
COVID 19

BUSINESS SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR MASSAGE THERAPISTS



INTRO

Well, I never thought I'd ever be sitting down writing something like this - a guide on how your business can try to manage a worldwide pandemic. This is an especially scary time for local businesses. The massage community is feeling worried, overwhelmed, and stressed. On top of this, there is a feeling of helplessness. There are clients who rely on you and it hurts that you can't treat them.

At the same time, I've talked to massage therapists who are adapting, working on developing new skills, and who have taken the time to grieve the situation and have now moved on to hope and optimism. And that's the reason I've decided to write this e-book, to show that once you have a plan in place, the situation is less scary and you can position your business to thrive in the future.

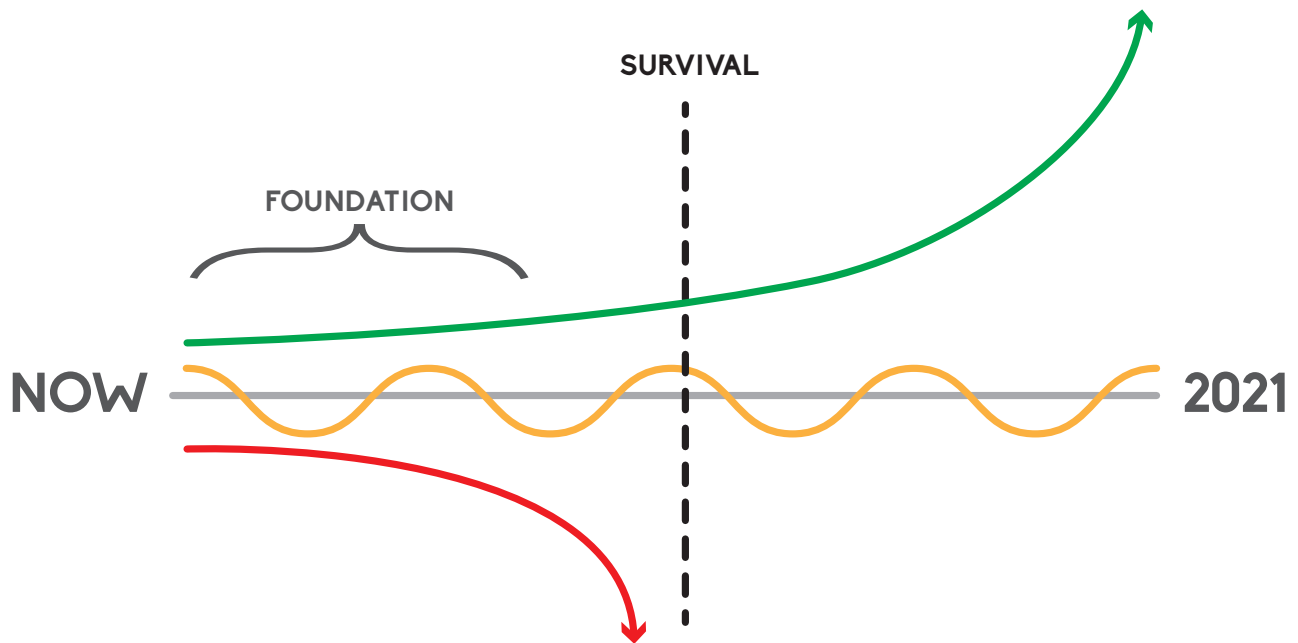
Think of all of the clients that were in the middle of a treatment plan when this hit, the number of people currently experiencing the highest levels of stress in their lives, and those who are not getting the amount of daily movement they are used to and are in pain. There is a world of people out there who will need the massage community more than ever and you will have the opportunity to step up and help in a big way when your doors are back open. Until then, this COVID-19 Business Continuity Guide will show you the things you can be doing now to keep your business afloat, build a ton of goodwill with your clients, and be ready to take your business to the next level in the coming months.



WHAT PATH ARE YOU ON?

WHAT PATH ARE YOU ON?

This chart was shared with me by my business coach. Its purpose is to highlight that most businesses right now are on one of three paths.



The dotted line represents the time when you're allowed to open your business. We call it the survival line.

- The red line represents businesses that are frozen by fear and are not taking any action.
- The yellow line represents businesses that are unfocused and it's unclear if they will make it to the survival line.
- The green line represents businesses that have a strategy in place and are actively working on improving their business.

In the early days, each business is right around the same spot. But as time goes on, the lines diverge and we will start to see how the mentality you have today affects the future of your business. The good news is that by reading this e-book, it's clear that you want to be on the green line, and by the end of the book you'll have a strategy to execute on.

