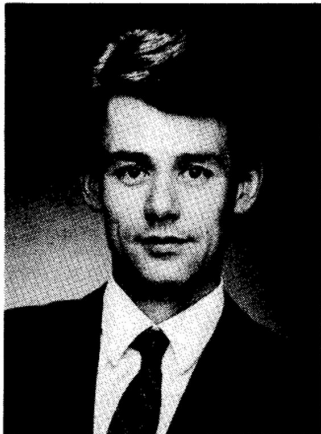


Entrepreneurship

Send your questions or requests for topics to be discussed in this column to:

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Articles by guest columnists are welcomed!



Owen Marcus, M.A.

Having Your Image Work for You

by Owen Marcus, M.A.

The word "image" has gotten a bad rap in the past few years with such books as *Dress of Success*, and we often think of image as being what the stereotyped car salesmen try to have and chiropractors never do. The image we as Rolfers and Roling Movement Teachers project is what the public sees. We may think we are not projecting an image, but we are without owning it. We spend hours a day looking at bodies to discern what is occurring with our clients' structure. As consumers our clients are exposed hours a day to businesses and professionals soliciting their business. In both cases, decisions are made on what is perceived. As Rolfers and Roling Movement Teachers, we are much more aware of why we make the decisions we do; as consumers we are not. So often the determining factor will be the imperceptible image of the product or service. Just think back to the last time you purchased a new product in the supermarket. What made you decide to choose the one you did over the others?

Yes, concern for image can be carried too far. But for the sake of argument and lack of attention in the past, grant me a little space to explore it with you.

The idea to write on image came from several Rolfers expressing an interest. As with so much else, the image we project starts with the image we have of ourselves. This aspect has always proved to be the most difficult for me to deal with. When I am tired or unenthusiastic about myself or the work, my practice reflects it. But what I have discovered is that if the image around my practice is a positive one, I can withdraw my energies and the momentum of the image of the practice carries me. With a little forethought, planning and work our image will be an enjoyable aspect of the practice.

Starting with your vision of Roling

and your practice, you will develop it out of your image. For example, if you see Roling as an alternative to traditional health care services, you may see your practice as one of dealing with orthopedic conditions, particularly the ones that no one else can achieve results with through their work. Now you have defined the market. What do you want to do with this market? Do you wish to work exclusively from physician referrals? Do you want to do a lot of fix-it work? Once these and others questions are answered, you will know the particulars of your market. This may sound obvious, and it is, but we often do not think about the obvious. It is useless to develop an image for a market you do not wish to work with.

Now that you have the arena you wish to work in, is your mind set there? Can you see yourself working successfully with these clients? If not, first check to see if this is really where you wish to be. One way to know this is to ask, does the prospect of this clientele excite me? If it is where you wish to be, ask yourself what it would take for you to be there. For example, are there skills you need to learn first?

It should be noted, as often as we do not think out and plan our course, we underestimate our potential. You may have all the skill needed to achieve the goal of this clientele/image, but all that is lacking is the action. Often I see with myself and others believing that we cannot do it. I contend that is rarely true. Operating as if we are doing it frequently will achieve your goal. It is here that your image can aid you. If you start to put out in all the possible ways you are at the place to handle this level of work, it will come. I guarantee you will not receive more than you are capable of handling. There will be times when you may question this, but it is true. The secret lies in what we all know: staying aware of the

mail a letter to all the dentists in your town. Realize a 5% response is high, and you can increase that percentage with phone contacts. The letter should be emotional, not a dry description of Rolwing. These dentists are themselves potentially tired and tight clients. Appeal to their human side by saying such things as how you can imagine how exhausting it is to be hunched over patients all day and how Rolwing has a reputation of relieving chronic aches by changing the body's structure. Include more on what you feel would interest them personally.

Yes, enclose information about Rolwing, but not too much. If you use a printed article or brochure, underline a few salient benefits or problems, so it catches their attention quickly and is read easily.

