



YOUR PRACTICE / BUSINESS

## Grow Your Business Through Networking

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As a doctor of chiropractic, networking is an extremely effective way to grow your business. Not only is it an affordable marketing strategy, but it also allows you to build lasting relationships with people in your community. Unfortunately, many DCs do not put enough emphasis on networking, which can hurt long-term growth. Here's how to capitalize on networking to grow your practice.

### Why Networking Works

Every small-business owner knows how important word of mouth can be. Networking gives you the opportunity to spread the word about your business directly to a targeted audience. While you can attend networking events for the general public and slowly introduce your business to people in your community, your time can be more effectively used to attend networking events aimed at specific professions, such as:

- Chiropractic events
- Massage therapy events
- Exercise and fitness events
- Yoga instruction events
- BIA (Business Improvement Area) events - network with neighboring businesses

Instead of networking with the general public and relying on referrals solely from friends, you can network with members of your community who have access to invaluable resources and patients who will be interested in your services through referrals. Each connection you make within a certain profession has the potential of leading to dozens of new patients each year.



Additionally, don't forget to network with fellow chiropractors - while you may consider the DC down the street your competition, you may actually specialize in different modalities and can be a source of new patients for each other. Although building an effective network does take time and effort, it definitely pays off in the long run.

### How to Network Successfully

There are several networking paths you can take to effectively grow your chiropractic business:

*Give Before You Get:* Often considered the golden rule of networking, you have to give something before you expect anything in return. Become a contributing member by sending referrals to people in your network and they may return the favor by sending patients your way. This give-and-take is what makes networking such an effective tool for small businesses.

*Know Your Market:* Not having the right people in their network is a common mistake made by small-business owners. Make sure you know your market and reach out to people who are connected to the chiropractic industry in some way, directly or indirectly. When you attend a networking event, tailor your "[elevator pitch](#)" to the audience, since what people are interested in will change depending on their profession. (Your "elevator pitch" is your short summary of what you do and how a relationship with you could benefit the other person.)

*Be Prepared:* When meeting new people, it's crucial to make a good first impression. Know what you are going to say when introducing yourself and make sure you let everyone know exactly what you do. If you specialize in treating a specific type of patient, include this information in your introductions at events. And remember to always carry your business card!

*Make Goals:* Avoid aimlessly wandering around networking events or talking to one person for too long by setting goals every time you go. Know exactly what you want to accomplish at every event - like meeting someone specific or introducing yourself to 10 new people.

*Use Social Media:* Thanks to [social media](#), networking is easier than ever. Social platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter can be extremely helpful in expanding your network as a chiropractic professional. Use these tools to connect with fellow chiropractors and other health care providers.

Specifically, LinkedIn and Facebook Groups offer a quick and easy way to join the conversation with your community. Keep in mind that these digital tools can never replace meeting people face-to-face. So, it's important to stay active online as well as in-person.

*Stay Active:* Building connections with people takes time and consistent effort. Make sure to follow up with people you meet and stay in touch with them on a regular basis. Fortunately, these days, you can easily send an email, make a phone call or post to social media to stay in contact with people.

### Stay Ahead of the Crowd

Networking can be the foundation of your success in the chiropractic industry. Stay ahead of the crowd by attending local networking events, then using social media, coffee dates and phone calls to stay connected with everyone you meet along the way. These tried-and-true techniques are the most effective and affordable way to ensure your long-term practice success.