STRATEGY PART 1

SUPPORT YOUR CUSTOMERS



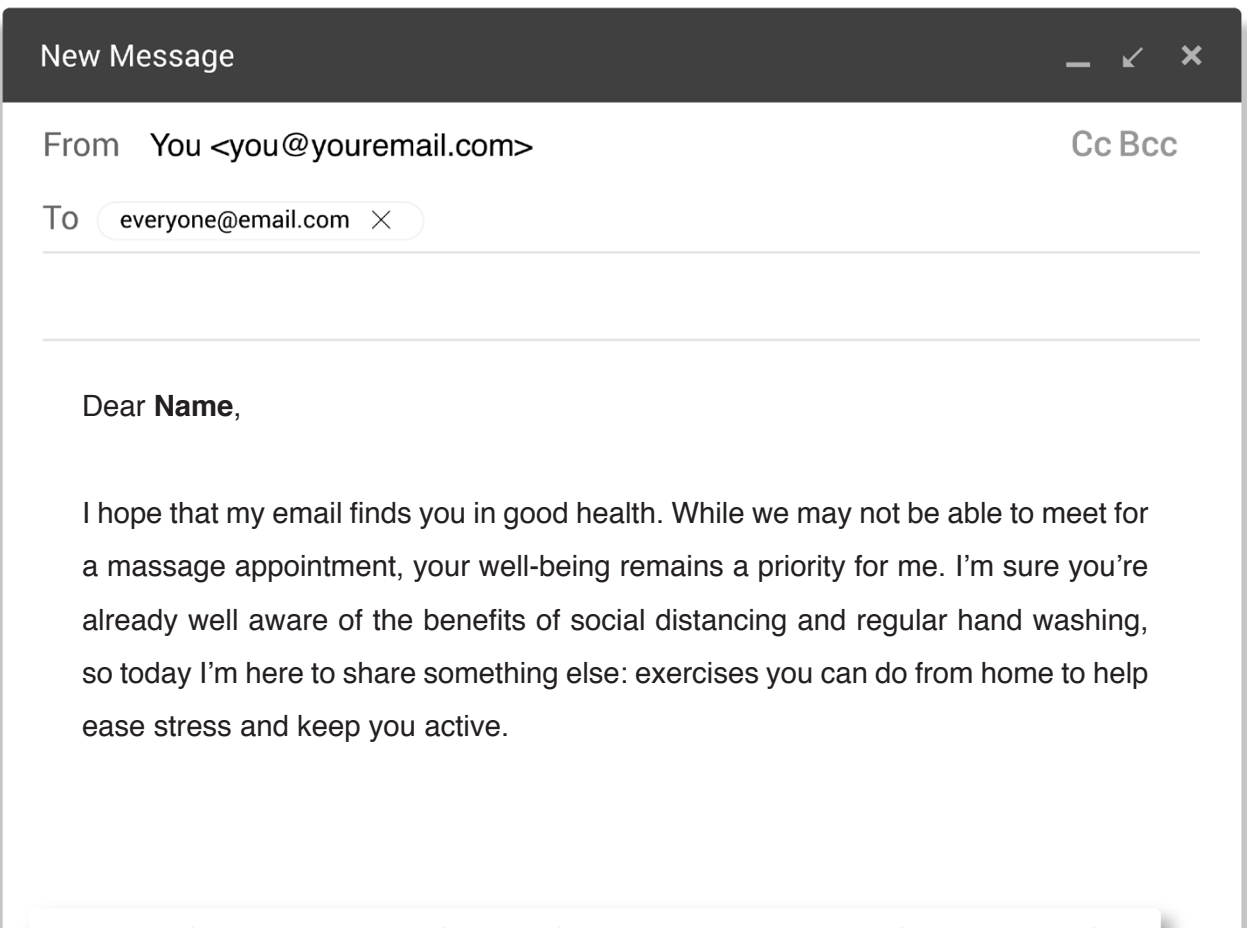
STRATEGY PART 1 – SUPPORT YOUR CUSTOMERS

While you cannot be physically present with your clients to treat them, you can continue to support them. Businesses on the green line are actively trying to help their clients in three ways: regular email correspondence, personal outreach, and virtual sessions.

Email Correspondence

Your customers have a relationship with many types of businesses. Some of those businesses will go into a hibernation mode, signalling to the client that they were simply a business transaction to them. We know that for the massage community, nothing could be further from the truth. This is why a weekly email to your clients to show that you're thinking about them and that you care about their well-being is essential. The great news is that this is super easy, with a time commitment of no more than 1 hour each week.

