



Paul E. Okamoto, D.C.

Back Talk

Business Principles (The third installment of this series)

Through the years, I have had a number of chiropractic students and doctors ask me what has made my practice successful. As every other child of God, He has blessed me with a number of different traits/gifts that help, i.e. the gift of gab, love for people, and a business mind. However, what immediately comes to the forefront are several foundational principles that I believe are crucial for any Christian business to thrive and succeed.

1) Seek God's Kingdom First. As I have contemplated what may be the main thing that I have consistently done, I cannot deny that Matthew 6:33 has been my family's theme. *"But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you."* As we look at the things that Jesus refers to in Matthew 6, it refers to our basic needs. I heard one pastor say that if we will take care of God's business, God will take care of our business. Doing God's work involves money, work, and prayer. Jesus states in Matthew 6 that there are only two masters on earth -- God or money. It is estimated that 17% of Christians tithe. I believe that tithing is the basic principle that determines that lordship, as well as the obedience of a person.

Malachi 3 states that when a person does not tithe, he/she is robbing God. I also believe that when a person does not tithe, that person is also robbing him/herself of God's blessing. There may be short-term gain, but there will be long-term loss. Additionally when Christians do not tithe, God's work around the world does not prosper. God's ministers are not limited by a lack of ideas, but rather by a lack of money. I am very thankful that early in my Christian life, I was taught the importance of tithes and offerings. Our family has not only consistently tithed to the church, but has also given offerings to various parachurch ministries through the years. There are many ministries that are doing an excellent job and need financial support, including the Christian Chiropractors Association. My wife, who is Korean, also is a missionary back to America to reach American souls for Christ. Of course, I have supported her efforts. When we have figured out what we have given on an annual basis, it is typically 20-30%. I do not state this to brag or receive accolades, but I share this to say that I have personally experienced that a person cannot out give God. I am confident that you have heard of

the common household names of Colgate and JC Penney. It is reported that both of these Christian businessmen were able to give 90% of their profits to the work of the Lord. My personal desire is to give much more than we do now. As a result of our giving, we have seen God direct, bless, and prosper the business, many times in unexpected ways. We have always been able to pay our bills, live comfortably, and have enough to share with others. For those of you who do not tithe, I would challenge you to do so and see how faithful your Heavenly Father will be to you.



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2) Choose human relationship over money. Whenever there is human interaction, there is always potential for misunderstanding regarding money.

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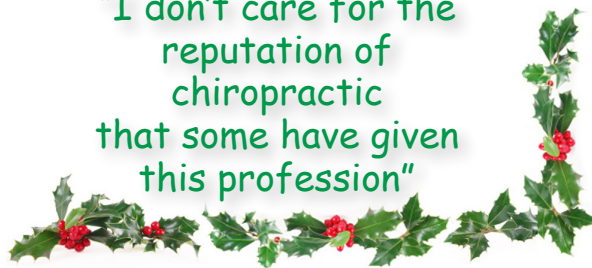
Back Talk, concluded.

This is especially true in business. Make it a principle to value relationship over money. In the beginning of care to avoid any misunderstanding, try to make it very plain what the cost of services will be before services are rendered. If there is a misunderstanding regarding money or if a patient does not feel that he/she obtained benefit from services rendered, consider making it a practice to refund the patient. The refund amount is typically determined by what will satisfy the patient. Sometimes I refund a portion while at other times I refund in full. Additionally, if a person has a detrimental experience from one visit, do not charge on the follow-up visit.

3) Do the right thing. Psychologist Dr. Laura Schlessinger tells her listening audience over the radio, *"Now go and do the right thing."* Always try to do the right thing. Be honest in all business dealings - patient assessment, recommendations, and charges. Sometimes I do not immediately do the right thing and later need to swallow my pride and rectify the situation. I recall one time that I took an x-ray that I did not need to take and billed Blue Cross. Although Blue Cross paid the x-ray, I felt convicted. I called their claims department and advised them that I had taken the x-ray unnecessarily and would pay them back, which I did. Interestingly enough, that claims adjuster later sent me a patient. Be very cautious to treat each patient with the care necessary for that individual. Since we are making judgments for the amount of care each visit and for total care, it is easy to be deceptive and dishonest. Do not give more care than necessary. Also try not to give less care than necessary. In your report of findings, allow each patient to have a choice of pain relief versus maximum benefit. Give home exercises individualized for that person's problem, keeping in mind their postural deficiencies, as well as lifestyle habits, so that they can manage their own condition. I do not like the reputation of chiropractic that some have given this profession. I am sure you have heard these sayings, *"Once you see a chiropractor, you see them for the rest of your life"* or *"they keep you coming back and back."* When explaining the rationale of chiropractic care to a patient, relate the similarity of chiropractic to orthodontics in which teeth are being straightened. The practice of chiropractic typically requires multiple visits to bring about desired results. Of course, it is vastly different than the practice of medicine in which a patient goes in once to the doctor to get a prescription. As a result, it is understandable why some people would come to the conclusion. However, still do everything possible to prevent chiropractic dependency and attempt to release the patient from care as soon as you are confident that the condition has obtained maximum benefit or is stable.

4) Treat each person as your father, mother, brother, or sister. Attempt to be respectful and patient with each person. Do your best not to offend a person or make a person uncomfortable. Be especially conscientious of

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the financial limitations of those pastors with small congregations or of overseas missionaries. These are the generals who are on the frontline of spiritual warfare. The more that Christian business people can help without causing financial restraint, the

more the Lord will bless that business.

These are general but foundational Christian business principles that I applied and found that they made my practice successful, even in time of recession. Since these are Biblical principles, I am convinced that they will work for you as well. Biblical truth has stood, stands, and will stand at all times. In future articles, I will discuss various tangible things that you can do. Have a blessed day!

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