

Business Case

MEASURE YOUR MARKETING

GROW YOUR PROFESSION

Before you spend another cent or second marketing your services, set yourself up for success by implementing these simple tracking measures.

By Matt Alderton



“How’s the pressure?”

That’s a question you’ve likely asked clients countless times to ensure that the work you’re doing during a massage therapy session is meeting your client’s expectations. Sometimes you need to work more deeply. Sometimes you need to back off the pressure. And sometimes you need to move on to another muscle group entirely. The point is: If you never ask, you’ll never know—and the client may never return.

The same sort of thinking also holds true for your marketing efforts: Having a good idea of what’s working and what isn’t when considering your overall marketing approach is imperative to focusing on the initiatives that can keep loyal clients coming back, while helping get more new clients through your door.

“Marketing is how you get customers,” explains Margo Aaron, founder of Argotics, a Jersey City, New Jersey-based marketing consultancy that specializes in entrepreneurial clients. “Unfortunately, you have limited resources to do it—especially if you’re a small business owner where it might only be you running the entire thing. So, spending your time on activities that don’t work is a big problem. It wastes time, money and energy.”

It all comes down to the old, but true, business adage: You can’t manage what you don’t measure.

“The reason we invest in marketing is because we want to see results,” echoes Carolyn Higgins, founder and president of Fortune Marketing Company, a marketing consultancy based in Walnut Creek, California. “When you measure your marketing, you’re able to stop spending time, money and energy on stuff that doesn’t work and reallocate those resources toward what does work.”

Offline word of mouth drives at least five times more sales than paid advertising.

Elizabeth Michael, director of Content and Social Strategy at CJRW

In large corporations, results are measured as “return on investment,” or ROI, which typically is calculated using sophisticated formulas with complex variables such as “net operating income,” “average operating assets,” “customer lifetime value” and “operating profit margin,” just to name a few. In small businesses, however, the best approach to determining ROI is usually the simplest.

“When my clients want to implement a marketing tactic, I ask them to think about how much time, money and energy it will cost, and how much payoff they would get,” explains Rockville, Maryland-based marketing consultant Evan Leepson, author of *Critical Connections: The Step-by-Step Guide to Transform Your Business Through Referral Marketing*. “I use the word ‘payoff’ instead of ‘ROI.’”

According to Leepson, evaluating a given marketing effort’s payoff is as easy as keeping track of what you put in and comparing it to what you got out, and then asking yourself, “Was it worth it?” These three steps will help you determine if it was:

1. Set a Marketing Goal

Before you can determine whether your marketing has paid off, you need to clearly define what you want to get out of it, according to Higgins.

“Are you building your brand? Or are you expecting to get actual customers?” she asks. “Setting your expectations up front will help you determine later if your investment was worth it.”

The best goals aren’t always monetary. For instance, you might want to increase your number of repeat customers. Or, perhaps you want to sell more of a particular service. Maybe you want to target a new market, attracting more pregnant women for neonatal massages, or more businesspeople for neck and shoulder massages.

“I even have some clients whose goal is having more time off. They went into business for themselves so they could spend more time with their family, so success for them is marketing that doesn’t require them to invest a lot of time,” says Seattle-based business coach Karol Dixon de la O of FocalPoint Business Coaching.

Whatever the goal, it should be “SMART”: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based. “If you’re just starting out and only have five clients, for example, a good goal is to say, ‘I want to double that and have 10 clients by the end of the quarter,’” continues Dixon de la O, who points out that the goal is explicit, realistic and has a deadline associated with it—all of which will make it easier to evaluate later whether you met your goal, and whether your marketing helped you do it. Either you doubled your clients by the end of the quarter, or you didn’t.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

According to AMTA's 2016 Massage Profession Research Report, 46 percent of consumers find their massage therapist via the internet/website, and 33 percent use social media.

2. Make It Measurable

Once you've set a general goal, you should ensure your marketing strategy is quantifiable. How you do so will depend on which marketing channels you've chosen to pursue.

PRINT ADVERTISING: When you advertise in print—whether it's an ad in your local newspaper, a flyer on a community bulletin board or a direct mail piece—it can be difficult to know if anyone's actually seeing it. To measure if they are, include a call to action and a unique promo code. You can offer customers who use the promo a discount, for example, a complimentary upgrade or a free gift.

"Asking the potential customer to use a phrase or code when they call for a discount isn't perfect—not everyone who sees the ad will remember to use the code—but it will begin to help you pinpoint where your potential customers saw your ad and whether the spend was worth it," Dixon de la O says.

