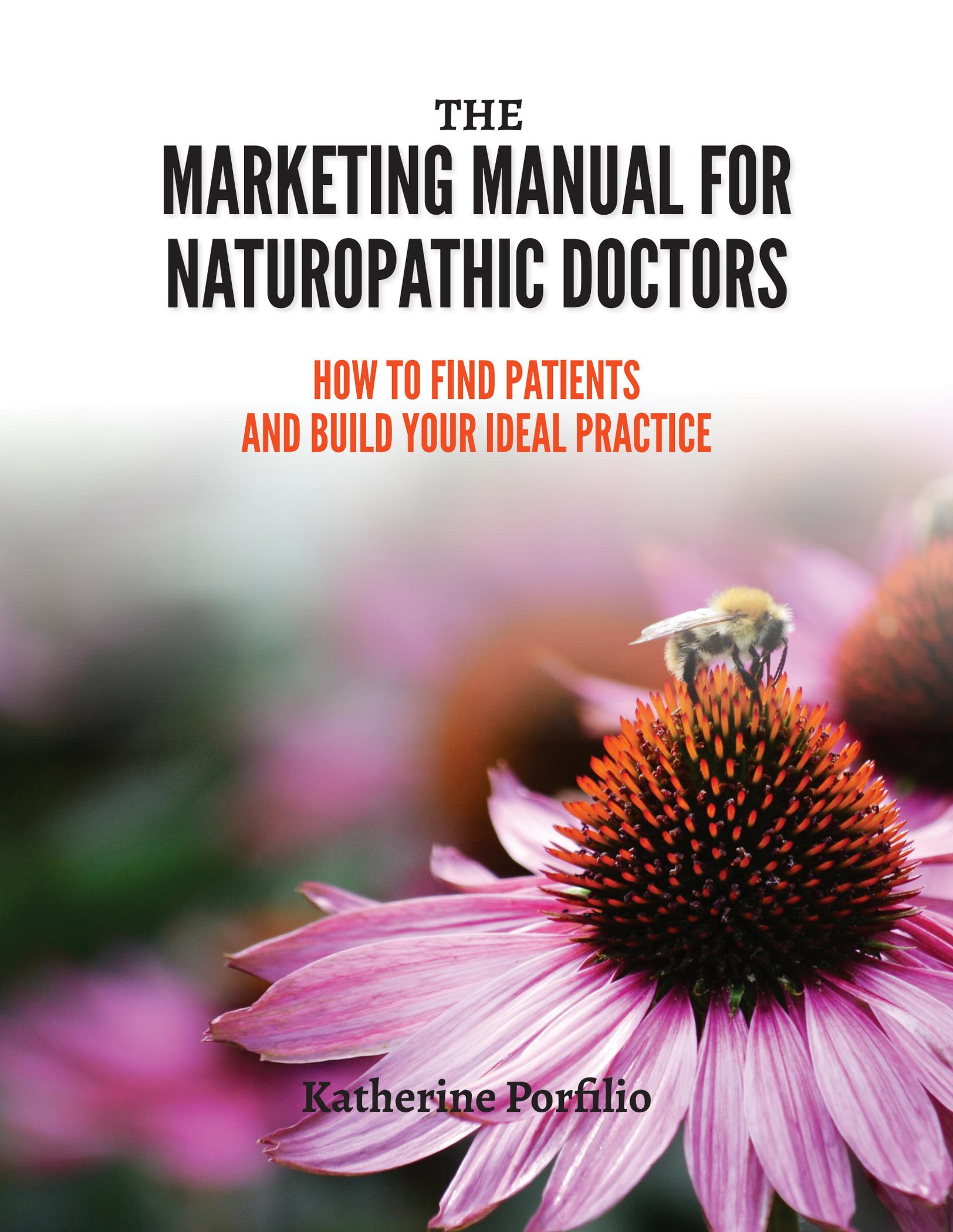


THE MARKETING MANUAL FOR NATUROPATHIC DOCTORS

HOW TO FIND PATIENTS
AND BUILD YOUR IDEAL PRACTICE

Katherine Porfilio

A close-up photograph of a purple flower with a bumblebee on its center. The flower has many thin, light purple petals radiating from a dark brown center with orange stamens. The bumblebee is perched on the center of the flower, facing right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus purple and green.

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You're So Fine Print

The Marketing Manual for Naturopathic Doctors How to Find Quality Patients and Build your Ideal Practice

By Katherine Porfilio

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Now that that's settled, time for a cup of tea?

The Marketing Manual for Naturopathic Doctors is published by Stark Raven Design, a boutique marketing agency focused on helping clients attract their ideal customer, avoid the most common marketing mistakes and earn a predictable revenue stream.

This book was designed with Adobe InDesign CC 2015.

Please write with questions or inquiries: kate@starkraven.design.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK

This book is for you if...

You're ready to take your practice to the next level. You want to make a bigger difference in the world and know that if you had a thriving practice, you could help more people and have financial success (without having to sell your soul).

You believe in yourself.

You don't wait for opportunities—you create them and you're willing to overcome your fears and insecurities to reach your goals.

