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Amy Galvan

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nuherbs Co.
3820 Penniman Avenue
Oakland, CA 94619
phone: (800) 233-4307
fax: (800) 550-1928
herbalexplorations@nuherbs.com
www.nuherbs.com

Embrace the Holiday Spirit for Business Development

With the holidays upon us our lives become increasingly hectic with family, friends, and parties to attend. Sometimes we become so busy during the holiday season that our careers become slightly neglected and we miss many opportunities to build business. It is essential to take advantage of these opportunities to reconnect with our customers, introduce them to new offerings, and, most significantly, to show them that they are important to us.

There are two distinct areas where you can reach out to your customers and patients: via external communications and at the office. By utilizing both channels, you can increase the number of touch points with your customers, thus improving the results of your efforts. Listed below are some ideas that you could incorporate during the holiday season to improve your business in the new year.

On Location

Warm Herbal Tea Serving warm herbal teas (preferably in environmentally friendly mugs or cups) imbues customers and clients with the holiday spirit and welcomes them in a tangible manner, helping them

to relax once they are inside. The warm liquid is soothing during the season of colds and chilly weather.

Gift Packages Retail stores and websites are teeming with packages of products and services for the holidays. This is the perfect time of year to experiment with selling packages to your clients, as they might purchase them for friends and family as well as themselves, thus increasing your clientele.

As we discussed in the "Weathering the Economic Downturn" series, *Treatment Packages* can be a boon to your business. Chances are your patients have loved ones who could benefit from treatment and there is no better time than now to give the gift of health. Bundle together packages for common ailments and offer them at a reduced gift price. This is also an ideal time to offer an *Introductory Package* for purchase as a gift from current patients to new prospects.

If you sell products in your store or clinic that are not only prescription based, now is a great time to package complementary items together

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Featured Essay: Amy Galvan



Amy is a student at Dragon Rises College of Oriental Medicine in Gainesville, Florida, and the recipient of the Herbal Times prize in the 2009 nuherbs co. Chinese Medicine Scholarship competition.

I came to Chinese medicine with a background in volunteer counseling for domestic violence, sexual assault and rape trauma that began in the mid-1990s. I have witnessed the profound healing Chinese medicine can have on these survivors. When I began my studies in Chinese medicine, I set out to integrate these disciplines in the following ways: (1) to use my clinical internship to develop a new model for practice that will promote Chinese medicine in the context of victim services, (2) to integrate Chinese medicine practitioners into the existing community support network for victims of crime, and (3) to conduct pilot studies on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for research I would like to conduct in the future.

The use of acupuncture to treat trauma is a growing interest in America, much as its use to treat pain was in the 1970s. The media has written about acupuncturists treating victims of 9/11 and Katrina. The U.S. military administers "battlefield acupuncture" for soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Andrews Air Force Base. The Fort Hood Warrior Combat Stress Reset program utilizes acupuncture to treat soldiers with PTSD. Domestic violence shelters remind us that PTSD treatment is appropriate for families of soldiers, too, as Department of Justice crime statistics show soldiers with untreated PTSD are linked with higher incidence of domestic violence and spousal sexual battery.

Going beyond a 5-point auricular protocol for battlefield acupuncture, I am using the full expanse of Chinese medicine modalities to treat crime-related trauma in individuals and communities at home. Currently I am incorporating Chinese medicine with Florida Department of Justice services for victims. The money to pay for treatment comes from convicted criminals through court-mandated fees,

not tax dollars. This money is available to all qualifying victims of crime regardless of socioeconomic status. The model I am pioneering can be used by acupuncturists across the U.S., within the scope of their practice laws.

The idea for this came to me after learning about Working Class Acupuncture. This community acupuncture model developed by Lisa Rohleder has been one way to successfully implement the healing of communities, not just individuals. Her model gives acupuncture access to more people than the typical upper middle class pay-out-of-pocket patient, or the poor who are serviced by government tax dollars. My adaptation of this model also transcends socioeconomic boundaries, but allows for treatments in private rooms, demands networking with community agencies, and promotes the transfer of money from criminals to victims for healing. My focus on addressing crime in communities comes from a desire to create the "beloved community" described by Martin Luther King, founded on respect for human dignity, justice, civic participation, and nonviolence.

Therefore in addition to my regular studies in Chinese medicine, I have completed specialized training with the Florida State Department of Justice to be certified as a victim advocate. Providing victim services in healthcare using Chinese medicine allows me to bring the potential of our beautiful and powerful medicine to the attention of local, county, and state systems through training seminars and Department of Justice networks which include law enforcement, the judicial system, and health departments.

