

Message Today

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The Difference Between Sales and Marketing

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Many of my students don't like marketing because they immediately equate it with sales. For some reason, the word sales has a bad reputation. Perhaps it's because of a prior career and you swore you would never have anything to do with sales again. Maybe you had a bad experience with a salesperson and vowed to never be like them. Perhaps you think sales is pushy and you have chosen to escape the consumerism of America and are determined not to sell anything, ever. A psychological block about sales could be stopping you from feeling comfortable talking about what you do for a living. Whatever your reasoning is for not liking sales, you must get over it if you want to be successful. Like it or not, the business of massage is about selling yourself and your services. This article will attempt to re-educate you about what sales really is and hopefully your perspective will change.

So, for the sake of keeping your attention, let's start using the word marketing instead of sales. They really are the same thing, but one tends to have a better connotation. And before I launch into my sales pitch (no pun intended) about marketing, let me highlight the three components for true success in the massage therapy industry. I call it the One-Third Rule. **Success in the massage industry is one-third hands-on skill, one-third business skills and one-third marketing techniques, all in equal proportions.** Most therapists put all their emphasis in hands-on training, both during their initial schooling and post-graduate and I believe that is why so many practitioners fail in business. With the other two areas comprising two-thirds of success, why are more therapists not giving equal time to business skills ... including, you guessed it, marketing? Beats me. I believe if equal time was given to hands-on skills, business skills and marketing skills, every practitioner would be wildly successful. It's my dream for all therapists to treat the business part of their practice with as much enthusiasm as they approach hands-on classes.

I want to paraphrase a lesson I read that sums up a point ... no one notices good hair color. Everyone notices bad hair color. Come on, you know it's true. When you see someone with a bad dye job, don't you think to yourself (or say to your friend), "what were they thinking? Do they know how bad that looks?" Perhaps, like me, you have vowed never to change your hair color because you have equated hair color with bad hair color. Well, the same is true for sales. **Everyone notices bad sales; the pushy used car salesman or the telemarketer. No one notices good sales. If someone is good at sales, it's easy, effortless and you don't even know it's happening.** The trick is to be the good sales -person. Before I tell you how, let's define this sales concept more.

So, what is marketing, also known as sales? **I believe it is sharing information and helping people make decisions.** Have you ever noticed how hard it is for people to make decisions? Why not make it easier for them? Offer them a solution. **If you are only trying**



to book a massage appointment, you are selling. If you are offering the solution of massage therapy to someone's back pain, you are providing information and helping someone make a decision. See the difference?

Part of the skill of marketing is being able to ask questions and recognize the information they need so that you can educate them and they can make the best decision for themselves.

Remember when you learned how to conduct an intake interview for a client. You asked the right questions to find out if massage was the right thing for this person. The same is true here. Go back to basics and remember how to ask the right questions so you can offer your solution. They will appreciate you for it and it won't look or feel like sales.

Sales is caring enough about someone to help them get what they need versus how they can help you. Instead of being "me focused," it is "them focused." If you are only focused on how others perceive you, you are being selfish. If you really believe you have something that can help someone else, but are more concerned in how you are viewed, you are self-absorbed. Get out of your own way, help people, and it won't feel like sales.

Sales is about customer service. If you know you have something that someone needs and can benefit from, you are serving your customer. Can you imagine if doctors didn't offer solutions because they were afraid their patients would think they were pushy? Give the information and the clients decide what to do from there. Sales is the opportunity to serve and support a clientele. Whether it is rescheduling appointments or sending newsletters, you are supporting people with what they need.

If you are genuine, it won't feel like sales. If you are selfless about it, people won't feel pressured or hassled. When the interaction is that natural, it will feel effortless and you won't even know or feel like you are selling.