

# The practitioner newsletter

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 next Practitioner Proficiency: setting up your own newsletter.

If you look carefully you will see successful practitioners are always giving something free away on the home page of their website: a free session, life plan, health check – and most commonly an invitation to sign-up to a free newsletter which will enlighten them every week with free health and business tips to help them become successful.

It's the least you should be offering. The main objective of course is to collect an email address from every website visitor. They get useful information and you can stay in touch with them.

In addition to having a standard sign-up on your website, you can also ask for your client's email address and get their permission to be added to your weekly newsletter when they fill in the paperwork at your clinic.

As long as your newsletter is full of expert advice, health tips and helpful information you will find visitors and clients want to sign up to it, especially if they are prompted by getting something free.

Running a regular newsletter keeps you in the client's mind, reinforces your credibility, and ensures a regular contact with your potential client of the future.

You may not have secured them as a client first time around, but if you follow my advice you have every chance of securing them as a future client.

If they sign up to your newsletter via your website they have probably never met you – but now they are taking advantage of your expertise in your specialist area – free. You're building a solid relationship with your potential client, reaching into your potential client's mind and you haven't even met or spoken to them yet!

You are now creating a data base and have begun a programme of data marketing which will prove critical to your future business.

You are creating what I call “relationships for tomorrow”, which ensures you are reaching and marketing to a wide potential audience on a regular basis.

The majority of practitioners I meet don't have an email newsletter until I start working with them. They readily admit they haven't even considered doing it as they think it's too complicated, time consuming and difficult; in a nutshell they don't understand it.



If you don't understand something it is true to say it will frighten you. Most of us are afraid of what we don't understand.

## Mark Shields modelling tip

Set up an e-newsletter from day 1 of going into private practice.

Ensure your website has the newsletter sign-up facility on the home page – the first page – and make sure you are also offering something free – again on your home page. That way you have two chances of capturing vital client information for the future.

Make it a non-negotiable minimum standard for yourself that you are going to collect an email address from everyone that you come into business contact with. These will include:

- Visitors to your website
- New clients
- Client enquiries
- Business partners
- Other therapists and practitioners
- Influential industry contacts

## How to set up your first newsletter

Set up is very straight forward. Most websites have the facility to send out a basic newsletter to up to a maximum data base of around 1000 names.

Use whatever built-in facilities your Internet Service Provider gives you with your website – or the system that comes built into blogging/website hosting packages like WordPress to get used to writing and sending a newsletter

Once you've got it off the ground, you can think about outsourcing your newsletter facility to an independent provider. I know it all sounds very expensive but to outsource your newsletter for up to 5000 recipients, take

advantage of full visuals, links, and media facilities costs from around £10.00 per month. For this you get everything you need from templates to design – a useful company for this is [www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com)

**How often?** You should send your newsletter out every week.

**When?** The same day every week to create consistency and continuity.

**What should I include?** Your newsletter should be full of benefits to your clients. Free tips, health news, current promotions, special days, discounted sessions. In addition you can share good news stories, up and coming events and how things are progressing in your world.

You should include everything you think will interest your potential client. Even links to national newspaper articles that might be relevant. A quick comment when there is a story “knocking” CAM.

## Easy unsubscribe

Nobody likes spam. Make sure you give everyone on your list the option to unsubscribe if they want to – every time they get it. In the same way, make sure you have permission to include them in the first place.

## What sort of numbers?

Go in simple steps. Set yourself goals. Aim for 50 in the first 3 months and 100 by month 6. I have found an achievable goal to have in the first year is 250 names on your newsletter database.

By the end of year 3 another achievable goal and expectation is to have collected 1000 names for your newsletter. Remember, you will get a handful of unsubscribers, so challenge yourself to replace them every month!



## About the author

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