And...

You're a Naturopathic Doctor (and fledgling marketer) who is passionate about learning how to market their practice in the quickest, most efficient and economical way possible.

SUPER POWERS AREN'T ENOUGH

You may be really good at what you do, but you can't do it all.

You're good at what you do. You've got skills and talent, you know how to help those in need and you've got enough passion to melt a frozen planet. You slaved away taking classes, reading, researching and learning all that you could to be a great practitioner.

You're a superhero.

Seriously.

You've dedicated your life to helping others and belong to one of the noblest of professions.

However, every superhero has their kryptonite and this is where most practitioners flounder.

YOUR KRYPTONITE

Kryptonite: noun. Superman's ultimate weakness, or anything that causes someone's ultimate weakness. (source: urbandictionary.com)

Every day, you assess the symptoms of your patients to determine the cause of pain or disease. You've become skilled at asking the right questions to help solve the riddles of the human body and its conditions. People come to you because you help them see and understand something they couldn't see for themselves. And, you give them the starting points and tools to make a change.

You're reading this book because you've recognized certain symptoms in your practice, but you're not sure of the cause.

This is your kryptonite.

If you don't know the **cause**, how can you change the **effect** it's having on your practice?

Most practitioners get stuck when it comes to marketing and self-promotion.

Your job is to help more people and make a bigger difference. Mine is to help you understand how to overcome this challenge and effectively market your practice.

It can be difficult to market yourself and your practice. It often feels awkward and overwhelming and I understand that. However, marketing (whether it's by word of mouth, through your website or any other method) has gotten a bad rap. It's often seen as blatant self-promotion, self-serving or inauthentic. We've all had traumatic experiences with pushy salesmen, inboxes inundated with SPAM and receiving information of little or no value. However, that is an insensitive approach and not how marketing (or sales for that matter) should work.

Marketing should be an act of service.

In the noblest sense, marketing is about improving people's lives.

It's about being human, it's about connecting, it's about raising awareness about how you can help those that need you the most.

There are patients out there that need you. If they don't know that you exist, how can you help them?

Marketing solves this problem.

Is marketing about helping your practice achieve financial success, too? Absolutely. Effective marketing will help you reach **more of the type of patients that you can serve the best.**

The automatic result will be an increase in revenue.

I'd like to ask you something.

What's the number one reason that you decided to become a practitioner? Put a check mark beside all of the reasons below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	To help people get well
<input type="checkbox"/>	To be an entrepreneur
<input type="checkbox"/>	To be an accountant
<input type="checkbox"/>	To be a lawyer
<input type="checkbox"/>	To be a marketing expert
<input type="checkbox"/>	To be a manager
<input type="checkbox"/>	To do administrative work
<input type="checkbox"/>	To hire people
<input type="checkbox"/>	To be a salesperson
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

If you're like most practitioners, the driving force behind why you became a Naturopathic Doctor was to help people, not to become an entrepreneur, marketing expert or bookkeeper.

Once you started your own practice (or began working in a clinic with other practitioners), you realized that you wouldn't be able to solely dedicate your time to working with your patients. You had other responsibilities on that list such as learning how to run a business, hiring staff and finding new patients.

In this book, we're going to look at how you can spend more time doing what you really love to do. We'll be analyzing some of the most common marketing misconceptions and how to overcome them. Ultimately, you'll walk away with a new sense of excitement, purpose and direction for marketing your practice.

Sound good? You can thank me later :)

*The best way to find yourself is to lose
yourself in the service of others
~ Mahatma Gandhi*

STRUGGLING OR THRIVING?

Struggle: verb. to move with difficulty.

Thrive: verb. to flourish or succeed. (merriam-webster.com)

Why do some practices thrive and others struggle? Would you say it's because they don't believe in what they're doing? Or, because they don't think their services are a good fit for their patients?

No.

You have plenty of talent, passion and love for what you do, but something's missing from the equation. Whether you're just starting out or doing well, you know you could be doing much better. You've just barely tapped your potential. The question is, how?

How do you attract enough patients to stabilize your cash flow and also have the freedom to enjoy life outside of work? Do you have enough energy left at the end of the day for your family and friends?

Let's look in detail at what differentiates a struggling practice from one that thrives.

Signs of a struggling practice

1. It's difficult to communicate what you do to those who are unfamiliar with alternative/complementary/holistic medicine
2. Your philosophy has been, "build it and they will come"
3. Sales makes you feel "icky"
4. You're stuck in survival mode (you worry if you will you'll be able to cover your expenses)
5. Your practice is a roller coaster of feast or famine
6. Your P&L is just an L
7. You think that helping patients get well begets more patients
8. You lack organized systems to produce predictable results
9. Your website and marketing materials are focused on you, not the patient

10. You market like a doctor (no offense—you weren't trained to be a marketing expert)
11. You have little (to zero) systems in place to analyze the success or failure of marketing initiatives
12. You are too busy to stay accountable or follow through with ideas
13. No matter how much time or money you spend on marketing strategies, you don't see a significant difference
14. You're not attracting the type of patients you would like
15. You attract patients who don't understand the value of your services
16. Many of your patients don't comply with your protocols
17. Your marketing plan (if you have one at all), is fire, aim, ready

If you nodded your head “yes” or can relate to any one of these points, read on. If you’ve got these nailed, break out the champagne. Actually, that’s probably a good idea either way.

