



3 Secret Steps to a Prosperous Alternative Health Practice

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3 Secrets to a Prosperous Alternative Health Practice



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Introduction

Did you know that there has never been a better time to be an alternative healthcare professional? Whether you are an acupuncturist, chiropractor, naturopath, or massage therapist the consumer demand is at an all time high for your services. Now, while that may sound like great news, if you are like the majority of CAM practitioners out there, you are discovering that building your dream practice doesn't just arise out of thin air. It takes a variety of different qualities, a few essential skills, and the right knowledge to create a thriving holistic health practice.

As a business coach to CAM practitioners and having owned my own acupuncture practice for many years, I can now clearly see why so many practices struggle even though there is more than enough demand. This report focuses on the three essential aspects that will ultimately determine how well you do in your CAM practice. If any one of these is missing or deficient, then your practice will never take off like you expected. If all three are integrated, then you can indeed create a lucrative practice that provides you with much enjoyment and flexibility.

Even if you have been in practice for a few years, I encourage you to approach this information with a beginner's mind. See if you can step back and honestly assess the degree to which you have mastered each of these steps. The more honest you are, the more value you will receive from this report and the more quickly your practice can change for the better. If you are new to practice, then you have a distinct advantage! You can use this information to create a blueprint for success for as long as you are in business. You won't have to learn the hard way like so many more established practices have had to do.

Having a prosperous practice isn't just about making more than enough money to survive. Prosperity mostly has to do with how much fulfillment you derive from the work you do, which is a direct byproduct of how aligned you are with your greater purpose. The steps outlined here will help you create prosperity through all areas of your life.



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So, let's dive into these three secret steps. These are simple but profound truths that I have learned in my own business and personal development and I'm thrilled to be able to share them with you. I sincerely hope that this report creates a fundamental shift in the way you perceive yourself as a business owner and in the way that you manage your time and give to your patients (that is, if a shift is needed!)



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Secret #1: Think like an entrepreneur, not just a clinician

First things first. You went into the healing arts because you very likely have a gift for helping people in very powerful ways. If you are like 95% of holistic health practitioners, however, you have not really acknowledged the undeniable importance of being an astute business owner. Your focus has overwhelmingly been on your healing craft and you spend your time, energy, and money developing your clinical skill set.

You see, the problem is that when it comes to running a profitable business, it doesn't really matter how knowledgeable or skilled you are at your craft. Sure, it's important and you will get some patients simply because you are good at what you do. Far more important, however, is how you market your services and how you function as an entrepreneur. If you are in private practice, you own your own business. There is simply no way around that. So, you have to treat your practice like a business, not a hobby.

If you don't know the basics of business management (marketing, book-keeping, etc.), you will inevitably find yourself struggling to succeed. I can't tell you how many practitioners I have coached who are good at and love what they do, but they are struggling to make enough money to survive. Most of them have been operating under the mistaken assumption that if they're good at their craft, the patients will come. How can patients come if nobody knows you exists? That is where marketing comes in. You have to be able to consistently and effectively get the word out about your services. You need systems in place that keep you on track in this manner every single month that your business is open.

MARKETING YOUR PRACTICE CAN BE ENJOYABLE AND AUTHENTIC!

Entrepreneurs tend to not only put up with marketing, but they actually find a way to enjoy it. They see the marketing end of their business as being inseparable from any other aspect of their business. In your case, it is extremely helpful to look at marketing as being inseparable from your clinical work. How you market will determine the quality of patient you bring



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in the door which will determine how much you can ultimately help your patient base.

Every single successful practitioner that I know of has found a way to embrace marketing their practice so it becomes enjoyable. If it's just 'work' in the negative sense of the word, it will never be as effective as you want it to be. The success of any business hinges on how well it is marketed. Please understand the importance of this statement. You can't just expect to create a brochure, hang it up around town, and have your phone ring off the hook. Successful entrepreneurs are more creative than that. As a CAM practitioner, you need to think out of the box when it comes to marketing. By far, the most powerful marketing strategies for your industry tend to be ones that are free or very cheap to implement. Display advertising tends to be a waste of money. I have heard of very few cases where display advertising offers a great return on investment. So, you have to be creative and innovative in how you spread the word about you and your services.

