

## Chapter 20

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# Marketing Your Aquatic Therapy Practice

Douglas W. Kinnaird, BA, LMP, ATRIC

In this chapter, the reader will learn:

- Elements of a marketing plan and the importance of developing one
- Essentials of market research
- Suggestions for planning a marketing budget
- Traditional and relationship marketing business models
- Setting goals, strategies, objectives, tactics for meeting them
- Suggestions on hiring marketing help

People spend years earning degrees in marketing, so the idea of marketing an aquatic therapy practice can seem daunting, but marketing is simply the act of offering a product or service to the public, or part of the public, defined as a “market.” A farmer piles vegetables onto a wagon, hauls them to town, and starts peddling. Another sorts out culls, cleans dirt off the produce, sets up a stand, and arranges the vegetables in a pleasing display. Both are approaches to marketing. Each attracts a different kind of customer. The effort is more complex when the marketplace is not a geographical location, or when prospective buyers are unfamiliar with the product or service, or when they don’t realize it is useful. Everyone needs to eat, but aquatic therapy and rehabilitation is not a daily necessity for most people.

Questions about effective marketing often center around what kind of advertising and promotion works best - newspaper or brochures, pens or mugs, phone calls or office visits - but these are tactics, tools to reach prospective customers who have been identified as belonging to a designated market. As this chapter will show, marketing comprises everything from locating a business, to developing a product or service, to selling and providing it, to following-up with customers afterward.

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### CREATE A MARKETING PLAN

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Planning improves the chances of succeeding in any endeavor, and a marketing plan is the essence of success in business. The Small Business Administration (SBA) has programs and services, including online training, to help in all aspects of creating and operating a business. Its online guide advises that a sound marketing plan includes market research, location, prospective customers, competition, positioning of one’s product or service, pricing, advertising, and