Now we're going to take a good look at what a thriving practice looks like.

A thriving practice has:

- 1.** A consistently booked schedule
- 2.** Rates that reflect the value of your services
- 3.** An effective patient acquisition system
- 4.** Strategies in place to maximize patient engagement and retention
- 5.** A website and marketing materials that do the heavy lifting (i.e. educating and building credibility)
- 6.** An active referral and reward system
- 7.** A patient reactivation system
- 8.** Educational tools that work to overcome objections and fears
- 9.** Successful and repeatable systems in place
- 10.** Identified and learned how to market to a particular niche
- 11.** Invested in proven marketing strategies

12. Profits
13. A solid brand and identity
14. Created an opportunity for you to become a respected authority in your field
15. A strong network of healthcare partners (i.e. local chiropractors, massage therapists, MDs, physical therapists, dentists, etc.)
16. Patients who turn into ambassadors — proactively willing to share their experience with others to increase awareness of you/ your practice

To summarize the major differences between the two, you could also look at it this way:

A struggling practice takes a passive approach:

Find patient. Provide phenomenal care. Wait. Pray.

A thriving practice takes a proactive approach:

Educate. Attract ideal patient. Provide phenomenal care. Follow-up. Analyze. Educate more.

REMOVING ROADBLOCKS

Roadblock: noun. Something that stops progress
(merriam-webster.com)

Successful practitioners face the same challenges as those who struggle. It's how they overcome those challenges that separates the sheep from the goats (or, if you're feeling snacky, the feta from the chevre).

Before we look at how, what or where to market, **it's critical to understand and overcome the most common roadblocks to success.** Some of these relate to your current belief system about success. Others come in the form of objections (fear or resistance) to the services that you provide.

Many patients come to see you after they've been through a menagerie of doctors, tests and prescriptions. You're often their last resort, their final chance to find balance and health. This places a significant amount of pressure on you to be successful for their sake. You lay awake at night worrying and strategizing about certain cases. How can you help all of the people who need you and be successful?

What does success mean to you?

If it includes having a successful practice (success in the sense of doing a great job, accomplishing amazing things, working with patients who see results that can't be refuted) and earning a good living, then you're in the right place.

My goal is to help you earn a predictable revenue stream through effective marketing strategies. One of the ways to accomplish this is by being booked solid, even months in advance.

I know this might sound strange, but sometimes the idea of being booked solid can present a roadblock. There is a psychological trap which typically presents itself in one of two ways and I'm going to address both of these here:

The "Booked Solid" Roadblock

1. Being booked solid can be seen as a status symbol. Although this statement could be seen as derogatory, let's look at it in a positive light. If patients are lining up at your door, it's most likely because they are seeing results.

This is a good thing. On the other hand, if being booked solid is tied up in ego or self-esteem, then there is a fundamental loss of purpose and perspective (in other words, whose serving who?).

2. Being booked solid can be a source of guilt. If you would like to be consistently booked solid (or are currently), you may feel a sense of guilt as you become less available to patients and prospective patients that may need you.

Let's analyze the difference between being booked solid and not being booked solid:

- If you are booked solid, there are patients that you're not reaching
- If you are not booked solid, there are patients that you're not reaching

What's the common demoninator?

There are patients that you're not reaching.

Whether you have patients scheduled months in advance or are wondering how to fill your schedule, the most important point is that ***you need a viable business in order to help anyone.***

Now that we've analyzed the Booked Solid Roadblock, let's look at the Patient Mindset Roadblock. Here are three of the most common objections that practitioners hear from their patients.

The “Patient Mindset” Roadblock

1. “My insurance doesn't cover your services. I can't afford to see you because I'd have to pay out of pocket”.
2. “I really don't understand what you do. What are the benefits? Why would I see you vs. an MD?”
3. “Do you have a quick fix for that? I just want to take a pill and feel better” or, “Your protocols seem extreme and overwhelming — is there anything easier?”

If you are consistently running up against any of these objections, there's one reason.

You are attracting the wrong type of patient.

It's that simple.

It's a symptom of a larger cause— your marketing is missing the mark.

To be clear, this doesn't mean that every person isn't worthy of your services. But, you have to meet people at the right time, where they are, and when they are ready to make a change. You can't force this, but you can sow the seeds, water the sprouts and harvest at just the right time... and that is one powerful way to look at marketing.

We'll go into detail in later chapters about how to identify and reach your ideal patient, be the perfect gardener and start to see fruit in your practice.

The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it. ~ Moliere

LET'S GET PERSONAL

This is where it gets personal. On the following page is a Practice Assessment Worksheet. I'd like you to take a few minutes of alone time and reflect about your practice. You may need to stop reading, do a little research and come back, but we're going to use this as a litmus test to determine where you are now and where you ultimately want to be.

