the personal connection that a letter or postcard can bring. The good news is that the art of the personalized, hand-addressed letter is not dead. On the contrary, they are an integral part of your future success when it comes to growing your practice.

Receiving mail always puts a smile on my face—and I'm not alone. Here are a few important letters that you can use right away to help you grow your practice. Each letter has a specific function. Also, don't forget to send out letters or postcards for:

- Welcome
- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Periodic announcements
- Tune-up reminder
- Seasonal changes or breaking news
- Special occasions such as a graduation, work promotion, engagement, marriage, new home, etc.

As you can see, you have many opportunities to keep in contact with your existing and former patients.

## Welcome Letter

Send this letter after a new patient's first visit. It's a warm way to welcome them into your practice.

---

Dear <patient name>,

Welcome to our clinic, and to the family and friends who have found success with the natural methods acupuncture care has to offer.

Most patients seek out acupuncture care for a variety of health concerns. My goal at this clinic is to help you, your family, and friends achieve and maintain optimal health with this safe, natural, drug-free, and holistic health care system.

The trust and confidence you have placed in selecting me as your acupuncturist is most appreciated.

It's a great pleasure to welcome you to our practice, and a wonderful opportunity to work together with you to provide a life free of pain and full of vitality! I look forward to our next appointment together.

I want to thank you for investing in your most valuable possession—your health!

Yours in Health and Wellness,

<handwritten signature>

<printed name>

---

Include the following items with this letter:

- ☐ A schedule card reminding them of their next appointment
- ☐ 3 business cards
- ☐ Acupuncture Question and Answer brochure
- ☐ Condition-specific brochure (if applicable)



## Reactivation Letter #1

It's a good idea to go through your files every few months to keep in touch with those patients who are making their way to the inactive file. Send this simple letter encouraging them to set up an appointment with you.

---

Dear <patient name>,

Our most valuable possession is our health. Fortunately, we feel fine most of the time. The thing is, problems don't just happen overnight. They develop slowly over days, weeks, and even years.

What would happen if you stopped brushing your teeth on a daily basis? Over time you may experience tooth decay and possibly periodontal disease.

That's why I am writing you this letter asking you to brush up on your health. It's my experience that periodic visits and seasonal tune-ups can potentially catch little problems before they become bigger ones. Not only that, they can help your body and mind make a smooth transition into each new season.

Would you wait until your teeth started falling out before going to the dentist? It's been over <specific number of days, weeks, months, years> since I saw you last. In other words, it's time to brush up on your health.

Give us a call to schedule a visit. Besides, I would love to catch up with you and find out how you have been doing.

In Health,  
<handwritten signature>  
<printed name>

*PS: Remember... regular preventative maintenance can keep you in tip-top shape. Call to schedule an appointment today!*

---

Include the following items with this letter:

- ☐ A coupon or Health Pass.
- ☐ Appropriate seasonal newsletter
- ☐ Acupuncture in a Nutshell booklet
- ☐ 3 business cards



## Reactivation Letter #2

If you have not seen patients in a while, here is another letter that you can send out as a gentle reminder of their health.

---

Dear <Patient name>,

I haven't seen you in a while and miss seeing you. I hope you are doing well these days. I am writing to remind you about the subtle, yet powerful potential that acupuncture has to offer. It's an ancient health care system that can:

- Help to alleviate pain and discomfort.
- Support, strengthen, and activate the self-healing and self-regulating abilities of the body.
- Address body, mind, and spirit, not just individual parts.
- Adjust and balance the flow of vital life energy, called Qi.
- Help you achieve optimal health, vitality, and well-being.
- Further prevent illness and disease, and potentially catch anything before it becomes a bigger problem.

I'm sending this to you because I care about your health! I would love to have you schedule an appointment so we can check in, find out what's been going on, and provide you with a quick health exam.

Hoping to hear from you!

In Health & Happiness,  
<handwritten signature>  
<printed name>

---

Include the following items with this letter:

- ☐ A coupon or Health Pass.
- ☐ Appropriate seasonal newsletter
- ☐ Acupuncture in a Nutshell booklet
- ☐ Three business cards



## Referral Letter

Send referral letters out on a regular basis. This is a great way to get your name noticed around town. Go through the yellow pages, holistic directories, those business cards you collected, anything you have at your disposal. Make a list of medical doctors, massage and talk therapists, chiropractors, anyone whose practice complements yours.

This letter is for your patients, asking them to help grow your practice.

Here's one to send to your patients:

---

Dear <Patient name>,

First of all, I want to thank you for being a patient of mine.