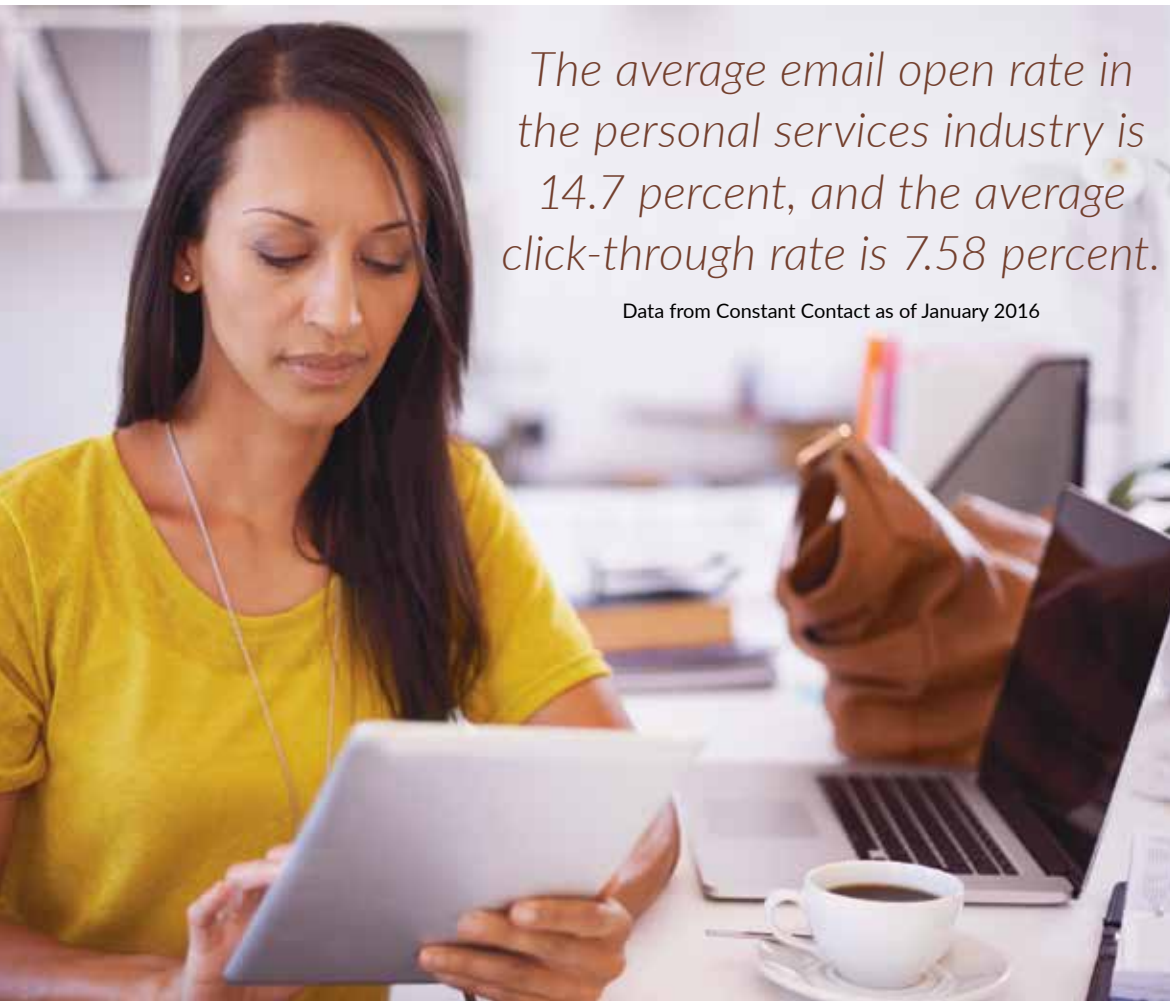
The call to action doesn't have to be claiming a discount or gift. It could be as simple as visiting your website and signing up for your email newsletter, in which case an easy way to measure results is creating a special landing page on your website where you send people who saw the ad. It shouldn't be your homepage, but rather a separate page created especially for your advertisement. You can use a landing page tool to create it—HubSpot and LeadPages are popular, easy-to-use choices, as is the "WordPress Landing Pages" plugin for WordPress websites—or you can use your existing Web design platform. Remember, AMTA members can create their own free websites with BodyworkSites. Either way, using a free tool like Google Analytics to track your website traffic will allow you to see how many people visited your landing page, which will give you a sense for whether or not the ad is working.