You can use the space below for notes or additional thoughts:

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Practice Assessment Worksheet

Assessment Questions	Where You Are	Where You Want To Be
How many active patients do you have (that you see on a regular basis)?		
How often do you see those active patients (i.e. weekly, monthly, quarterly)?		
How many patients do you see per week?		
What's your capacity (how many patients could you see per week?)		
How many patients have you seen in the past year?		
How many patients have you not seen in over a year?		
How many patients do you have in your database (how many contacts/emails do you have?)		
Which service is your most profitable?		
How many product lines do you sell?		
If applicable, what percentage of your income is from product sales?		
What is your gross monthly revenue?		
What is your net profit?		
What is your average appointment cost?		
What is your average sale per person?		
What is your closing ratio (i.e. when someone calls or has a free consultation, what percentage of those become patients?)		
What percentage of your patients have trouble with compliance?		

Reflecting back at this list, are you where you ultimately want to be? If so, wonderful. You can stop reading now and bask in the glory of your success. If the left and right columns do not align, you need to do something different to reach the goals that you've identified. However, even though you've just recognized that you're not where you want to be, how do you actually get there?

You probably have some questions now, such as, "What do I do next? What's the highest priority? Where should I invest my time and resources? Why haven't I reached my goals in the past?", etc.

"What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals" ~ Zig Ziglar

WHAT'S A GIRL OR GUY TO DO?

I'm glad you asked. Let's talk more about you.

As a Naturopathic Doctor you most likely have a heartfelt passion to partner with and help each and every individual you can to feel and be well. You love having an active and effective role in caring for people. Your practice is designed to support and treat your patients as individuals (not just as their diagnoses, symptoms or lab tests).

You want to help as many people as will truly benefit from your services.

And, you should.

But here's the rub.

Even if you could help everyone that walks through your door or visits your website, or calls, you can't efficiently or effectively market to all of them.

Repeat after me.

You Can't Market To Everyone.

And here's why.

If you try to market to everyone, it's like trying to be all things to all people and that's not only an exercise in futility, but it's also a disservice to those that need you the most.

Don't worry about turning away those who aren't a good fit for your services. You're not looking to just get anyone with a heartbeat into your practice. Your goal is to attract those who are open and willing to partner with you in one of the most intimate and important elements of life... their health.

*Everyone is not your customer.
- Seth Godin*

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU. IT'S ABOUT THEM.

Let's say you have a new patient. They come in for their first appointment and sit in your office. You immediately start talking about your life story, your degrees and accomplishments, the services you offer, the products you sell, the skills you have, the hours you're open and all the ways they can contact you.

They stare blankly at you, wondering if they're in the right place. You then say, "By the way, how can I help you today?"

Sounds ridiculous, right?

I know you would never do this in person, but, what happens when a new visitor comes to your website? Is their experience anything like the scenario above? If so, you're probably not speaking or connecting to them in a way where they truly feel understood.

Here's the thing.

Most people don't understand how or why you can help them.

It takes the average person 7-9 points of contact before they feel comfortable doing business with you. Most patients will not call or buy just from initial exposure. Patients need nurturing to feel safe making a decision to see you. Your website and marketing materials should transition each person from fear and/or resistance into inspiring them to call you.

Here's an example of the typical **practice-centered** approach to marketing and then we'll look at ways to change that to **patient-centered** marketing.

Imagine that there's a woman searching online. We'll call her Alice. Alice is pregnant and she's suffering from back pain. She's uncomfortable and is seeking relief, but wants to do it naturally. She's not keen on taking medication unnecessarily or to just cover up the symptoms. Alice is looking for the healthiest and most non-intrusive choices for her and her baby.

Alice starts searching online for how to naturally treat back pain during pregnancy. She finds her way to Dr. Dean's website, a Naturopathic Doctor. This is what she reads about Dr. Dean.

My name is Dr. Dean and I am a Naturopathic Doctor. I have a special interest in hormone imbalance, menopause support and chronic pain. I work with patients to determine and treat the root cause of their health concerns using dietary counseling, homeopathy and herbal remedies.

This is a very typical example of text you might find on a practitioner's website. The problem is that it's focused more on Dr. Dean than Alice, it's generic and it doesn't really help Dr. Dean or Alice. Dr. Dean wants to find the ideal patient that he knows he can help. Alice wants to find her ideal practitioner, too.

Let's analyze the paragraph from Alice's point of view:

- Who is the text focused on? Dr. Dean. Note the frequent use of phrases such as, "I am... I have... I work..."
- Who is Dr. Dean trying to reach? Everyone. As I've

said, you can't market to everyone.

