



EDUCATION & SEMINARS

Starting Practice: Tips for New Grads in the New World

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Last year, many chiropractic students were eagerly looking forward to graduation, preparing for their board exams and getting ready to enter the job market. However, as we all know, 2020 has been unexpected, to say the least. The pandemic was not on anyone's map and now many grads are wondering what their best career move is.

Here are a few of the common concerns I've heard from new graduates and how they can navigate them in the "new world."

Q: How am I going to pay off my student loan debt and not have it hang over me?

Many graduates are still dealing with five- and six-figure debt. Being successful in your practice sooner, rather than later, is a great way to start paying down that student loan debt and incur little interest. *Prioritize your debt.* If you have other debt that is of higher interest, pay that down first. But don't let debt fall to the wayside and put off paying it down.



Develop streams of income beyond seeing patients one-on-one. Aside from getting care from you, what else do you believe will help your patients? For example, are there products or supplements you believe are beneficial and can also bring in a source of passive income?

In addition, what about things you say over and over again to patients? Have you ever thought of putting all that knowledge in *an online course*? An online course can be automated so many people can learn and benefit from it over and over, after you have just created it once.

For example, a client of mine I helped create an automated course for contacted me at the start of the pandemic, sharing how grateful she was because now she was able to educate people online, even if she weren't able to see people in person. The best part about creating something leveraged like this is that you can reach people beyond your immediate practice area.

Seek successful mentors or hire experts who can help you grow your practice. There are many things to think about when first starting a practice. It is impossible to be savvy about marketing and the business side of things without having learned it systematically or had business experience in the past.

Q: Should I start a new practice or work for someone else?

In a challenging economy, it's possible that fewer practices will be looking for new chiropractors because some are experiencing a slowdown of patient flow. On the other hand, there are doctors who are doing well and their practices are even busier than before.

A benefit of working for someone else is that you can gain more clinical knowledge and experience. You can also learn a lot from a practice about how they run it. Some practice owners are looking to hire an associate who could eventually buy the practice.

How to choose who to work for: Choose a practice that has had a steady flow of patients and

systems in place that support growth. Vet the doctor's philosophy. Sometimes, if it's the first time a chiropractor or practice owner is hiring an associate, they may not realize the level of involvement that's important in training and supporting you to be successful, nor with marketing.

Ask them what kind of support they will give you. Ask them what kind of marketing systems they have in place and whether that's been consistent. Ask them about their expectations for you marketing. (Some practice owners have an unsaid expectation for your involvement with marketing). That way, you are going into an environment that is more stable compared to other practices you are considering.

Starting your own practice: Many rewards come with owning your own practice: being your own boss; having the ability to build a respectable, trusted practice; making your own hours; and if lucky enough, taking a vacation whenever you want.

If you decide to start your practice, it is important for you to have a system that brings in patients in this climate. How do you get your own practice going and stand on your own two feet? The important thing is to bring new patients through the door. Many new grads who start their own practices overlook this.

One advantage of going out on your own is that you have control over your practice. However, as a student you were generally only taught how to treat patients and how to give people the best health care they can get. You likely received limited training in school on how to run your own business.

Your new practice's success depends on you having a steady income, consistent flow of patients and the right strategies marketing strategies. "*Which paint should I use for the walls inside my clinic?*" is irrelevant, at least in the beginning. If you have too few patients, you will end up with struggling practice ... regardless of your paint choice.

Consequently, one of the first challenges in starting your own practice is knowing how to generate interest in your practice. This is especially true when you're just starting out and don't know anyone in the area. A few avenues that are working well in this climate include developing relationships with medical doctors; speaking online (webinars, podcasts, interviews); and developing an online presence in avenues that can make a big difference (e.g., positive Google reviews) without spending money on SEO or paid ads.

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