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# THRIVING PRACTICE

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A Comprehensive Guide to Building and  
Growing Your Complementary Clinic

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# INTRODUCTION

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This book is designed to help anyone who aspires to set up their own clinic – for any kind of health treatment, whether medical, alternative or a combination. I'll be sharing my insights into each type of practice and the essentials to guide you through the process from turning your idea into a plan, to the practicalities of putting it into practice – successfully.

Whether you want to establish a complementary clinic with a diverse range of practitioners such as chiropractors, physiotherapists, osteopaths, or podiatrists, or want to build a practice offering alternative treatments such as massage, hypnotherapy, aromatherapy, reiki, reflexology and other types of therapy, this book offers valuable insights. You'll learn how to plan for and create a steady growth to accommodate additional practitioners over time.

No matter how expert you are in your area of specialism, there's more to being self-employed than treating patients. You'll need to have a good understanding of how a business works and learn the skills of a business owner and manager. While you don't need to be an accountant, you do need to understand your figures and operating costs – and you will need to have someone to keep your accounts up-to-date, whether as a part-time member of staff or an outsourced service.

Getting your business plan in place first is essential and this will include understanding the unique value proposition of your clinic – in other words, what makes you different from your competitors. A description of your ideal client will also help to ensure that your

marketing activities are well-focused.

Your business won't thrive if you don't get to grips with marketing. You need a reliable system so you don't fall into the feast and famine cycle.

In today's digital age, establishing an online presence is paramount. We'll delve into the importance of online advertising and guide you through the process of leveraging the various social media platforms to promote your practice effectively. You'll learn the importance of positioning your clinic as the preferred destination for clients.

We'll also explore the strategies PR experts use to promote their clients, such as winning awards, authoring a book, or engaging in local charity work to distinguish your clinic.

Tailoring your advertising activity to reach your target audience is crucial. We'll be covering how to find the right audience and how to craft compelling advertising campaigns to attract them.

Of course, customer service is paramount and if you look after your patients and give them the best possible service they will recommend others and generate new business for your practice.

The step-by-step process outlined in this book serves as a valuable reference tool, adaptable to changing circumstances and future business expansions. Whether you're navigating changes in your business environment or seeking to grow your clinic, you'll get robust guidance and practical advice.

Everything in this book is a culmination of 20 years spent establishing and managing various clinics, it's not theory, but practical advice that offers invaluable insights into navigating the challenges and strategies to sidestep them.

Running a business is undeniably challenging, it's essential to seek as much advice as possible and learn how to avoid the pitfalls. I hope my experiences and the knowledge I've acquired will help your business to thrive and achieve all your goals, without having to negotiate unexpected setbacks.

Discover how to create a business that allows you the flexibility to work within it, if that's what you want to do, or to step back and focus solely on overseeing its operations. Knowing how to set up your business so you can choose your level of involvement is the key to a successful business that you love, rather than feeling as though you're paddling hard constantly trying to keep your head above water.

This book is a comprehensive guide to help you determine the nature of your desired business and navigate the process of establishing it. From identifying the ideal business model to effective advertising strategies, it equips you with the tools necessary to build and sustain a successful practice.

Ultimately, this book will empower you to build a business where you maintain control and create the business you want; your way.

*"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

***Maya Angelou***



# 1: STARTING OUT

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*When I left university I took the leap straight into self-employment. This meant I had a fast-tracked education in setting up a business. This included the admin side, such as registering with Companies House as a limited company and finding premises, and discovering that I needed to know how to market my services to get patients to come to the clinic.*

*I had to take out a loan to start the clinic and it was very daunting as I didn't know what I was doing or if I would make enough money to get by.*

*I decided that a launch would be a great way to bring together lots of local people, who would then see the clinic and we even made the local newspaper. Advertising back then was trickier and I learned the hard way that an advert in a local paper was not only costly, but I didn't get one person through the door.*

*With my first clinic I was renting a room with a colleague in a clinic run by a Podiatrist. She shared her own experiences and gave me lots of ideas for when I started the next clinic on my own. For instance, she'd invited a local artist to use her clinic as a free gallery. This brightened the clinic and she didn't have to pay for the artwork, while the artist got exposure to a regular audience – a win-win for both sides.*

*This first foray into self-employment was a partnership with a fellow chiropractor with a few years of experience under his belt. On the whole it worked very well, but there were always compromises, especially when it came to deciding how much money to spend to encourage new patients to come to the clinic.*

*Eventually, I decided to 'go solo', which meant that I was the one making all the decisions, which I loved. If something went wrong I only had myself to blame. I was more experienced and knew what were good investments, such as a good treatment bench, and what weren't, like advertising in the newspaper.*

*Looking back, it would have been better if I'd had a mentor starting out to guide me, as I would have made different decisions about how my income was generated. But we all learn from our experiences! I have made my share of mistakes and learned an enormous amount about what works - and what doesn't.*

Your first business decision when you start a career is deciding whether to work for someone else or embark on your own entrepreneurial journey. Going it alone can be daunting and there's no definitive right or wrong path.

I chose a hybrid approach, teaming up with someone who had some existing expertise. However, I also supplemented my income with other jobs during the clinic's early stages of growth. I took an associate position in a practice located geographically far enough from our clinic that there were no competition concerns. This gave me additional experience and exposure to different working styles.

I left the partnership when I relocated and I started doing home visits to build a business. This proved beneficial for establishing a patient base without incurring building costs, although it did entail significant time driving from place to place and physical strain in lugging all the required equipment in and out of patients' homes. The challenge with this model is that your income potential is limited by the time you have available to spend with patients – and you don't get paid for the time travelling between patient locations.

However, conducting home visits presents a cost-effective strategy

for building clientele and revenue and is a good starting point.

If your goal is to generate income independent of your presence, establishing a clinic or engaging other practitioners to conduct home visits under your clinic's banner becomes imperative.

Undoubtedly, acquiring somewhere to home your clinic entails financial investment, whether you decide to rent or purchase premises. When you decide to transition to a physical clinic, you already have an established patient base, which facilitates a smooth transition. It also may aid you to secure finance as it demonstrates demand for your services in the area.

## Identify your values and target audience

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Take a moment to reflect on the reasons driving your desire to embark on this entrepreneurial journey. Your underlying motivation, your 'Why' serves as the cornerstone of your narrative and sets you apart from competitors. It must be robust and authentic to propel your success in the industry.

What is important to you?

What are the essential outcomes you want from your business?

What does your vision of success look like? Imagine yourself in five years' time, what will you be doing then? What will your life look like?

It's also important to identify the specific demographic you aim to serve.

Is your passion:

- A paediatric-focused practice catering to infants, where services like baby massage and group sessions could be

integral offerings within your clinic.

- Sports therapy alongside specialised diagnostic services such as diagnostic ultrasound to detect muscle tears or hydrotherapy for rehabilitation.
- Working with older patients or people who are undergoing rehabilitation after injury.

Your focus may be something else. Think about the individuals you find most gratifying to work with and the type of business you aspire to create. Is there a particular age group or community with shared interests you resonate with? Have you overcome personal challenges and wish to establish a practice to assist others on similar journeys?

By carefully examining your motivations and target audience, you can craft a compelling story that resonates with potential clients, illustrating why they should choose your services over others. Your 'Why' is not just a driving force; it becomes a key element of your brand identity and a catalyst for building trust and loyalty among your clientele.

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**Exercise:**

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**Is there a demographic you prefer treating? For example paediatrics or sports?**