



YOUR PRACTICE / BUSINESS

# Using Email Marketing to Create Loyal Fans of Your Acupuncture Clinic

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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Emailing your clients can educate them, but more surreptitiously, you can use it for marketing. It's (mostly) free advertising that can help you grow your business.
- Email your client list regularly. That means at least twice per month; ideally at least once per week. This keeps you at the top of their mind.
- Stay in contact with your clients! You could write snail-mail newsletters as well, but I don't see why anyone would choose that over email.

I'm always the last person to hop onto any sort of technology trend. In 2007, a friend suggested I start a blog. I still remember thinking, *What the heck is a BLOG?!* It sounded like a lot of unnecessary work I didn't want to do.

I didn't start one right away, but I did start emailing my clients. Over the years, I've grown my email list and made my blog more professional. I've taken classes on copywriting to make my words more compelling and interesting. Because of that, I always have a stream of returning clients. When they think of their current health care challenges, especially on topics I've mentioned before, I'm right there in their in-box.

Recently I wrote about UTIs. That week, I had five clients struggling with stubborn and recurring UTIs book appointments. I also get new clients coming in who "have enjoyed my emails for years," and finally get around to making that commitment to treatment.

You may think, *Don't people already understand what I do?* The answer, in short, is "not really." I've had people come to my clinic for back pain who have no idea that I also treat anxiety. People

come in for allergies, but don't realize I can also treat the common cold. And don't get me started on how many people think eating tons of cold, raw salads and frozen smoothies is "eating healthy."

Emailing your clients can educate them, but more surreptitiously, you can use it for marketing. It's (mostly) free advertising that can help you grow your business, if that's something you're interested in doing. Here are my top three takeaways from years of sending weekly emails to my clients.

### The More Radical You Are - the More People Listen

This may surprise you, but the absolute worst thing you can do in your email newsletter or blog is be boring. OK, maybe being condescending is the worst, but being boring is up there.

I once lost sleep over a blog I wrote about chocolate (gasp!); specifically, the health benefits of a small amount of good quality, dark chocolate from time to time. Looking back, it's like "So what!?" At the time, it was polarizing. Someone replied, "How dare you recommend people eat sugar! Unsubscribe!" Which I did. It happens.

And to that, now in hindsight, I say, "good riddance." You don't want people around who don't jive with your message. Letting go of those people opens up energy for better-matched clients to come your way. The second thing that happened was that the other 10 subscribers I had at the time loved it.

Since then, I've written about alcohol, marijuana, and sex. They're some of the highest commented-on and replied-to topics from my clients; or what I like to call, "When keeping it real goes RIGHT."

Reading about health care can be b-o-r-i-n-g. If you want people to listen, make it fun. I can't tell you the number of articles and books about Chinese medicine that I wanted to read, really, but ultimately couldn't finish because I was falling asleep by the end of the first paragraph. If someone with an intense interest in this medicine can't get through your article, what do you think will happen when a lay-person starts reading?

Consider the difference between these two writing samples:

1. When the spleen meridian has a depletion of *qi* and blood, the manifesting symptoms of poor appetite and fatigue will create additional stress on the body, leading, perhaps to excessive bleeding, weight gain, and dampness which may appear as water retention. (Are you asleep yet?)
2. Back when I was binging Oreos at night, spending my whole day worrying, studying, and not eating regular meals, I was always tired. It was hard to focus, I never knew when my period was going to start, and my head hurt constantly. And those extra five pounds were going nowhere.

The only time to use "professional lingo" should be if you're writing a book to cure insomnia. Tagline: "Two pages and you're out like a light!" There's no need to talk like a robot. You're not in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, writing an English final.

### Email Your Client List Regularly

Regularly means at least twice per month; ideally at least once per week. This keeps you at the top of their mind. When they think "acupuncture" or even better, "health care," they should think of YOU. At some point, many acupuncture clients stop coming in for whatever reason. Maybe they moved farther away, or they're feeling better and don't understand the reason to keep going, or

financial reason, etc.

At least once a week, I've had one of these "long-gone" clients return to me ... because they're still on my email list. And since they enjoy reading my emails and blogs, they (1) like, know and trust me; (2) have heard me talk about the health topics they're now suffering with; and (3) know I can help them (again.)

### Always Be Growing Your Email List

This alone could be an article or a whole book. First, you need an email service provider like Aweber, MailChimp, Constant Contact, or Kajabi. You can make a "freebie," like a PDF download on a topic that your ideal clients want to know about. In exchange for your well-crafted PDF, they give you their email address. Other ideas: a signup form at health fairs; add all your current and new clients to your email list.

### The Big Takeaway

Stay in contact with your clients! You could write snail-mail newsletters as well, but I don't see why anyone would choose that over email. It's 2024! Oh, and remember, don't be boring!

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