



A FRESH NEW OUTLOOK FOR YOUR BUSINESS

The Federation of Holistic Therapists' Paul Battersby looks at five ways to get yourself seen and boost your business this spring...

WITH the days finally getting longer and plants springing back to life, what better time of year to take a fresh look at your therapy business? There are lots of simple and cost-effective ways to help boost your practice and harness interest in the services you provide, many of which will enrich you personally as well as professionally. Here are just five you might like to consider...

GET SOCIAL

If you're self-employed, opportunities to network are a great way of linking up with other small business owners and gaining support in what can sometimes be a lonely job. For general business

networking events in your area – many of which are free – simply Google 'business networking events in [your location]' or visit www.eventbrite.co.uk to get you started. The FHT also runs the largest network of local support groups for therapists, with nearly 100 throughout the UK, where you can enjoy different talks and meeting up with like-minded therapists – visit fht.org.uk/lsgs to find your nearest group.

GET INVOLVED

Volunteering is a fairly controversial topic in the therapy world at the moment, as it can be seen to devalue a very important and skilled service. However, volunteering an hour or two of your time to support members of your local community can be very rewarding, and potentially convert into paid work, if the opportunity arises. It can also provide valuable experience and training, while benefiting others who may not otherwise have access to these services.

GET RECOGNISED

Therapists are often modest by nature, but business and industry awards are a great way

of showing the world at large what best practice looks like, and the many benefits therapies have to offer. As well as gaining publicity for you and your work, especially in the local media, awards can even help therapists to secure funding to support the therapy service they provide, or research. Have a look online for information about 'Everywoman awards' and 'small business awards', and remember that the FHT and Holistic Therapist Magazine run awards specifically for therapists.

GET ONLINE

From your website to social media platforms like Facebook, your online presence is an introduction to your business for many prospective clients. It allows people to safely check you out from a distance before making contact or committing to a treatment. If you're not ready to set up your own website yet, Facebook is a great online platform and won't cost you a penny. See their guide to getting started at www.facebook.com/business/learn/set-up-facebook-page.

GET TRAINING

Many therapists treat CPD as a grudge activity, but each new skill you learn will help to boost your business. Whether it's learning about successful marketing or gaining a new therapy qualification that your clients have enquired about, it's all good for business. As always, check that your training will be covered by your professional association and/or Accredited Register before you book. And remember, not all training relevant to therapists costs money – Google 'HMRC e-learning' and 'vision2learn' to see some examples or free webinars and online courses. ■

i **PAUL BATTERSBY** is President of the FHT. The FHT offers a range of membership benefits to holistic therapists and runs the largest independently Accredited Register for complementary healthcare therapists. For further information, visit www.fht.org.uk or call 023 8062 4350.

