Increase your client Wallet Share

In his coaching series for CAM practitioners dedicated to "the difference that makes the difference", NLP coach **Mark Shields**, director of the Life Practice Group, explains the seventh Practitioner Proficiency: unlocking and maximising client potential.

Those of you from a corporate sales background may recognize the term "wallet share". It's not a term normally found in the world of alternative medicine, but often used in business when discussing an individual client profile, or their income value to a particular business.

"Wallet share" describes the measurement of how many needs an individual client may have and how many of those needs you are able to satisfy with your services or products.

It enables you to look at not only maximizing your earning potential from every client you see but also at keeping the competition at bay by covering all the bases. This is in addition to why you are there in the first place, which is to satisfy your entire client needs with a sensible, fair and affordable set of solutions.

That's why our seventh Practitioner Proficiency is "Unlocking and maximising client potential" – not only ensuring we have a robust process in place to satisfy all of our clients' needs, but also to ensure we derive as much income as possible from every client.

Here are my Big 5 tips to get this done.

1. Structured client programmes

When coaching practitioners, I consistently find many have an average rate of between 1 and 3 sessions per client. You could argue that this is because they are doing a fantastic job, however on closer inspection this normally isn't the case, and the practitioner generally feels that a longer, more structured relationship is needed.

My solution has always been to offer and market structured programmes for each individual problem. Package the programme at a set price which includes all consultations by you, any business partners and associated support materials.

For example, you could run an "Into Shape Weight Loss Programme", and you would set this up to include six consultations with a qualified nutritional therapist, six consultations with a motivational NLP coach, weekly food diary analytics, diagnostics and recommendations, and a copy of the Into Shape Weight Guide and recommended reading list. It also includes all email and telephone support and guidance. Total price: £1495.00.

The principle is the same whether you are a herbalist/phytotherapist, naturopath, acupuncturist, bodyworker or whatever.

2. Client contracting

Motivation, Inspiration, Confidence and Belief are the key four emotional drivers in any successful relationship.

When forming a new relationship with a client an effective way to begin is to form a written contract with the above four principles in mind. Outline the roles of both parties, the commitments and expectations of each other.

Agree a review process and how you are going to record and action results and progress. The GROW model is a very effective coaching model for following through on agreed actions with clients: Goals/Review/Options/Way Forward.

Just remember the golden rule. Write it down. An idea only becomes and action when you write it down.

3. Affiliate business partnering

It is becoming increasingly sensible and profitable to form business partnerships with other practitioners specialising in other disciplines and well-being strategies.

More and more therapists are partnering with life coaches and NLP practitioners. If you are not a bodyworker, you KNOW many of your clients are crying out for it. Many practitioners are addressing this by gaining qualifications in a range of disciplines that can add value to both themselves and their clients. Another way is for a small group of practitioners, each specialising in different disciplines, to serve a wide range of clients. This would be a sensible strategy to capture as much of that wallet share we mentioned earlier.

4. Building client relationships

A lot of the results we get with our clients are based on the relationship. To inspire and motivate our clients into action we must have our client's full attention, co-operation and the client's will to succeed.

Remember, we just provide the tools; the client facilitates the change

My principles ensure that you build such strong relationships that you gain repeat business and the client views you as their life-time coach.

Use tactics such as phoning instead of emailing, sending on meaningful articles you feel may interest your client even after sessions have finished, or sending on details of appropriate courses that may help them, even if it is months down the line.

Sending your own monthly newsletter to all your clients works very well and keeps you in the mind of your client long after your initial relationship seems over.

5. The Difference that makes the difference

I embrace this principle completely. Provide a service to your client that no one else provides – and don't hide it from your client. Explain it on the front page of your website and have it on practice stationery. A good way of communicating it is in the form of a vision statement.

See the client when the client needs to be seen, even if it is a Sunday, or welcome and take phone calls between sessions if it is required.

Encourage your client to email you updates between sessions and respond promptly. I call this practice principles: make sure yours are different to your competitors and be vocal about it. cam

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