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## Four Simple Factors to Business Success

*Second in a Series on Practice Management*

If you recall my last article in the December Journal, I wrote about the importance of trading our minutes for significant return - loving God and loving people. I also touched on the four simple factors necessary to make a business grow.

The four factors:

- New business - attracting new patients.
- Repeat business - retaining existing patients for reasons that are in their best interest
- Increased back door business - offering additional services that our patients want and need
- Internal controls - limiting expenses without sacrificing quality, and training of ourselves and our staff

In this article, let's focus on the first factor, which is finding new business. Since I'm not an expert, I will, of necessity, have to keep it simple. New business in any field or profession is critical, and no less so in a chiropractic office. It is the life-blood of a healthy practice. Ironically, this is even more so in chiropractic because we are good at what we do. We help sick people get better, and therefore, people drop out of our practices. Due to this, we must have new patients on a regular basis to stay fluid.

There are two ways to bring in new business. Those are internal and external marketing. It would be nice if we did not need to lower ourselves to "marketing" or sales, but both are critical. We must pay intentional attention to both, or we will see our practices, our finances, and our ministry in our practices suffer. If you have a hard time accepting the fact that we must market and sell, try to see it as a process of education, teaching people how they can experience better health. That is what we do, and, like it or not, we are teachers, educators. To stay in business, we need to do this with earning a living in mind.

Internal marketing includes such things as: newsletters to our existing patients, making sure our patients are pleased with our level of service, and asking for referrals. If we were to put some energy into these three areas, we would find our practices growing in astonishing ways. Yet, it does take discipline to do a quality newsletter on a consistent basis, to exceed our patients' expectations, to educate our patients on each and every visit, and to ask for referrals on a consistent, pre-planned timetable. Discipline yourself to learn how to do each of these tasks in an efficient, high quality, selfless way.

External marketing includes: yellow pages ads, spinal screenings, outside speaking engagements, expos, handing out business cards, networking, and so on. The challenge is that all of these are important, but none of us really likes

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*Business Success, concluded,*

to do all of them. We each have our own strong areas and our own weak areas. However, that is no excuse for avoiding any of them. We must do all of them or risk developing a weak link in the chain of events that leads to a new patient coming into our office.

Sit down in a quiet place. Set up a calendar of committed times to do each of the internal and external events. Study, or find a teacher to help you to become proficient at each one. And do them. Assign a staff member (or your spouse) to hold you accountable to do them, and do them.

The result of internal and external marketing, or patient education if you prefer that term, is new patients - one of the four most important keys to a healthy, productive, significant, prosperous practice. Don't waste your years of experience, nor your talents, nor your education, nor your potential, nor your calling by settling for a mediocre practice. Focus, learn, stretch yourself, and build a healthy, productive practice that impacts many patients with better health, and points each of them toward a deeper relationship with their Creator.

**Dr. Charles Roost** has been a member of the CCA since 1989 and currently serves on the board of directors as chairman of the Missions Committee. He resides in Lansing, MI, with his wife Judith and family.