- Who does Dr. Dean work with? Patients. Does Alice think of herself a patient? Probably not. This is a clinical description of who she is when under a practitioner's care, but not how she is perceiving herself when she's searching for help. She's looking for a solution and identifies with her symptoms and/or condition.
- Dr. Dean has a special interest in hormone support, menopause and chronic pain, but how does this relate to Alice's specific concern?
- How does the text convey to Alice that he's "the one," the practitioner that really "gets" what she's experiencing and could possibly change her quality of life? At this point, she doesn't have enough information to make an informed decision.
- Why should Alice call Dr. Dean for an appointment? Perhaps she's desperate and calls, but she's uncertain. She has reservations about Dr. Dean. She doesn't know him from Dr. Adam. Why should she trust her health with him? She truly wants to believe in Dr. Dean because she hopes he can help her, but she's uncertain. She is looking for a solid reason to put her faith in him.

Let's look at a different way of communicating that empathizes and connects with your prospective patient.

I'm Dr. Dean and I help pregnant women find relief from back pain, naturally and safely.

What's the significant difference between the two descriptions? The first one lists everything that Dr. Dean does. The second one relates to Alice. It reaches out and answers a need. It simply conveys that he understands her pain, concerns and desires.

In the chapter, "Your Target Market," we'll talk about how to create a unique positioning statement (a short phrase that identifies who you are, who you serve, what you do for them and how you are different). In addition to attracting quality patients, positioning yourself as a specialist will allow you to become better at what you do.

So, how can you change dry, practice-centered copy into a marketing tool that your patients can relate to?

Your marketing should make people feel that you understand them, and you can't do that generally. It needs to be specific. It needs to target your ideal patient, the ones that you can help the most.

When that happens, the results are magical.

The patient thinks and feels, “this is the doctor I should see...he ‘gets’ me... I can trust him... I like what he’s saying to me... I feel safe putting my health (my life) in his hands.”

Your marketing is not your identity, nor does it need to include the entirety of you and your services. Remember, you can't be all things to all people.

For example, if a man suffering from migraines comes to you for help, you don't have to say, ‘sorry, I only help pregnant women with back pain’. Good marketing needn't limit the range of patients you help. It merely focuses on attracting a particular type. You'll continue to attract all kinds of people.

This is one of the greatest secrets to effective marketing and how to become a marketing genius in your practice.

The good news is you don't have to change what you do every day, you just have to change how you talk about what you do.

Note: I want to be clear that I'm not saying that your credentials or background aren't important (they are). The key is how, why, when and where they should appear.

*Your customer doesn't care how much you know until they know how much you care
- Damon Richards*

HOW TO FIND YOUR IDEAL PATIENT

An Ideal Patient is someone who finds the perfect solution to their health concerns in the services or products that your practice offers.

In order to market any product or service, it is crucial to target your marketing and sales efforts to specifically reach the segment of the population that will most likely buy from you (i.e. who you can help the most).

You must know your patients' needs and desires, know who they are, what they want, where they live and what they can afford.

Although your practice is available to a wide range of people with various conditions, if you try to market to “everyone,” your results will be at best mediocre.

A few times earlier in this book, I mentioned the term, “**ideal patient.**” From a marketing standpoint, this is distinctly different from “**any patient that walks through your front door**”.

The process of identifying your ideal patient is the first step to creating a specific marketing niche for your practice. Following this thought through, once you've identified your ideal patient and your niche, all future marketing efforts are then focused on a specific and well defined segment.

A few advantages to establishing a marketing niche:

- You will attract quality patients open to receiving your help
- It generates a powerful word of mouth effect
- It creates those “rolodex” moments, where a patient thinks to share your name when they are talking to a friend, family member or colleague who has the same problem—and they just know that you can help
- You will start to be seen as an expert in that particular niche
- It creates the foundation for a successful practice
- Your marketing will have laser pointed focus
- You will stand out from the crowd (differentiation)

Who needs your help the most?

Targeting your market (a particular group of patients at which your services are directed to) is simply defining what type of patient you would like to attract for the next period of time. It could be for several months or even years. The first question to ask is, “Who needs your help the most?” Identifying those whose lives wherein you can bring about the biggest change is as simple as speaking their language. Define who they are and then focus your marketing message to those who are an ideal fit for the services that you provide.

Going through this process will serve two purposes:

1. You will start to attract those patients who need you the most
2. You won't be throwing time and money down the drain on unsuccessful marketing efforts (when you could be helping those patients who need you the most)

The target market you pick should be measurable, sufficiently large and reachable.

Ideal Patient Worksheet

Ideal Patient Worksheet	Describe here
What is your favorite type of patient to work with (i.e. seniors, children, moms, etc.)	
What health condition do you see the most?	
What conditions are you the best at finding solutions for?	
What are your spidey skills (what problems are you really great at solving?)	
What makes you different?	
What do you enjoy doing the most?	
Who are your top 5 patients?	
What qualities do these top 5 have in common (i.e. stressful jobs, PTSD, etc.)?	
What do these patients have in common (i.e. age, sex, occupation, personality, etc.)?	
What type of patient benefits the most from your services?	
What is your most profitable service?	
What service is the most scalable?	

By now, you should be getting a feel for who your ideal patient could be. Take all of the information above and write a sentence or two that describes your niche. All future marketing efforts will be targeted towards this “ideal” patient.

Here’s a template to use as a starting point to developing a positioning statement that identifies your niche.

