

Ask Dr. Kelley

1. *I'm a newly licensed dentist and I was looking into getting business cards made. One of my classmates said it was a waste of money. What do you think? – Mike R.*

First – congratulations on your accomplishment, and welcome to the healing professions! In a word, **YES!** You should *absolutely* get business cards made for your new practice. They aren't that expensive, and people expect them of any professional even in today's technologically-oriented world. Your cards should contain all of your contact information and be clear and easy-to-read. Don't forget to check with your state Board regarding any specific information they require you to put on business cards, such as your license number. Avoid hard-to-read fonts or distracting pictures. Be creative and let your card represent you and your practice! (Please see chapter 7 of *Community Connections!* for a more thorough discussion of business cards.)

2. *I've been a practicing chiropractor for over 7 years. I see 15-20 new patients a month, every month, but most only come in for a couple of visits and then I don't see them until they're in pain again. What can I do to change this cycle? -- Thomas G.*

Wow...that's a really great question, and I think most practitioners have been in a similar place at some point in their career. First, take a deep breath. You can figure this out, and you're not alone! It sounds to me like you want your patients to come in for corrective and possibly wellness care – not just symptomatic relief. If that's the case, your messages **must** be congruent. So, take a long hard look at the messages you're sending your patients. Do your advertising, marketing, website, intake paperwork, and office décor focus on pain relief or wellness care? (Or are the messages mixed?) Make the necessary changes. Now look at your policies and procedures. Do you discuss the differences between symptom relief, correction, and wellness care with your patients? Do you allow them to choose the option that's right for them? This can be easily handled in the report of findings and reinforced during your regular re-examinations. You may be amazed at the difference you can see in your patient visits when you tweak just a few of these areas. If you need more help, please take a look at my consulting packages. In addition, be on the look-out for my second book, *Practice Excellence! An Integrated Approach to Creating a World-Class Healthcare Practice* where I'll address issues such as these in more detail.

3. *Hi Dr. Kelley! My name is Michael and I'm a licensed massage therapist. My question is simple: Do I really need a website for my practice when I already have a Facebook page? – Michael M.*

Hi Michael! I get asked this question a lot from professionals in many disciplines, but my answer is always the same. You absolutely, without question, **MUST** have a website for your practice. There are so many affordable options available that it's almost criminal when businesses don't have a website. I don't know about you, but I **always** look up the website of any professional I interact with – doctors, massage therapists, plumbers, electricians, restaurants, etc. If someone doesn't have a website, then that sends a message to me they're either behind-the-times or they don't care enough about their clients to provide easily accessible information. If you're not sure of where to start, contact your state association and see if they can recommend any website companies that cater to LMTs. Alternatively – look around the internet and find websites of other LMTs you like and see who designed their site. You don't have to break the bank and purchase a fully custom-made site...but you must have *something*! Many companies who build sites for healthcare professionals have the ability to add scheduling, payment, and gift certificate functionality. Check it out – you may be surprised at how affordable it can be.

4. ***Hello, Dr. Kelley! My name is Samantha and I'm a licensed acupuncturist. I live in a city of about 40,000 – and the community is fairly split between conservative and progressive thinkers with regards to healthcare. I constantly struggle with trying to explain what I do to people...should I focus more on the science or the philosophy of acupuncture when I'm networking? – Samantha H.***

Hi Samantha! Thank you so much for your excellent question! When you're a healthcare professional who practices what is considered to be a "complementary or alternative" discipline it can be hard to adequately explain your profession to a layperson. One thing to remember is that you can't be all things to all people. Given that...I have a question for **you**. Which resonates more *for you personally*? The *science* of acupuncture or the ancient *philosophies* behind it? Whichever one fits you the best...then build and market your practice accordingly. Be true to yourself and build the type of practice that makes you happy to be there every day. No matter how wonderful you are, you won't be the perfect acupuncturist for all people. Those who don't fit with your practice will simply go elsewhere, leaving room in your practice for your ideal clients. For more information on practice discovery and identity, please read chapter 2 of *Community Connections*!