An obvious consideration is your letterhead. Is it as professional as the person or business you are writing? Also consider having each letter prepared individually---rather than quick-printed or photocopied---by either using a word processor with access to a good letter-quality printer or hiring a secretarial service to "individualize" your correspondence.

Conclude the letter with a command phrase such as "Call today". It does not have to sound like a used car salesman. The point here is, do not be equivocal. Request a response from them. Include a time limit on the response. If you offer a complimentary session, tell them it is only good until a certain date.

membering their names will do a lot, so write them in your notes. Yes, keep notes. It may be a while before you achieve your goal.

the individual, ask about his/her work. With sensitivity, talk about Rolwing or Rolwing Movement. Do not try to impress the person with your abilities or knowledge. Discover ways to describe how your work benefits people. If this person cares about their clients and is not threatened by someone who may get the results he/she cannot, you might get referrals from this individual.

BREAKING BREAD. Another means of networking that has traditionally been effective in the business world is that of lunches. In a letter or phone call, invite the person to lunch. Let it be a time to become acquainted with one another,

rather than using it for a sales pitch. Let them ask the questions about what you do. It may help to bring a few simple pieces to show what you do, such as pictures. Or you can always give them the material after lunch or enclose it with a follow-up letter.

An important factor in the referral equation is the component of "people-buying-people". This other professional with whom you perhaps had lunch will send you someone, first because they feel their clients can be entrusted to you. Secondly, because he/she likes you. And then finally the appropriateness of your work is considered in the decision to make a referral.

RESULTS. Expect the first few referrals to be challenging cases; it is unlikely you will get "successful cases" from a referring specialist. As an orthopedic surgeon told me, if you are successful only 50% of the time, that's 50% better than your referring source did. To increase your success rate and decrease your headaches, consider preparing a sheet of contraindications for Rolwing and/or Rolwing Movement and include information about the areas you are most proficient in. Put a disclaimer on this sheet stating that Rolwing/Rolwing Movement is not medicine.

The most significant secret weapon we have is our work. Having a referral source experience Rolwing or Rolwing Movement Integration can be what finally convinces the person of your personal integrity and the power of our work. This is the arena in which you are able to give to this person in a way no one else can. We all know that therapists, doctors, educators, psychologists, etc. must constantly give to the people they work with, and a Rolwing or Movement session is the opportunity for them to be the one receiving care. For this reason it may be difficult to get them in for their first appointment. Being vulnerable and being a recipient frequently arise as hidden considerations, and this situation requires that you subtly coax them in for a session. Often the more renown they are, the more they behave as a shy child.

ONGOING PROCESS. The entire process of creating a network develops into an ongoing project that you pursue on a regular basis, hopefully before you need more clients. As with all market-

ing, do not wait until business requires more clients. For example, plan on taking out one physician to lunch per month or doing one complimentary session per month.

The first few encounters may be a little rough, but it will become easier. I knew nothing of medicine when I first began contacting physicians. I did not need to, as I later found out. We need only be experts about what we do and who we are.

Enjoy meeting new friends and future supporters of Rolwing!

Making the Most of Printed Advertising

by Jeffrey Galper, Ph.D.

Encouraged by your response to previous sharing of Rolwing advertisements, I am offering four more for you to inspect, modify, or borrow as is.

Some suggestions regarding printed advertisements:

Printed advertising is rarely useful on a one-shot basis. Choose an outlet for your ads and a frequency that you can sustain over time.

You will tire of copy before the copy has lost its impact.

Printed ads need to be used in a broader context of reaching your target. They may or may not bring calls immediately, but they will help create a context for Rolwing when awareness of Rolwing reaches people in a second and third way. Therefore to the extent possible, target your intended audience for repeated messages (ads, demos, word of mouth, referral), and assess the appropriate next Rolwing message needed by the target group. For example, do people need to have an initial exposure to Rolwing, do they need a very specific benefit highlighted, do they need a reason to "act now"? Different answers to these questions suggest different advertising and outreach approaches.

Jeff Galper of Burlington, Vermont, is an Adv. Certified Rolfer who serves on the Rolf Institute's Board of Directors.