DIGITAL ADVERTISING: The same strategies that work for print advertising work for digital advertising, according to Higgins, who reiterates the importance of calls to action and landing pages. Whether it's a paid advertisement on Facebook, a pay-per-click ad on Google or a banner ad on a third-party website, most of your advertising should ask consumers to visit your website—again, via a special landing page—and complete a designated action, like downloading a piece of content.

"I recommend every business owner have some kind of download

The average email open rate in the personal services industry is 14.7 percent, and the average click-through rate is 7.58 percent.

Data from Constant Contact as of January 2016



on their website, like ‘10 Tips for a Healthier Back’ or ‘10 Things You Should Ask Your Massage Therapist Before Your Next Appointment,’” states Higgins, who says downloads add value and can be easily tracked.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: If your goal is making more people aware of your services, social media can be a good channel in which to invest, according to Higgins, who says quantifying social media exposure can be as easy as counting Facebook likes. You can also track Facebook shares, Twitter followers, re-tweets or even YouTube views.

“It’s about continuous growth; as long as you see your numbers going up, you know it’s working,” explains Higgins, who says massage therapists who want to create not only awareness, but also attract clients, can leverage the aforementioned “promo code” and “landing page” strategies. “You can create a special ‘Facebook-only’ offer and put ‘Facebook’ in

the promo code so you can measure it. If that offer is only available on Facebook, you know that anyone who redeems it came from that campaign.”

REFERRAL MARKETING: Referral marketing—promoting your business through word of mouth—can take many forms. One is networking, according to Higgins, who says the easiest way to measure the fruits of networking is to keep track of how many qualified leads you meet during networking events, and how many of them eventually turn into business, either directly or through referrals. If you spend an hour networking every week, but never generate any business, it’s probably not worth your time. If you get at least one new client every time you attend a mixer, however, attending more events may pay off.

To determine whether a new client is someone you met at a networking event, or was referred by

CLIENT COMMUNICATION

Send newsletters and promotions using an email-marketing platform that can automatically track email performance to help you quantify your success. Pay attention to the open rate and the click-through rate. **AMTA members get discounts at Constant Contact.**



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someone you met—ask. “The No. 1 thing every business owner needs to do to measure their marketing ROI is get in the habit of asking every single person who calls or comes in, ‘How did you hear about me?’” explains Higgins, who says the question can yield insights about virtually every marketing channel you’re in. “That’s the easiest thing any business owner can do to figure out where customers are hearing about them.”

Another way to engage in referral marketing is by partnering with other local businesses. For example, you could offer a discount to clients who are referred by another local health care provider. You could quantify that type of partnership, Aaron says, by asking your partner to pass out flyers; customers receive the discount when they bring in the flyers, which you can count.

EMAIL MARKETING: Email is one of the most measurable mediums there is, according to Aaron, who recommends sending newsletters and promotions using an email marketing platform like Constant Contact or MailChimp, which automatically track email performance to help you quantify your success. “Things you want to pay attention to are who’s opening it, which we call ‘open rate,’ and who’s clicking on it, which is called ‘click rate,’” Aaron explains. “You also want to know if anyone is forwarding it or unsubscribing. All this can be tracked, and over time you can tell if people are actually reading your emails.”

3. Track Your Progress

Quantifying your marketing is useless unless you’re also aggregating and analyzing the results.

“It doesn’t matter that you’re collecting the information,” Aaron says. “You also have to spend some time ... looking at it, because that’s the only way you’ll know what to do with it.”

Because it allows you to keep a database of your customers, including information about how they heard about you and which marketing channels they use to engage with you, customer

Fifty-nine percent of small business owners say they have not seen a return on their social media investment. One-third say they outearned their social media marketing spend by more than \$2,000.

Social Media Examiner

relationship management (CRM) software such as Salesforce, Insightly, Nimble or Zoho can be helpful, though not necessary.

“There are a number of good CRM systems online that enable you to track everything. The simplest, though, is pencil and paper,” Dixon de la O says. “You can start with just a list of who your customers are, when they come in, where they came from and how they interact with you. Then, at the end of the week or the month, you can see that this person who saw one of your YouTube videos made four appointments versus this person who heard about you on Facebook who only made one.”

Ultimately, the goal is to determine which marketing strategies are helping you achieve your goals and which ones are distracting you from them.

“Your data will give you a roadmap to identify where there are problems so you can fix them. If you spent \$400 on an ad but only made \$25, that’s probably not a good place for you to be marketing. So, what else can you be doing, instead?” Aaron concludes. “Sometimes it raises more questions than answers, and that’s OK. Because that means there are new places you should be spending your time and money that will be more effective and will grow your business. You just have to find out what they are.” ☉