I’m a _____ who helps
_____ with _____.
I’m different than _____
because _____.

P.S. Just because you define a target market doesn’t mean that this won’t change in the future. It’s not a tattoo, but don’t jump ship too quickly. It takes time, patience and persistence to be successful.

If you’ve gotten this far, congratulations. You have just climbed Marketing Everest. You’ve accomplished something that have made grown men cry and you’re on your way to successfully marketing your practice.

IT'S TIME TO START MARKETING

Marketing is the art of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising.

Where to put your marketing efforts

Let's look now at how you can take what you've learned and practically apply it to marketing your practice. I'd like to remind you at this point, that if you invest time and resources in any marketing channel (area), and you are marketing to a specific target market (ideal patient), you will begin to see amazing results in your practice.

I've compiled a list of the 7 most effective marketing opportunities for practitioners like you. This is not an exhaustive list, and one size does not fit all, but it is a starting point that will offer the greatest leverage for almost any type of practice.

1. Your Website
2. Facebook Ads
3. eNewsletter
4. Networking
5. Speaking
6. Referrals
7. Reconnect

1. Your Website: Providing the most value

Everything that you've learned so far in this book provides you with the opportunity to look at your website with new eyes. Don't fret over the design—the content is THE most important aspect. Take a few minutes and read through the pages on your website and take note of the areas that need improvement. Who does the writing target? If it's everyone, you know you've got some work to do. Here are a few of the most important points to consider relative to your site content:

Reassess Your Website— Transform your website into an educational tool. **By the time patients come in for their first session, all of their main questions should be answered.** You shouldn't be answering all the same questions for every patient as it doesn't use your time effectively. By their first visit, they should be on the way to compliance because their expectations have been met and objections answered. This helps to reduce any fear or skepticism. The process of educating shows them what you can accomplish and the more structured, the better.

Build a Landing Page— A landing page is a single web page (often on your own website) that contains an offer with an online form. It's called a landing page because it's where visitor's "land" after clicking a call-to-action (words that urge the visitor to take action) on your website, social media or an online ad, etc.

The benefit of having a landing page is that it captures visitor's information, it's trackable (analytics) and you can test and monitor it's effectiveness. The difference between a typical web page on your website and a landing page is that **a landing page contains no other distractions.** The landing page should be designed to attract your ideal patient and contains a form that can be filled out online.

It can feature some explanatory text, but it exists solely to capture information about your visitor. The text can be any offer that would be valuable to your ideal client (i.e. an ebook, subscription to a newsletter, guidebook, or other resource) in exchange for their information (i.e. name and email).

Landing pages help deliver the right information to your ideal patient at the right time.

Blogging— Blogging can be a very effective method of connecting and engaging with your audience. A blog can be on your website or on a social media platform (Facebook, Twitter and Google+ are considered microblogs because the content is shorter than a typical blog). Whichever tool you use, create an organized system for distributing valuable information to your patients and prospective patients.

An example of an organized system would be the following:

- Determine strategic goals, such as “attracting your ideal patient with a specific offer.”
- Identify what type of information would be of value to your audience.

- Create a list of article topics.
- Create an editorial calendar (schedule of when you will be sending e-blasts, blog posts, etc.).
- Dedicate resources (time, people, money) to create and deliver the content.
- Set up repeatable/automated systems.
- Track effectiveness and adjust as necessary

Testimonials— You can be sure if patients are seeing results, that they are talking about you. In fact, new patients probably let you know who recommended them (if not, you should be asking) and existing patients usually tell you if they recommended someone to you. It's great to receive a referral, but what about those visitors who come to your clinic or website and don't know anything about you?

Testimonials are one of the most effective ways to build trust and establish credibility. Word of mouth is the undisputed king of marketing. However, all testimonials are not equal. They can either be general (bland) or specific (incredibly effective). For example, here are two testimonials that are positive, yet unfocused and unconvincing:

*“Dr. Anderson was great!” or
“I highly recommend Dr. Anderson.”*

A effective testimonial should convey why someone or something is great. For example:

*“I simply could not pass up this golden opportunity to comment on the excellent attention and care I received by Dr. Anderson and her staff. They are certainly dedicated to their patients! Kind, compassionate, efficient and most important friendly. Wow!!!
Bravo, keep up the good work!!!”*

Here are some guidelines to getting those glowing comments in writing:

- Make a list of the top 5 patients you think would be happy to provide a testimonial
- Let them know that privacy is of utmost importance (even though you’ve probably already covered this with a HIPPA privacy form)
- Give them an easy out if they are uncomfortable—let them know there’s no pressure if they say no
- Ask them if they’d like to see and approve it before it goes live

- Get their signed consent (this is important for legal reasons)
- Include the patient's first name and last initial or full name if possible (try to avoid having no name or merely initials)
- If you can include their occupation, such as, "Alice Sims, President of Charter International," this allows the reader to identify with the writer and will have greater impact
- The use of and content allowed for testimonials varies by country, so make sure that you are compliant with the laws depending on where you practice

2. Facebook Ads: Reaching your ideal patient

Chances are, your patients are on Facebook and it's currently one of the best tools for local marketing. Facebook is easy to use and inexpensive. Ads can be segmented by demographics, preferences and interests. Your biggest challenge will be to create well written ads. I'd recommend creating and testing 5-10 headlines that focus a problem that your ideal patient is facing (i.e. relief from migraines) along with one sentence of body copy. Review the insights/analytics and then optimize your ads to perfect them. True success lies by continually refining your strategy based on the results you are getting.

