Hello,

As wellness practitioners, our greatest challenge is finding more clients and gaining a sustainable revenue. We can sit and wait for clients to show up at our door. Or we can be more proactive. Our fellow practitioners offer a great opportunity for referrals.

Take a look at this guide. It may sound scary to put yourself out there and ask for referrals, but it's done all the time.

It will take some time and effort. You must organize your information to present to each practitioner. But once you get some practitioner referrals, you'll find you have a more sustainable revenue stream.

This guide outlines a basic procedure to follow.

Making new contacts and letting the world know you exist is never a bad thing.

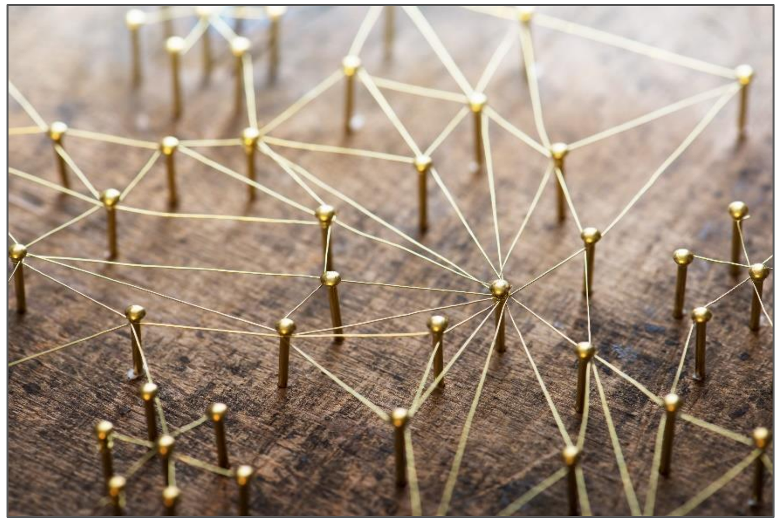
If you could use my help with this, please feel free to book an appointment here. In the meantime, use this guide to think outside the box and seize this opportunity to gain more control over your business.

Wishing you all the best,

Lorene Sauro, RHN

Why Approach Practitioners for Referrals?

One practitioner can provide many more referrals than one client.



Find a good practitioner, and the relationship will provide referrals for many years and help create a sustainable business.

Who can provide the most referrals? MDs. They're not being paid with the same dollars as other practitioners such as massage therapists or chiropractors. And the entire medical system is based on knowing when to refer. The key is showing the MD and any other practitioner that your service can help their practice, clients or patients.

The Key to Getting A Practitioner to Refer:

Discover what they need to better help their clients or patients.

This means you must do your homework. Learning what frustrates the practitioner and inhibits a good result with clients or patients is the key. Many practitioners find that the suggestions they give their patients or clients are not implemented. Can you help with this? Of course you can.

This is the kind of seed that needs to be planted to help practitioners see how they can benefit from working with you.

Remember, for a practitioner to provide you with consistent referrals, they're going to have to learn to trust you, but first you need to get their attention so they can give you a chance.

Step 1: Decide Who to Contact

- ✓ Decide what kind of practitioners you think your services would help.
- ✓ Make a list which includes both location and contact information.
- ✓ Set aside one day a week to make phone calls or send emails. It's a good idea to go to the location if it's local.

Step 2: Plan Your Pitch

The first person to talk to is the office administrator or the "gatekeeper." Most practitioner's offices are accustomed to various businesspeople asking for appointments. They're also aware of the clients' or patients' struggles.

Build rapport to get the conversation going but be conscious of the office administrator's time. They may be the ones who tell you what kind of help the practitioner needs with their clients or patients. It's okay to bring snacks or treats – just make sure it's really a treat for them.

Let them know the services you offer that could help. Ask if it's possible to make an appointment with the practitioner.