I have really enjoyed working with you over the past few <weeks, months, years>, and I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate you choosing me as your acupuncturist.

I realized that I would love to have a practice full of <patient's first name> if I could. Since people tend to attract and socialize with like-minded folks, I figured that asking for your help is the next best thing to cloning you! To be quite honest, I'm figuring that you know others who may also benefit from acupuncture care.

So, short of cloning you, if you know anyone that I can help, let me know, or just send them my way. I will even provide them with a <complimentary, reduced rate, or discounted> initial exam, just because they're a friend or family member of yours.

Thanks again for helping me help your friends and family, and having the trust and confidence in referring them to us. If there is any way I can be of service to you, don't hesitate to let me know!

In Health,

<handwritten signature>

<printed name>

*PS. I have included 3 discounted Health Passes. Please hand these out to your friends and family members who may also benefit from acupuncture care. Thanks again!*

---

Include the following items with this letter:

- ☐ Acupuncture & Modern Research brochure
- ☐ 3 Acupuncture in a Nutshell booklets
- ☐ 3 business cards
- ☐ 3 coupons or Health Passes



## Talk Letter

Don't like speaking in front of people? I can totally understand this. Still, I encourage you to embrace speaking and providing lectures, because it is one of the best ways to meet many prospective patients at once.

The first thing to do is compose and practice your presentation. Then find locations, organizations or businesses that would be interested in having you speak. Find a contact name and send them this letter. Before you send it off, have a Curriculum Vitae (CV) ready to send out if it is requested.

Dear <event planner name>,

I can honestly say that I love what I do! I love what I do so much, that I am willing to look fear right in the eye, smile, and say a few words.

Call me crazy, but I enjoy getting up in front of people and sharing this. My name is <your full name>. I am an acupuncturist <and herbalist, homeopath, etc. as appropriate> who has been in private practice since <month and year>. I have had the pleasure and opportunity to work with many people with various health concerns.

There is no denying that the awareness of alternative medicine is growing rapidly. With this growing interest, I have decided to make myself available for speaking opportunities at any of your upcoming meetings. My mission is to educate the public and dispel any myths about acupuncture & Chinese medicine. I have a 30-minute talk all prepared and ready to go.

Remember, I love what I do, so my presentation will not only be illuminating, but very fun! I will give you a call next week (insert a specific date/time) to follow-up and hopefully schedule an upcoming presentation talk.

In Health & Education,  
<handwritten signature>  
<printed name>

*PS. I have included a simple outline about my talk and the various topics that I am available to present to your <members, organization, club, etc...>*

Include the following items with this letter:

- ☐ Acupuncture in a Nutshell booklet
- ☐ Acupuncture Questions and Answers brochure
- ☐ A short bio





- ☐ A Curriculum Vitae (resume)
- ☐ 3 business cards
- ☐ A sample outline of your talk and other topics that you can talk about

## Marketing Newsletter

As a valued Acupuncture Media Works customer, I encourage you to sign up for our free marketing e-newsletter. This newsletter is packed with marketing insight, tips, and information to help you get the most for your marketing efforts. Please visit [www.acupuncturemediaworks.com](http://www.acupuncturemediaworks.com) to sign up and start receiving this informative, power-packed newsletter.

## Health Pass

A Health Pass is a great tool for getting prospective patients through your door. It's a card that features special rates, freebies, discounts, consultations—whatever your heart desires. Not only that, but each time you hand one out, you are taking a stand for our profession, spreading the idea that health can be achieved naturally through acupuncture care. This alone should be enough to make you want to hand a Health Pass to everyone you meet.

You can use the Health Pass concept in a variety of ways. For example, your existing patients are your best source for referrals, and they would most likely welcome the opportunity to give their friends and family members a special offer from you. You can also hand them out at screenings and talks or provide them to your networking partners—the possibilities are endless.

When your patient expresses that he or she is feeling an improvement with their initial complaint, this is one of the best times to ask for referrals. They're praising you and your care. Their energy is high, so tap into it! Here's a sample script you can use with your existing patients when handing them a Health Pass:

---

"Wow! Mr. Jones, I am so glad to hear you are recovering so well and so quickly. It's nice to see how effective acupuncture care has been for you. I really enjoy working with you. You know, I was thinking, since you have been getting great results, I was wondering if you would like to help me out.

I bet you could name a dozen or so people who also may be able to benefit from care here at this clinic.

I have these three Health Passes that I would like to give to you. Would you be willing to hand them out to your friends and family members?

It would be a great honor for me to help anybody you know since I enjoy working with you so much. And since you have been receiving great results, why not share a good thing with those you love!