What I have discovered through coaching and having my own practice (and I truly hope this is the case for you) is that many healing arts practitioners have an entrepreneurial spirit that is hidden within them. You see, entrepreneurship shares many of the same wonderful themes as your healing interests do. The best entrepreneurs and the best clinicians are people who utilize:

- Creativity and innovation
- A commitment to overcoming limiting beliefs and negative psychological constructs
- Self-confidence and faith even when they are treading in ambiguous territory

Being an entrepreneur gives you just as much of an opportunity for personal development as being a clinician does. When I discovered this in my practice, I realized that I had a genuine passion for business and entrepreneurship because it rounded out my clinical practice and personal



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growth in so many ways.

I want you to have this same experience because I now consider it vital to the success of CAM practitioners. Your mindset should always be divided as follows: 50% clinician, 50% entrepreneur. You are always looking at your practice through the lens of a good marketer—in your patient interactions, communication skills, and day to day situations.

When you enjoy marketing, you will no longer see it as an inauthentic or repugnant sales ploy. You will see that good marketing has nothing to do with you; it is all about how you can help people. It is about educating people to see the value in what you offer so they can achieve greater levels of health. Many, many CAM practitioners have been conditioned into believing that marketing always boils down to the tactics used by sleazy used car salesman. Because of this erroneous belief, their practices never reach their full potential.

IF YOU INVEST IN YOUR PRACTICE WISELY, THE DIVIDENDS WILL BE ENORMOUS!

When you think like an entrepreneur, you will also recognize the importance of continually investing in yourself and your business. Did you know that nearly every successful entrepreneur will claim that they have invested thousands of dollars in their personal and business development? It is crucial to surround yourself with the right team of mentors and colleagues who can guide you to the level of success you desire. Most of the time, this requires a financial investment. To get to where I am as a coach and acupuncturist, I have utilized the services of many business coaches and mentors. Every one of these investments has brought a HUGE return on investment. There is simply no way I could have accomplished all that I have without this continued guidance. Sure, you can learn a lot from books. But the most powerful transmission occurs in the presence of someone who has done what you are setting out to do. You need to have role models so your mind can tangibly conceive of what is possible.



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There is one more important point here. Every successful business owner recognizes the importance of making a healthy profit for their business. When you think like an entrepreneur, you will no longer be inclined to devalue the role that money plays in your life. You will see that you will be able to help way more people in a much more powerful way if your business is financially thriving. If there are money troubles, you will always feel a hint of desperation and anxiety which will undermine your clinical skills and patient interactions. Now, the key here is to put people before money, first and foremost. But, money is a close second! No need to be greedy or to use deceptive tactics to lure people to your practice. Find a balance between practicing with integrity and making a healthy profit. Your practice will be much more enjoyable and successful if you perceive money in the right way.



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Case Study #1: John, acupuncturist

(The names of these clients are changed for confidentiality. Every one of these case studies are real life clients; every detail is accurate and true)

John consulted me for coaching because he just wasn't feeling like his practice was measuring up to the potential he knew was possible. He was seeing about 20 patients a week and was scraping by financially, just able to pay his business expenses and bills on a monthly basis. After doing an intake of John's practice, it was clear to me that he was very gifted at acupuncture and loved his work, but he did not understand how to treat his practice like a business.

In particular, his marketing message was not clear. He didn't know what kind of patient he was targeting or what his true purpose was for his practice. Because of this, he didn't know how to get the word out effectively.

After a series of coaching sessions, John was able to distill his mission into a powerful marketing message that targeted in on a select group of people who were ready to receive his care. Just by doing this, his patient volume increased immediately and he started getting higher quality patients. He began a targeted marketing campaign using a variety of means which brought immediate results to his practice.

John also tightened up the administrative and front office procedures in his office. He consolidated his time better and put his focus into marketing consistently. Simply put, John discovered his 'inner entrepreneur' by treating his practice like a business. After a few months of coaching, his practice jumped from 20 to 40 patients per week.



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Secret 2: Put your own spiritual, emotional and physical well being first

I have coached many CAM practitioners who love what they do but they feel drained by their work. They tend to put their patients before themselves. They do not set healthy boundaries and they easily get overwhelmed. Interestingly, I have noticed that a striking number of practitioners are sending out mixed messages when it comes to building their practice. On one hand, they want more patients because they want to make a decent living and they want to help more people. On the other hand, they are already depleted by what they currently have.

