

# How to have your clients flourish ... and your business too

You probably know the power of following-up past clients to improve booking numbers. Basically, it's good for business! There's a heap of studies showing that marketing to your existing or past clients is much easier than going to new people all the time (and cheaper too.) James Crook shares his ideas for creating a flourishing business.

**I** bet you're also aware that rebooking clients is usually better for their health outcomes as well. If they saw you to treat a problem caused by an activity they do regularly, then it makes sense to check in with them some time later to see if their body needs another tune-up.

Sometimes, following up clients seems effortless ... but sometimes it's a challenge. It can be a struggle to know what to say, especially if you haven't seen your client for a while.

## Caring follow-up

So, how do we follow up in an easy and natural way?

Let's look at an example conversation: 'Hi Kylie, I remember you were away last week running the Gold Coast marathon. How was it? ... uh huh ... how did your body hold up? Should I book you in for a treatment?'

This is great. Firstly, it's very personal and authentic. This therapist knows Kylie, has remembered an important detail about her, and even better: has remembered to check in and ask about it! It's a natural conversation between a marathon runner and her health practitioner that shows the therapist cares for her client. It's part of an ongoing relationship that has a lot of trust.

You can also hear that the therapist is very confident in herself. She's confident in her ability to help her client recover. She's also confident to get on the phone and speak with Kylie personally. That confidence allows the client to develop even higher levels of trust.

So, we can see that natural and effective follow-up happens with trust and confidence. But it isn't always easy to create these two

things, is it? What if it was Kylie's first visit? Or if it had been six months since last time she was in? Either way it would change the details of the conversation. There would need to be a different way of connecting and building trust ... but once that was established, the outcome would likely be the same. Another booking!

An authentic message reaching your client at the right time packs a big punch. It shows that you understand what the client is experiencing right now, you've seen it before and know what happens next. And you know how to help! All of this wisdom builds massive trust in the person receiving the message.

## Flourishing your regular clients

Your client base is an important asset for your business, and as a health practitioner it is also your responsibility to encourage them to flourish within themselves. Your treatments will be a huge part of this, and you can use education and community to create even more powerful change for them.

For new clients, create a short email series that introduces them to you and your practice. This can be a welcome message, some aftercare practices and an introduction to you and your big picture mission. The more your new clients can align with 'why' you do what you do, the more they will see themselves as part of your community.

New clients will normally need see you more than once – whether you have a formal treatment plan or simply offer to see them again to continue the service. While people continue to see you regularly you should communicate in simple ways designed to increase that sense of community. You probably do some of these already – things like email

newsletters, your social media feed and even appointment reminders become opportunities to create even more trust and connection.

## The '3R' Escalation Model

But what about when they're not regular anymore? This creates a huge opportunity to reconnect with them. It's much easier to find past clients that are ready to rebook than it is to attract new people – after all, past clients have already experienced how good you are!

So, we have developed this '3R' escalation model to help you connect with your clients using the right message at the right time to encourage them to book in again.

### 'Remind' after six weeks

Some people just literally forget to rebook, or they get caught up in other parts of life and despite their best intentions they don't book in that next appointment. I'm sure we can all relate to this in one way or another! To help your clients remember to book, the first communications you have with them will be simple reminders. You might send two or three variations of the message over a few weeks, starting at six weeks since they last saw you.

### An example of the wording might be something like:

*'Hi Barry, I had a note pop up in my calendar telling me it's been over a month since we saw you last. Time flies! Many clients find a regular massage really helpful to maintain their health and keep on top of any niggles before they develop into something worse. And we also know many of our clients appreciate being reminded! So, if you haven't got your next session booked in yet, click here to find the next available appointment.'*

(Obviously, adjust and format these examples for email or SMS better than those in this article. And remember to include your booking link!)

### 'Reactivate' after 12 weeks

By the time 12 weeks has passed, you've already messaged them a couple of times and it's obvious your client needs more than a simple reminder if they're going to come back. A really powerful step at this point is to ask for feedback – this brings the client's attention back to their own health to see whether the problem is still there... and if it is, then they have a natural prompt to rebook themselves.

Asking for feedback might feel a little confronting to some therapists. But the reality is that the only way any of us get better at our jobs is when we know what happens after someone leaves our room. Of course, you'll always get immediate feedback from the way your client's body responds and what they say to you in your session. But to check in on longer term results is important. If you have another session with them then that's easy! But if not, you need to follow up for your sake as well as theirs.

### Email something like:

*'Hi Mel, I can see from my records that it's been over three months since your last visit, and I trust that's because you're now feeling 100%. If you're feeling great, then that's awesome! Please reply and let me know. I'd love to hear about it!'*

*If you are NOT feeling 100% yet ... then please let me know so I can see if or how I can help. I will point you in the right direction!'*

### 'Resuscitate' after 40 weeks

Let's face it – if someone hasn't been to see you for nine months then the way you will speak with them is almost like marketing to someone brand new. But the advantage is that you have their name and contact details! If you want to get these people back in, chances are you'll need an offer of some kind to trigger them to come back. They already know you but maybe they need that extra carrot to get back in the habit of seeing you regularly.

### An example could include wording like:

*'Hi Gene, it's been a while since I saw you in the clinic and I trust it's because you are now feeling 100%. Just to let you know ... as YOU are one of our clients you have access to our April "we appreciate you" SPECIAL OFFER which gives you a bonus gift and a free upgrade when you book your next 60-minute treatment. Be sure to book now so you don't miss out!'*

### The Tools

Your booking software may be able to run a report that shows you which clients haven't been in for a given length of time, and you can use these reports to follow-up as I've shown above. Another way to do it is to look back in your calendar to six weeks earlier and note which clients from that week have not been in since ... and use that as your contact list.

There are also a few popular tools that will help you get your message out there. Mailchimp is popular for sending group emails – you simply create a new list for people 'Six weeks old' and you can import your report list into that and set up the 'Reminder email' to be sent

automatically. Some systems also let you send SMS messages to specific lists as well so you could do it that way if you prefer.

Whatever way you choose to send the message, you can still add your own personal touch to the wording, of course. How you speak to each client is calibrated to that client's needs – plus, you have a natural way of connecting using your own personality.

Empowering your clients to flourish in their long-term health reflects the results you will see in business as well. By having a simple system in place for following up clients you get better results for them, and you too. Win-win!



James Crook is a business coach for massage therapists at Massage Champions. He specialises in business growth and marketing, and is a best-selling author and international presenter.



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