*Hand them three Health Pass cards and write their names on them so you know where they came from. During a screening, if a prospective patient doesn't sign up right away, then it is extremely important to provide them with a Health Pass. Don't just hand it to them, create urgency and value. The Health Pass is akin to closing the deal after you talked with them and pre-screened them. It's how you get them through your clinic door and onto your table.*

Well, Mr. Jones, after all the screening we did for you today, I think it would be a good idea to have you come in to the clinic so that we can conduct a thorough exam for you.

I have what I call a Health Pass for you. It's good for a <free, low cost, \$ value> examination to tell you if acupuncture may be able to help you. I only have a few with me today, so I would like to give this one to you. Would this be of interest to you? If not, I will save it and give to someone else who may also benefit from it.

This Health Pass entitles you to <list off everything you will offer during your consultation. See the following examples for some ideas>.

Normally, I would charge <your normal rate>. But today, I am offering it for <your current offering price, or even FREE>. The whole exam will take about <15, 30, 45, 60 minutes>. And after that I should know if I will be able to help you. Would you be interested? Great! But, I only have <some small number> with me. So, if I give one to you, can I count on you calling me up and setting an appointment to come in to our clinic?

---

Below is a sample Acupuncture Health Pass.



Here are a few pointers when creating your health pass:

- You can offer EITHER a free 15-minute consultation or a free/reduced-rate initial examination, whichever you feel more comfortable with.
- Make your offer very clear and state it in as few words as possible.
- Always include the normal cost of the item being offered so your prospective patients will see the exact value you are offering them.
- Include the words “There is no obligation with this offer” or similar.

This allays those skeptics who might think your offer is too good or that there's some hidden cost or catch.

- Always include a clear call to action statement. My example says "Call today to set up an appointment to begin on your road toward health." A call to action sets prospective patients into motion to take your desired action—in this case, calling you to schedule an appointment.
- Have an expiration date. Limiting your offer generates a sense of urgency to call and make the appointment before the time runs out. Don't make the expiration date too far into the future, because you want to generate momentum early. The longer your offer remains valid, the easier it is to forget.
- Printing up a bunch of Health Pass cards at one time? No problem. Include the words "Offer Expires on," then leave a blank area where you can fill in the expiration date by hand.
- Print your Health Pass cards on a heavy card stock and place them inside a red lucky money envelope. This makes for a nice presentation and is also good Feng Shui.

In your conversation with them you want to keep these things in mind:

- Become acquainted with their health complaint, and concerned about their problem. "Gee, Mary, you said that you miss four days per month with a migraine. Is that so? That must be terrible." Or, "Wow, Bobby, you mentioned that you can't get out of bed like you used to. How does that affect your life and make you feel?"
- Introduce them to acupuncture. "You know Mary, over the years I have treated several people with a similar complaint rather successfully! You don't really have to suffer any more. I may be able to help if you only came in to visit us." Or "Bobby, if I told you that you would no longer have to struggle to get out of bed in the morning and regain some of the life you mentioned you lost, what would you do?"

## Next Steps

This book gives you a few ideas about how you can market your acupuncture practice and build lifelong relationships with your patients. Keep in mind, there is a lot to know and each business is unique. I hope it stimulates your intellectual and creative energies and helps you start planning for success.

Before I became an acupuncturist, I was working in the field of marketing, graphic design and advertising. After a period of time, and deep soul searching, I changed course and found myself striving toward a career helping others. I now call myself a **graphic needler**.

I graduated from the NESA in 1997, and found my way out west in Seattle. I have been here ever since.

When I began practice I felt like I was on my own. NESA gave me to tools and knowledge to diagnose, prescribe and create effective treatments. But, I didn't learn the skill to grow a practice, get new patients and keep them coming back (*no offense NESA, I dearly love you*).

For the first few years I struggled with growing my practice. Finally I got it! I began to focus on **patient education** and that's when it all shifted. I began to develop marketing tools and out-reach protocols to use in my practice as a living laboratory. I created brochures, cards, newsletters, scripts and developed a patient visit protocol. I watched my practice steadily grow, and grow!

My colleagues wanted me to create materials for their practices, and I found myself giving advice, coaching and suggestions on how they can grow their practice. And they too reaped benefits of a growing, prosperous practice.

It is with great honor and pride that I can share them with you. I have finally found myself: happy and thankful.

I am available to speak on the subjects contained in this eBook. Feel free to contact me for information regarding speaking, teaching and coaching engagements.

Your colleague in Health, Prosperity & Marketing,

*Jeffrey Grossman, EAMP.*  
President and Creative Engine  
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