How can you expect to keep growing your practice if you feel overwhelmed by your current patient volume? For some practitioners, seeing 15 clients a week feels like a lot. They go home feeling totally shot and wonder why this is so. The main problem is that they are giving too much. They spend too much time with the client, thinking that this is the key to success. Other practitioners can see 30,40, even up to 200 clients a week and still feel very balanced and healthy in their work and personal life. These high volume practitioners have learned a couple crucial lessons:

1. Treatment success is not dependent upon how much energy the practitioner personally expends or on how much time is spent with the patient.
2. There is no need to take anything personally that happens in the context of practice.

PRACTICE THE ART OF BEING EMPTY

In order to see a lot of patients, you pretty much have to get yourself out of the way. It is like a dance. You flow in and out of the treatment rooms with a quality of equanimity, even grace. You don't get attached to the highs or lows of your patients. You just do what you can do and move on without getting stuck or giving too much of yourself.



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Now, to get to this place of equanimity and grace takes practice. You may have an innate gift for doing this, but for most of us this requires ongoing practice and cultivation. One of the most helpful things you can do in this regard is to have a daily meditation or contemplative practice. In particular, spend 30 minutes or so every morning before you see patients simply emptying yourself so you can be open to the impersonal transformational energy that can move through you when working with patients. Set an intention to maintain your personal reserves and let a greater presence move through you as you do your work.

This is a wonderful practice for your entire life, not just for your clinical work. The key is to do this every single day. The more consistent you are, the more penetrating the impact of your contemplative practice. Interestingly, nearly every high volume practitioner I know has emphasized the importance of this to their practice success. Whether it's tai chi, qi gong, yoga, or mindfulness meditation, see if you can find a practice that resonates with you who are and seems like a natural fit.

On another note, it is also astonishing to me how easy it is for us practitioners to forget about the basics in our own lives. Practice what you preach! Take time every day to exercise. Zig Ziglar, one of the top salesman and entrepreneurs of all time, has said repeatedly that his daily jogging routine has been instrumental to his success. Exercise simply puts us in a better state of mind. It offers more mental clarity and confidence. I also believe that regular exercise enables us to exude a more uplifting and inspired energy to our patients that makes them feel more cared for. That may seem subtle, but it is something that I have certainly noticed in my own experience.

Simply put, don't forget about your own health and your own needs in general. The irony is that in order to be truly selfless, you have to put yourself first some of the time. If you are able to meet your own needs, then you will have much more to offer to your patients. Simple, but easy to overlook!



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VALUE YOURSELF AND YOUR TIME

One last thought here that I have found to be quite an intriguing issue: Of all the practitioners, business owners, and entrepreneurs that I most admire and that I would deem as the ‘top of the top’ in their work, very few of them are what I could call ‘really sweet and nice people’ in the conventional sense. Good business owners are able to set firm boundaries, even when it means that they may be perceived in a negative light on occasion. Being nice just isn’t as much of a priority to them as it is to most people who are stuck in mediocrity. It is not that they are overtly mean or rude; it’s just that they don’t have time for B.S. Their tolerance for time wasting or idle pleasantries is markedly low. They recognize the preciousness of their time and do not have an interest in indulging others in an unproductive manner. Because of this, people perceive them in a special way. They trigger a reaction. As a result, they become sought after.

I encourage you to develop this mindset in your business and life. If you tend to be overly nice, people pleasing, or you give too much, make it a practice to value your time and energy as precious resources. Based on my experience as a coach, the vast majority of CAM practitioners would experience much greater practice growth if they put their focus here.



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Case Study #2: Phil, acupuncturist

(The names of these clients are changed for confidentiality. Every one of these case studies are real life clients; every detail is accurate and true)

Phil contacted me for coaching after being stuck in the frustrating cycle of his practice constantly going up and down. He was never able to get beyond 20 patients per week. After doing an intake of Phil's practice, it was clear that he was giving too much time and energy to each patient (spending 75 minutes with them) and that there was simply no room to increase his patient volume. This was leaving Phil feeling exhausted.

