

5 Mistakes to Avoid When Opening Your Own Practice

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TAKING OUT A BIG LOAN



If you've been thinking about opening your own office, you've probably been dreaming about it for a while now - the most beautiful, perfect, amazing-looking space with everything you want. You've also likely been tempted to spend a lot of money to make it look exactly as you imagined. But the truth is... your patients don't care! I'm not saying you should have an ugly office, but most of the time, your patients don't notice the small details. They probably won't even notice when you get upgrades! As a new doctor, you've already got a lot of expenses and you should keep your overhead as low as possible. As you get more patients and create a more steady stream of income, you can always make upgrades or make changes later as you need them.

NOT HAVING A WEBSITE



Of all the mistakes I see new chiropractors make, this is the biggest. When I talk about having a website, I don't mean one you created on your own. The truth is, **YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!** Sure, you can make a site that might look okay as far as design, but **the most important feature a website will offer you is the ability to bring traffic into your office (in other words, make you money).** This is called *Search Engine Optimization (SEO)* and you must hire a professional to do this! Having your office ranked high on Google is the best way to ensure predictable income and the amount of new patients that will come through your door. Your website is the one area you should spend a lot of money on (I'm talking ~\$5,000 - \$7,000). If you're going to take out a loan, I would highly suggest you use most of the money for your website and online presence.

HIRING A FRONT DESK PERSON



Since you are a chiropractor, I think it's fair to say you might have an easily-bruised ego. You might already be mad as you're reading this list of things not to do. In my opinion, ego is one of the biggest reasons why chiropractors fail. Hiring a front desk person usually comes from the idea that answering the phone is beneath you or it "looks" more professional to have one. In my experience, a front desk person is the biggest waste of money. If you really get busy, you can hire a virtual phone answering service, but you don't need one until you are REALLY busy. Also, if you get over yourself and actually answer the phone, people will be shocked that they actually get to talk to the doctor. This allows you to give more personalized service (and charge 5X more because of it!)

NOT KNOWING YOUR TARGET MARKET



You might think you're going to open your office and help everyone. This is a big mistake! You can make your life a whole lot easier by figuring out who you work best with. Another way to think about it is to **figure out who you are meant to serve.** If you can clearly identify who you want to work with and serve (i.e. your target market) then you can design your office the way they would want it to be. You can pick your location based on the city or area they hang out in. You can host marketing events that they would want to attend, or present talks on topics they might be interested in learning about. Then, you can fill your office with the perfect patients: those who you love to work with AND who love coming into the office.

DOING IT WITHOUT HELP



Here comes the truth bomb: **you likely have no idea where to start in regards to opening your own practice or running a business.** I don't say this to be mean, but chiropractic school is not designed to teach you these things, it's meant to help you pass boards and teach you how to take care of people. This is why people go to business school specifically to learn how business works. There are two types of chiropractors who actually make it past 5 years. The first is the *grinder* who bangs their head against the wall, never takes time off, has failed relationships, is broke and in major debt, but somehow makes it through and starts to build momentum after 5 years of being miserable. The second is the *mentored chiropractor* who has mentors and coaches who help them find their purpose and avoid as many mistakes as possible. I was lucky enough to be one of the second type and I'd love to help you become the same. Over the last 15 years, I have been practicing chiropractic AND practicing business. I can help you avoid mistakes and navigate through the very difficult process of opening an office. If you decide you want to work with me, I promise I will ALWAYS tell you the truth, even if it might be something you don't want to hear. I look forward to building a relationship with you and helping you become as successful as you want to be! For more information, to work with me or to listen to my *Cultivating Success* podcast, check out my website at: alisonbremner.com