Remember, be genuine and seek to establish trust. Talk about them, not you. It's all about engaging and providing value.

Also, let your audience know your practice is active from within. Update your Facebook page and header image regularly.

3. eNewsletter: Nurturing with email

An email newsletter will help you create a sequence of nurturing connections. The newsletter and social media (Facebook) are two of the best ways to accomplish this. For example, if a prospective patient clicks on a Facebook ad, they reach your website (or landing page) and the next logical step for them could be one of the following:

1. They have an opportunity to sign up for an informative e-book in exchange for their email address. They are then added to your email list.

And/or:

2. They can join your mailing list and receive valuable information and education (this can be a 5-part automated email campaign re-used for every prospective ideal patient). Take the knowledge that you already have and write about specific topics. At the end of each email that the prospective patient receives will be a call to action to schedule a call or book a visit. The call to action should relate to the benefit that they will receive from your expertise.

4. Networking: Developing long lasting relationships

Networking is the art of creating long lasting relationships. It's taking the time to establish trust and credibility and looking for opportunities to assist others. Dedicate a certain amount of time each month to building a network of connections. If possible, don't vary from this "set time." Your time is valuable, but keep focused and look at it as if it were an appointment. Here are a few networking ideas:

Join your local Chamber of Commerce. In fact, oftentimes they have a healthcare committee. Find out if there are any other health-related organizations that you might be able to be a part of. This will open future doors that you may not be able to immediately see. You will become more well known in the community and have increased name recognition.

Get to know other practitioners. Introduce yourself to other practitioners in your area. Don't be afraid to approach them by email or visit their office. This can feel awkward initially, but if you approach this with the intent to give something, it becomes quite easy.

Here's an example of an email that you could send:

Hi {first name},

I have a naturopathic practice in {town/location} and I'm looking for a {chiropractor/acupuncturist/MD} to refer my clients to. I'd love to learn more about your services and what conditions you have the most success with. I was wondering if we could {chat/meet} to see if there's a good fit? If so, just hit reply and send me a few dates/times that work for you.

Yours truly,

Networking is creating bridges between people. Keep in touch with connections. Follow them on Facebook, subscribe to their emails, invite them out to lunch. In other words, stay in touch.

Join a local networking group. All networking groups are not created equal. It all depends on the quality of its members. Find a group that's focused on building relationships. Whether you're introverted or extroverted, you can excel at this. Here's how:

When you attend a networking group or event, have focus, keep it simple and never go unprepared. You need to know your business goals, have a clear and simple “next step” at hand (a.k.a. call to action), and have the discipline to adhere to your plan. In other words, handing out business cards at a Chamber of Commerce meeting with a request to “call me if you need anything” is often a waste of time.

Instead, ask those you meet, “Do you know anyone who suffers from _____ (this is the “condition” that you’ve identified as what your ideal patient suffers from)? Oh, you do? Please do give him/her my number. I’ve helped many (_____) sufferers get their lives back.

Can I have your card, so I can follow up?”

(A tip on business card etiquette: never offer your business card unless asked.

5. Speaking engagements: Becoming a respected authority

Find opportunities to speak for free in your community (don't forget to focus on your niche). This is an excellent lead generation tool, a way to offer value and build credibility. Possible venues include a local health food store, yoga studio, wellness spa, corporations, fitness center, office, Chamber of Commerce, health-related event or library. As you become more well known, people will begin to think of you as a respected authority.

6. Referrals: Grow your practice

Referrals are an easy and cost-effective way to grow your practice. The 3 main types of referrals that I'd like to touch upon are patient, professional and personal.

- 1. Patient Referrals**—These tend to be the highest quality referral. Patients who have had great success in your care are one of the best sources of new patients. They will happily and actively refer you to their family, friends and colleagues. Another benefit is that existing patients tend to refer clients who are a better fit for your practice.

- 2. Professional Referrals**— These are the patients that come to you through your colleagues (other naturopaths, chiropractors, MD's, etc.) as well as related professions such as health food stores and personal trainers. One of the advantages to professional referrals is that they are working with people who are already open to what you do.
- 3. Personal Referrals**— These are referrals that you receive from friends, family and acquaintances that come to you because they know you or have met you at a networking event or somewhere else.

One of the simplest ways to get a referral is to ask for it. Once received, be sure to send a thank you note or show your gratitude in some other way.

7. Reconnect: Implementing a reactivation system

Research shows that it's 6-7 times more costly to acquire a **new patient** than it is to retain an **existing patient**.