Through coaching, we overhauled Phil's schedule to allow him to see multiple patients per hour. I gave him a variety of techniques to practice so he could enjoy the 'dance' of a high volume practice and remove any habitual tendency to believe that his patients needed every last drop of his time and energy or else they wouldn't return. Ironically, Phil found that his treatments went a lot deeper after learning to empty himself in the treatment room and stop thinking about each treatment so much.

Through implementing these changes, he was able to consolidate his energy and feel very well each day after work. Not surprisingly, after a couple months of coaching Phil's practice had increased to 28-30 patients a week with more free time than he had before!



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Secret 3: Make it a priority to enhance your patient communication skills

Patient communication is not typically something that is taught in most schools. What I have learned, however, is that this is one of the absolute main influences in the growth of your practice. Even if you are a savvy entrepreneur, take good care of yourself, and are technically gifted at your craft, your practice will struggle if you haven't learned the art of effective communication.

What this boils down to is how you educate your patients. If you know what to say and how to say it, you will notice a few very good things happening in your practice:

- Increased patient compliance
- Increased patient retention
- Increase in the overall quality of the patients you work with
- Increase in word of mouth referrals
- Increase in the depth of your treatment and the progress of the patient

All of these pivotal factors are dependent upon how well you educate and communicate with your patients. In order to enjoy a lucrative and stable practice for the long-term, you need patients who are sufficiently educated about what you do so they can tell their friends and family about you and why they should check you out. Effective education also sets the tone for patients who know what to look for as they progress through treatment. The more educated they are, the more motivated they tend to be to implement self-care strategies between treatments.

If you have noticed that your patient retention is lower than you'd like it to be, it's very likely that there is a weak link in the way that your patients are being educated. Now, this could be due to other factors as well, but almost



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always it goes back to the fact that your patients are missing something essential from the treatment experience. It is human nature that if we don't get the structure, guidance, and understanding we need, then we tend to assume the worst. This means that if your patients don't know what to expect out of the treatment process, they will tend to assume that they aren't making the progress that they would hope to see, which means they will quit treatment prematurely.

EFFECTIVE EDUCATION = LOYAL PATIENTS

In my own practice, I have discovered that educating patients is one of the most enjoyable aspects of my work. With that said, it is also easy to allow this crucial aspect of treatment to slip through the cracks. Most of your patients will have an immensely more positive experience with you if you take the time to share with them your findings and put the pieces together so they can understand why and how they got to where they are and what to do to get to where they want to be.

Patient education is something that can and should happen during each treatment. If you are creative and resourceful in the way you approach it, every time you see the patient becomes an opportunity to share increasingly deeper insights into their health and the vast scope of benefits that you offer in your work. Every time they leave your office, they should understand something new about your work and what you are doing for them. If you facilitate this process well, then you will likely see that your patients are better equipped to tell others about you and share their experience. Of course, that is what you want to see happen! You want your patients to wholeheartedly endorse you to everyone they know. The only way they will do this is if they feel that they can speak about you with confidence and knowledge. And, you guessed it, that can only happen through effective education.

YOUR JOB IS TO MASTER ALL 3 OF THESE SECRET STEPS

Truthfully, there is a lot more to patient communication than can be relayed



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in this special report. For many of my coaching clients, I spend quite a bit of time helping them develop more effective communication skills. What I have found is that this skill set is intimately tied to the first two secrets we have already discussed. Effective communication results from knowing yourself deeply enough to trust what you say and to speak and listen from a place of intuition. It has a lot to do with being present and bringing your full faculty of awareness to each and every patient. (Haven't you found it true that, above all else, most of your clients simply want to be heard and seen?) So, you can see how this ties into our second step, putting your well being first.

It is also true that a good marketer is a good communicator, which brings us back to our first step. If you communicate well, then you have a crystal clear marketing message that is conveyed through your website, brochures, and other promotional literature. Who you are, what you do, and most importantly, how you can help is seamlessly and powerfully conveyed to your prospective patients. Your practice emanates the exact image and energy that you have intended and you attract patients to you that naturally respond to these qualities.

So, when you refine your communication skills, you become a better marketer and entrepreneur. Each of these secret steps are intricately connected. They all feed off of one another. My recommendation is that you embrace and emphasize *each of these steps because that is the quickest way to a high volume practice*. If any of these steps is missing, there will be a weak link and your practice potential will be undermined.



