



## Networking for Complimentary Therapists

### Why Should You Network

NETWORKING – you either love it or hate it, but it should be one of your marketing pillars. Networking is all about building business relationships and building trust – you are selling yourself but not your services. Networking is not just at organised events but with anybody you meet, greet or treat. Networking is not just about handing out your business cards. I do believe in networking and I am currently the Manager of the Littlehampton and Arundel Branch of Mumpreneurs Networking Club ([www.agoodgossip.co.uk](http://www.agoodgossip.co.uk))

If it wasn't for networking I do believe I would not still be in business. When I started back in 2000 I had not lived in the area long, so there was no friends or family I could call on to be my first clients. I



had to find and make contacts so my only option to start was networking. The thought of it terrified me and I really had to push myself out of my very shy and comfortable comfort zone. If I wanted this to work I had to get out there and then there were also not that many networking groups about to attend, so the ones that did exist were very suited and booted. I persevered and made contacts, my first clients came from these events through referrals and recommendations.

While networking I realised I needed to learn more about business so I joined the Federation Of Small Businesses ([www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)) and volunteered for the committee. This was a place to create deep business relationships, develop trusted business partnerships, get involved in community service and yes, get massage clients. When networking for massage therapists in the FSB/Chamber of Commerce/Rotary/Lions etc I highly suggest you plant yourself on a committee and do some good in your community. Frankly, that will be some of the best publicity, networking, client generation you CAN do! BIG TIP: Be sure to regularly book one-on-one meetings with business people you get to know.



There are different groups to help with networking -

**Lead Groups** – such as BNI where you work to find referrals for other businesses, and they find referrals for you.

**Industry Specific Groups** - these groups are fantastic, and I encourage you to start one, if you aren't already in one. You basically create a group with a purpose to serve your mutual clientele, so a prenatal massage therapist could partner with a midwife, a prenatal acupuncturist, a baby goods store owner, a personal chef, a childbirth educator, and anyone else who fit in the category of serving the pregnant and newborn population to exchange leads. This type of group is AWESOME for collaborative events. Create a fun and community serving event, all of you promoting to your mutual clientele, to introduce all the clients to the other entire service provider. TOP networking opportunity. Figure out how you can do it for YOUR business.

**One-on-One Meetings** - this type of networking for massage therapists is the “The Bread and Butter” of business. One on one (or very small group) meetings are the only environment that you really get a chance to learn in depth information about business colleagues. This is where you get a chance to brainstorm on possible collaborations, exchange ideas for which you know that could be served by their business or service, and really deepen the business relationship. We typically do this over coffee. In order for it to really work, it needs to be a sharing, NOT a sales call, NOT an hour long promotion of one company or the other. It's about really teasing out the possibility for partnership, or the ability to help each other. This works really well at Mumpreneurs Networking Club and also as the attendees realised yesterday at workshops and seminars. At the workshop about ‘Networking’ yesterday as a group we started to share and brainstorm and by the end of the workshop telephone numbers were being exchanged as they found out they could help one another in different ways – the penny dropped – they were networking! I hear from many therapists who do not network because, they are too shy, nervous, the fear, do not know what to say or do, think they will not be taken seriously, do not have a serious enough business to network with, find they are too clicky – these are all excuses. You have to show you exist to have a successful business; you have to look at your attitude and prepare! Why not look at the internet and attend workshops to learn about networking. You can



get lots of information now to prepare yourself and to get your 'pitch' ready for these events. There is lots of information available out there now to help you.

The most effective ways to get massage clients or any personal service or health practice is to build deep relationships and collaborate with other great businesses in your town. Along with attending meetings regularly, there is a strategy to targeting specific businesses with your ideal client/target market when you network. These are the businesses who serve the same demographic you do, with whom you build strong business and referral relationships.

Networking for massage therapists who specialize in prenatal massage will focus on targeting not only ladies who are pregnant, but midwives, childbirth educators, obstetricians, people who run playgroups for moms with small babies (since second babies often come to those who have one already!), prenatal yoga instructors and fertility clinics.

For a practice that specializes in working with athletes, some of the possible businesses would be: personal trainers, triathlon coaches, cycling club owners, sports equipment store managers, gyms, sports medicine doctors, football, rugby coaches and physical therapists, and often times when you are attending professional networking meetings to get massage clients, you will find that some of THOSE people know potential businesses they can introduce to you.

Success in networking for massage therapists to get massage clients depends on planning, clarity of message and executing your plan by attending meetings regularly.