There can be many reasons why patients become inactive, including:

- They started to feel better and stopped their protocol
- They missed a few appointments and were too embarrassed to call or reschedule
- Life just got in the way, they're busy and it keeps getting moved to the bottom of their list
- They feel great because they achieved success by following your protocol (this is a perfect opportunity to ask for a testimonial)

The first step is to start tracking why patients become inactive. Create a system, even if it's a simple spreadsheet to keep track of anyone that you haven't seen in a while, who is past due for an appointment or who has missed an appointment in the middle of a treatment plan. Review your database regularly. You may not always know why every single patient becomes inactive, but you can learn

valuable information just by asking. Once you have figured out who your lost patients are, you'll have a feel for the best way to approach them. Here are 3 simple methods for reactivating patients:

1. Send a notecard or postcard
2. Pick up the phone and call
3. Send an email

It's best to create automated systems and procedures for your reactivation efforts. Dedicate a certain amount of time each month to touch in with patients you haven't seen in a while.

WHAT'S NEXT?

What about all of the other marketing opportunities?

There are a variety of marketing opportunities that are available or will come your way such as SEO (search engine optimization), video marketing, Twitter, Pinterest, advertising, etc. Again, what I've provided is not an exhaustive list. However, my advice is to focus on what will provide the most leverage with the best return on investment. This will be your website, Facebook and email marketing. Keep it simple by focusing on what really matters—connecting to your ideal patient.

Once you've had success with these, feel free to try other things. Marketing is a dynamic process that requires analysis, objectivity, experimentation and a willingness to change.

By rethinking your approach to marketing, you will eventually be able to spend more time doing what you love to do most. Whether that's working directly with patients, focusing on education or spending more time with

your family. We've looked at some of the most common marketing misconceptions and learned how to overcome them.

By getting out of survival mode and learning how to thrive, you'll be in a better position to help others and really make a difference. The effects of a thriving practice are:

- Reduced burnout
- Better time management (more effective, streamlined systems in place)
- Increased revenue

Running a successful practice can also be a catalyst for your own personal and professional growth. I hope you have a new sense of excitement, purpose and direction for marketing your practice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hello. I'm Katherine Porfilio and I help my clients promote their business and achieve their goals as quickly, efficiently and economically as possible. For the past 14 years, I have been running a boutique marketing and design agency. Most of my clients are in the integrative health care industry — from solo practitioners, busy clinics and wellness spas to online natural pharmacies and nutritional supplement companies.

One thing that I noticed was that although there are many great marketing companies out there, **few specifically focus on the needs of Naturopathic Doctors.** After working with a variety of practitioners, I realized that they all face a similar problem—balancing the needs of their business with the needs of their patients. I decided to take a radically different approach and focus solely on solving this problem in a way that is 100% customized for their unique traits, long term goals and available resources. By specializing on marketing solutions for Naturopathic Doctors, **I can go beyond generic “one-size-fits-all” marketing advice and get right down to step-by-step customized processes that describe how to achieve success with their practice.**

I wrote this book because I want you to find your ideal patient (and for them to find you)

Armed with an understanding of how to effectively market your practice, I'm confident that you'll be able to grow your practice and reach those you can help the most. And, along the way, if you have any questions, you can always contact me.

Want To Leave Feedback?

Testimonials are so important for my business because they help potential customers understand if my services are going to be right for them. I'd so appreciate you taking a minute or two to leave your feedback!

Send me an email [here](#) to leave your feedback on The Marketing Manual for Naturopathic Doctors.

Want To Ask Me A Question?

Want to ask me a question about *The Marketing Manual for Naturopathic Doctors* or about marketing to attract the right type of patient to your practice? I really love answering questions about marketing, website design and graphic design.

You can expect answers within a day or so, maybe sooner—ask away!

Thank you.

Thank you so much for your purchase. I deeply appreciate the investment you made in this book and the time you took to read it.

If there's anything I can do to help you, please feel free to reach out. I'm always happy to answer questions.

— Katherine Porfilio

MARKETING GLOSSARY

Ideal Patient

An ideal patient is one that you enjoy working with, experiences results from the services that you offer and is willing to invest time and/or resources to get well. They essentially see you as a partner in their journey to health.

Landing Page

A web page that patients can land on or arrive at. It typically is a standalone page designed for a single and focused purpose. A landing page helps guide prospective patients to your intended conversion goal (i.e. to complete a form, to call you or to subscribe to your mailing list)

Marketing

The means (tools and strategies) by which you connect patients to your services. Marketing is the process of building a relationship between your services and patients by understanding and fulfilling those needs. Ultimately, it's about **improving people's lives.**

Niche

Your niche is the services that you specialize in, which then provides a gateway to your target market.

Positioning

Positioning helps make your brand more memorable. This is accomplished by focusing your marketing message on a particular area of your business, on a specific target market, or both. Ultimately, positioning is how potential patients perceive your services as compared to other practitioners who provide similar services.

Positioning Statement

A phrase that identifies and defines your practice in an extremely specific way. It conveys what your services are, how patients will benefit from them and how you are different from your competitors.

Target Market

Your potential market. It's every patient (within a specific segment) who might buy your services.