Use the framework on the following page to document your email campaign strategy. It's one email per week with one tip for the mind (to help manage stress) and one tip for the body (to help prevent pain). I put together some ideas with the help of ClinicSense customers to help get you started. First is an example of email copy:



The screenshot shows an email composition window with a dark header bar labeled "New Message" and standard window controls (minimize, maximize, close). The email fields are as follows:

- From:** You <you@youremail.com>
- Cc:** Bcc
- To:** everyone@email.com (with a close button 'X')

The email body contains the following text:

Dear **Name**,

I hope that my email finds you in good health. While we may not be able to meet for a massage appointment, your well-being remains a priority for me. I'm sure you're already well aware of the benefits of social distancing and regular hand washing, so today I'm here to share something else: exercises you can do from home to help ease stress and keep you active.

Then you want to share your tips. A fun way to approach your weekly email is to make it into a challenge. Tell them that you're going to send two tips each week, one for their body and one for their mind, and the challenge is to complete both tasks within the week. Here are a few ideas to get started.

For Your Mind

- Complete a daily 5-minute meditation with an app like [Calm](#) or [Headspace](#)
- Watch 3 videos from [The Mindful Movement](#) YouTube channel
- Practice 5-minutes of mindfulness daily. Close your eyes, take deep breaths, and when you have a thought, acknowledge it and then move on
- Abstain from reading the news for 3 days this week
- Make time for a nice long bath, at least 30 minutes
- Each day this week, write down one thing you are grateful for

For Your Body

- Go for a daily 30-minute walk (while maintaining social distancing)
- Do this [5-minute stretch routine](#) each day
- Follow along to 3 videos from [Yoga with Adriene](#) this week
- Do 3 [bodyweight workouts](#) this week
- Complete a push-up challenge. Do as many push-ups as you can on Day 1, then add one extra push-up each of the following days (so by Day 7, you did 7 more push-ups)
- Each day, do a stair exercise. Go up and down a flight of stairs 10 times

Each time you send an email (we recommend on a Monday), post the same content to your social media. Then post again on Wednesday and Friday. It'll give clients who weren't online on Monday a chance to see your challenge and will also serve as a check-in with clients to see how they are making out this week.

Encourage your clients to continue with any of the tips you provided that they really liked. Just because you are on to the next week's challenge doesn't mean they have to stop activities from previous weeks. You should also encourage them to share your email with their friends. For your clients, inviting friends will make it more fun for them; for your business, forwarded emails may mean building trust with new people that may turn into future clients.

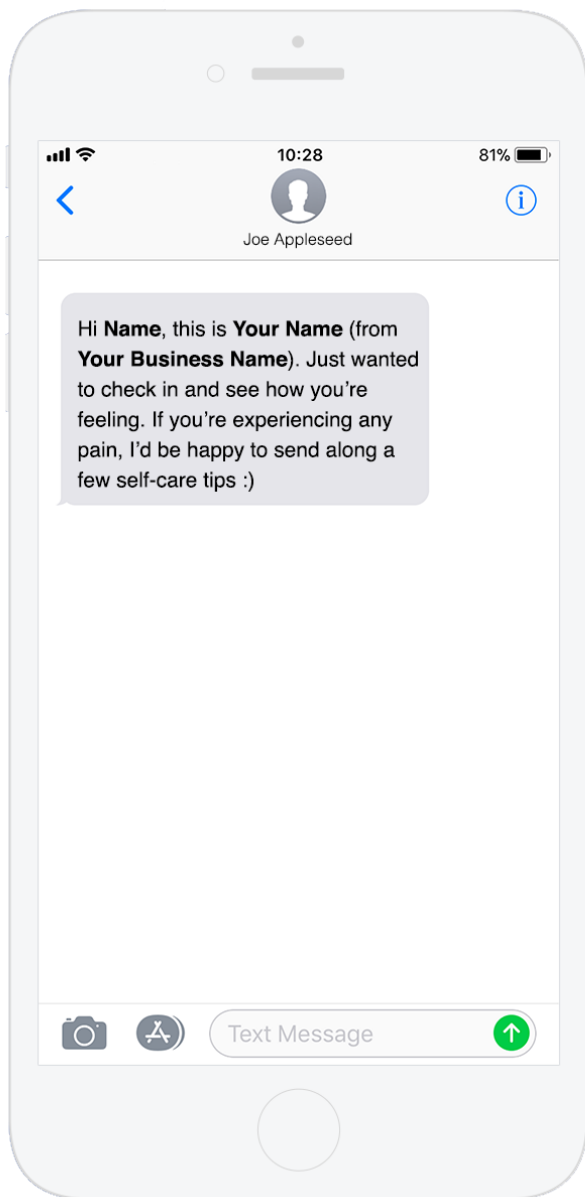
Support your Customers: Email Correspondence Framework

Send one email to clients every week. Write down the date you're sending it as well as 1 self-care tip for the body and 1 self-care tip for the mind.