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Case Study #3: Jan, acupuncturist

(The names of these clients are changed for confidentiality. Every one of these case studies are real life clients; every detail is accurate and true)

Jan contacted me for coaching looking for ways to increase her patient volume. After doing an intake of her practice, it was clear to me that Jan was doing a lot of the right things to market her practice and that she was in the right mindset as a business owner. The problem, however, was in her communication skills.

While Jan came across as very sincere and trustworthy, there was something missing in her presentation. We could call this charisma, enthusiasm, or the ability to inspire. Her voice was markedly monotone. It was hard to feel her personal connection with her practice. Since I felt this way, I was sure that her patients were getting affected by this as well.

Over the course of a few weeks of coaching, I taught Jan how to speak with more animation and connection. I had her practice carrying herself with a new energy and lightness, especially in her patient interactions. When she shared her Report of Findings with patients, I made sure that she was conscious of how she was saying what she was saying and that she was being sensitive to the patient's reaction.

Jan made miraculous strides in her ability to bring more energy and life to her patients. She was able to unlock the genuine enthusiasm she has for acupuncture and share that with her patients. As I predicted, her word of mouth referrals began to increase dramatically. She went from seeing 10 patients a week to seeing 20 patients a week within a few coaching sessions.



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Conclusion

I understand that focusing on these three steps may require a shift in mindset that feels a bit awkward or uncomfortable at first. When you step into your entrepreneurial shoes, you are likely entering new territory that requires a change in how you perceive yourself. As a business owner, this is truly a wonderful process! What's important is that you surround yourself with others who have similar objectives so you get the support you need. Once you shift your perspective to bring out the part of you that is business oriented, you will likely feel a surprising sense of exhilaration. This may even be a hidden reason why you became a CAM practitioner in the first place.

As I already mentioned, the demand for alternative healthcare is at an all time high. There is no reason why you can't enjoy a lucrative and thriving practice, even if that has not been your experience up to this point. You may have heard that one definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. You have to be willing to try new things and experiment in your practice if you haven't achieved what you would have hoped. Shift it up. Be willing to take a few risks, but manage them well. Please, don't just sit back and wait for your situation to improve. That is a frustrating and disempowering way to run your practice.

First, decide to change your mindset to embrace your entrepreneurial spirit. Then, create an action plan and stick to it. Keep it simple and methodical. Be willing to fail on occasion. Most successful entrepreneurs say that they have failed their way to success. What separates them from normal people is that they are continually willing to try new things for their business. They are innovative and pioneering. Bring this kind of approach to your practice and you will become unstoppable!



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BUILDING YOUR PRACTICE PAINFUL? IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT...AND THERE'S A BETTER WAY

For the past several years, I have helped numerous CAM practitioners build their dream practices. There's a good chance I can do the same for you. If you are serious about tapping into your full potential as a business owner and healer, then consider signing up for the Business Breakthrough Session, a 45 minute one-on-one call that will get you moving quickly toward your practice goals.

In this laser focused call, we will look at every detail of your practice and create a powerful set of strategies to greatly enhance your practice enjoyment, skyrocket your income, and attract more and better patients for your practice. When you sign up for the business breakthrough session, you will also get a free copy of my ebook *Build Your Dream Practice*, a \$34.95 value.

**Go to → <http://www.buildyourdreampractice.net/bbs.htm> ←
to learn more about the Business Coaching Breakthrough Session.**



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About Kevin Doherty

Kevin Doherty, L.Ac., MS is a business and life coach, acupuncturist, and entrepreneur. He is the author of the popular ebook *[Build Your Dream Practice](#)*. Kevin has helped numerous holistic health practitioners with all facets of practice development. He offers one-on-one, group, and e-coaching.

Kevin has built two highly successful practices and currently resides in Superior, Colorado. His goal is to dramatically increase the exposure and success of CAM practices throughout the world and help individual practitioners tap into their deepest purpose and passion to create a more lucrative and dynamic career.

Kevin's websites are:

<http://www.buildyourdreampractice.net>

<http://www.practiceevolutionsuccesskit.com>

<http://www.findyou-lifecoaching.com>

<http://www.bouldercountyacupuncture.com>

<http://www.havinghealthnow.com>

<http://www.juniorpreneur.net>