Tips:

- ✓ Ask about office policy.
- ✓ Make a quick statement as to why you're there.
- ✓ Ask what type of clients/patients they typically see.
- ✓ Ask about any issues the office and the practitioner may be facing.
- ✓ You may want to write out a script for yourself and practice it so that you're prepared – just don't sound like you're reading one.
- ✓ Many offices have a "sales rep" policy. Be sure to differentiate yourself – you are not a "sales rep" – you are a practitioner.

Step 3: Seeing the Practitioner

Be sure to dress professionally and always smile and look people in the eye. Ask how you can see the practitioner. The office administrator will tell you what's typically done. It could be a short presentation at lunch or 5 minutes between the practitioner's appointments.

Once You Have the Appointment:

Have your introduction ready – who are you, the purpose of your meeting. Try to find common ground. Hopefully, your research on helping their clients or patients can now be used to establish common ground.

Remember, you're a practitioner, too, and you probably have had similar issues with your clients.

Have Your Questions Ready:

- ✓ Pick one topic and one type of practitioner to start.
- ✓ Think about what you want to know – do you understand what the practitioner does?

- ✓ Think about what you can ask the practitioner that will lead them to understand what you do.

The Presentation:

- ✓ Remember the focus is on how the benefits relate to the practitioner.
- ✓ Include any information that is specific to the practitioner you are presenting to.
- ✓ Keep it short and concise – don't waste their time.

Make sure you can answer all possible questions the practitioner has – it's your service and business – no one knows it like you. Just be sure you can discuss it in terms that make sense to the practitioner's business, patients and clients.

If you don't know the answer to a question, let them know you will follow up with an answer for them. It's a good reason to reconnect.

Gathering More Information:

Perhaps the first conversation with the practitioner provides more information – you may have done your research, but sometimes it's not enough. Use any conversation as an opportunity to learn all that you can about the practitioner's needs.

Listen for gaps you can fill as they outline the issues of their clients or patients.

Sample question: What issues are you facing when it comes to clients/patients following your recommendations?

Many practitioners may believe that their patients won't pay for your services. But if you show them the value of what you do and they see how it will help their patients or clients, they may be convinced. Also, some clients or patients may have extended health care benefits. Employers determine coverage, and there are often options available, especially when an MD has made the referral.

Closing the Presentation:

In the perfect world, the first meeting establishes the opportunity for referrals. But the most common path is that the practitioner will need to think about it.

As the meeting ends, agree as to how you will follow up (email, phone, another appointment).

It may take several conversations before referrals will begin.

It will start with one. As trust builds, more will follow.

In the meantime, be sure to have a one-page information sheet that gives a description of a product or program. It also should include key pieces of information on how the product or program can relate to the practitioner and their clients or patients.

You can also leave a copy of a study, research article or survey that helps makes your case. As well, you can ask for permission to leave brochures for the practitioner's clients or patients.

Don't be upset by a "no" or take it personally. It will happen and you move on to the next practitioner.

Building A Sustainable Business with Referrals

- ✓ Approach several practitioners to get enough referrals.
- ✓ Take one day a week for contacting practitioners but be open with your schedule for appointments.
- ✓ Keep detailed records as to who you contacted, what they said and what you learned so that you can plan your next approach. Most importantly, document what worked and what didn't.

Remember the 80/20 rule. You will receive 80% of your referrals from 20% of the practitioners. This is why you need to build a relationship with many practitioners.

These relationships with practitioners won't happen overnight, but this is something you can do proactively. You don't have to wait for them to find you or for someone to recommend you. You can let the practitioners know that you have services that will help them.

Lorene Sauro, RHN, has spent 20+ years in the wellness industry (even longer in the food industry), and she's pretty much done it all: seen clients, learned what she needed for having an online business, worked with big corporations and small businesses, researched nutrition, learned all aspects of legalities and professionalism, created and manufactured recipes, done contract work, wrote a book, learned to copywrite, and taught all kinds of programs and courses. She can help you.

If you would like Lorene's help, then click here to learn more.