This year in my internship in Chinese medicine, I worked with the local county rape crisis center to form an acupuncture support group as a pilot study for further research. We secured funds for 5

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women to receive 10 weeks of herbal medicine and acupuncture concurrent with 12 weeks of mental health counseling. We quantified results using a) the Burns Depression Scale, b) functional pain assessments, and c) a Quality of Life inventory that considered habits, sleep patterns, social, psychological, and work related competencies. Press releases were sent out and the media covered our story with curiosity and respect. I hope to publish our positive results of the study in the next 9 months.

In victim services, Chinese medicine can be used to support patients as they heal from physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual pain from trauma. Conditions treated may include physical injuries, infections, memory problems, insomnia, eating disorders, flashbacks, intense emotions or emotional numbness, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Chinese medicine heals the community by helping to transform the effects of crime. It can strengthen survivors to testify against their perpetrators to put the guilty behind bars. It helps complete the healing process to prevent revictimization (usually girls, women) or retaliatory crime (usually boys, men). This work can promote our profession by conducting desired research on treating PTSD for survivors of war, catastrophe, and other traumatic events.

Chinese medicine works well with the victim advocate profession. Like us, they embrace multicultural values, spirituality, and the interrelatedness of systems---both within the individual and in community services. Some of the problems they cannot solve can be helped with Chinese medicine. For example, because we can diagnose and treat based on subtle signs found on the pulse, tongue, face, ear, or palpation, the victims do not have to retell their traumatic stories to receive proper diagnosis. This is especially helpful for victims who have memory loss, flashbacks, or do not speak English. When survivors "stonewall" in counseling, acupuncture can help move energy, open the heart, and serve communication and awareness to aid in the counseling process. We can also help "compassion fatigue" of other victim advocates.

Chinese medicine is an evolving medicine. While influences on its growth have been made by practitioners, philosophers, religious leaders, governments, and lineages of local and historical traditions over thousands of years, its relevance derives from its ability to solve modern problems of the individual and the collective. As modern society is not immune to the effects of crime, stress and trauma, using Chinese medicine to address these problems is my contribution to the future growth of our profession.

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into a pretty gift basket or bag. Often patients want to share Chinese Medicine with their friends and family but are unsure how to do so - a nice gift bundle can facilitate this.

Specials are a great way to introduce your patients to the other services your clinic may offer. Both set and customizable packages combining massage, chiropractic, herbal therapy or any other offerings will encourage your clients to enrich their lives and support the work that you are doing with them. Encourage your partners and the practitioners of the other treatments to offer the same packages, thus sending business your way as well.

Tokens of Appreciation tell your patients that they are in your thoughts even when they are not in your office. These gifts can be tangible goods or a free service. Give them a nice gift of the herbal tea you brewed for them onsite, some

healthy cookies for them to bring home, or any other small gift that strikes your fancy and promotes a sense of appreciation, warmth and health. A free class, be it an educational seminar or a fun TCM-based cooking lesson, makes your patients feel appreciated and is another opportunity for you to get to know them and their needs. Also, do not forget cross promotions. Most local restaurants and businesses would be happy to give you gift certificates for your clients, particularly if they are offered a discount in return. This is a win-win situation for everyone: you open the door to potential clients and you show appreciation for your current patients.

External Communication

Holiday Cards and New Years cards are the perfect opportunity to reconnect with patients that you haven't seen in a while. Try to make the

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\$25
credit

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cards as personal as you can, at least with a real signature if possible. People notice the small touches, and the time it takes to sign a card by hand will pay off in positive feelings towards you and hopefully continued business. Remember that you can add an action item to these cards, informing them of a new special or service, without detracting from the spirit of the card. A good way to do this would be to create a coupon that looks like a gift and not an advertisement.

A *holiday party* or *happy hour* is a fantastic way to build community within your patients. Serve beverages and healthy food and give your customers a chance to interact with each other and share their stories. Encouraging them to bring their friends and family not only introduces new people to your business, but it gives you an opportunity to get to know your current patients better, thus fostering the practitioner-patient relationship.

These are just some ideas that can help you spark business throughout the holiday season while showing your patients and the community that you care.

We would love to hear the things that you do in your practice or store to reach out to your customers and your community. Email us at herbalexplorations@nuherbs.com to tell your story and how you have grown your practice while reaching out to your patients.

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nuherbs Co.
3820 Penniman Avenue
Oakland, CA 94619