	SEND DATE	BODY	MIND
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			
Week 5			
Week 6			
Week 7			
Week 8			
Week 9			
Week 10			
Week 11			
Week 12			

Personal Outreach

The strongest relationships with clients are formed by taking the time to reach out personally. So while an email newsletter is an excellent first step to support clients, the next step is scheduling time to reach out to specific clients. You may have hundreds, or even thousands of clients and the thought of personally messaging them is surely overwhelming. That's why this is precisely what you don't want to do!



Each weekday, choose only 3 clients to message (preferably by text or phone). All you need to say is:

Hi Name, this is Your Name (from Business Name). Just wanted to check in and see how you're feeling. If you're experiencing any pain, I'd be happy to send along a few self-care tips :)

That will likely lead to a short conversation. Many people will say they are doing well and that will be it, but the fact that you reached out to them to check is what matters most. That's a gesture that people will remember and leads to loyal, long-term clients who are happy to make referrals.

How do you choose which clients to reach out to? Start with your regulars. Then review your SOAP notes from the past couple months and reach out to those that came with a specific problem in mind. Then move on to everyone else. Follow-up a week later with anyone that said they did need some help with a specific problem.

Support your Customers: Personal Outreach Framework

Choose 3 clients to email each week day. Write down their name below & schedule a follow-up if needed.

April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Virtual Sessions

I recently spoke with Sarah Lashley from Somavida Pain Relief Center in Evanston, IL. Sarah is offering virtual sessions to her clients and I think she has a plan that can be replicated by many massage therapists. Sarah is offering two types of virtual sessions:

Individual sessions - This is a 30-minute call where she teaches the client how to precisely treat 2 to 4 muscles using a Thera Cane, ball, foam roller, or their hands.

Partner sessions - This is a 45-minute call where she teaches the client's partner how to precisely treat the muscles the client needs maintenance on to stay pain-free or in low levels of pain.

Sarah also added this to our conversation, which I loved: "We are really excited that this unique time can be used to help clients in pain gain self-treatment skills to help them feel empowered and like they can have control over their pain like never before."

Sarah is using doxy.me, but you can also consider Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, and FaceTime. Some of your conversations from your personal outreach may lead to scheduling a virtual session, but you should also send out an email campaign to your clients to let them know you're able to help them treat pain remotely with either an individual or partner session. We've included an email framework on the next page that you can use.





STRATEGY PART 2

SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

STRATEGY PART 2 – SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Part 1 was how to support your clients, and now we're talking about how to support your community. Look back at the chart from the beginning of this e-book, specifically the foundation. Serving others IS the foundation. The businesses on the red and yellow lines succumb to the temptation of turning inwards (or as I put it earlier, going into hibernation mode). Businesses on the green line find every opportunity to support others.

Here are three creative ways the massage community is supporting their community:

The First Responder Promo

The time and effort being put in by first responders right now is inspiring; there is truly no way we'll ever be able to show the true extent of our appreciation. But that doesn't mean we can't try! The following idea was shared by Heather in Massachusetts. I initially shared it via the ClinicSense email list and through social media and the response was amazing:

"When clients buy a gift certificate valued at \$75 or more, I will donate a \$25 gift certificate to the local hospital for our front-line workers to redeem when they are well and are ready for an hour of relaxation (which I'm sure they will need desperately). It works out to be about one treatment donated for every 3 treatments sold."

I asked Heather if the idea was the front line worker would have to pay for the balance of the treatment and she clarified that they would not. She would redeem multiple gift certificates for each session.

I've also seen variations of this idea. For example, Dawn from Texas was running a promotion where for every \$100 in gift certificates sold, she would donate a 30-minute session to front line workers at her local hospital. Anaika from Connecticut even set up a process where her clients could buy a gift certificate to donate to a doctor or nurse practitioner.

I'm not sure if Heather, Dawn, or Anaika have reached out to her local news about their promotion ideas, but this is the type of creative idea that can get media attention. A lot of good would be created in the world if other businesses saw their story and replicated their ideas.



The Pay-It-Forward Promo

When thinking about how to serve others, Madison from New York started to think about all of her favorite local businesses that are also suffering from the shut down and how she can help them. This inspired an imaginative idea:

"I started thinking about how I can help others. Specifically, some of my favorite local businesses that are also shut down. And that's when I came up with my pay-it-forward promotion idea that is all about supporting the local economy. For every gift certificate that I sell next weekend, I am personally going to buy a gift certificate to another local business of the exact same amount."

I have some hope that the idea will go viral in my community and we can all support each other. I know I'll be going to my favorite restaurants, hair salons, and MY massage therapist, so the gift certificates I buy will be used and I get to support people like me."

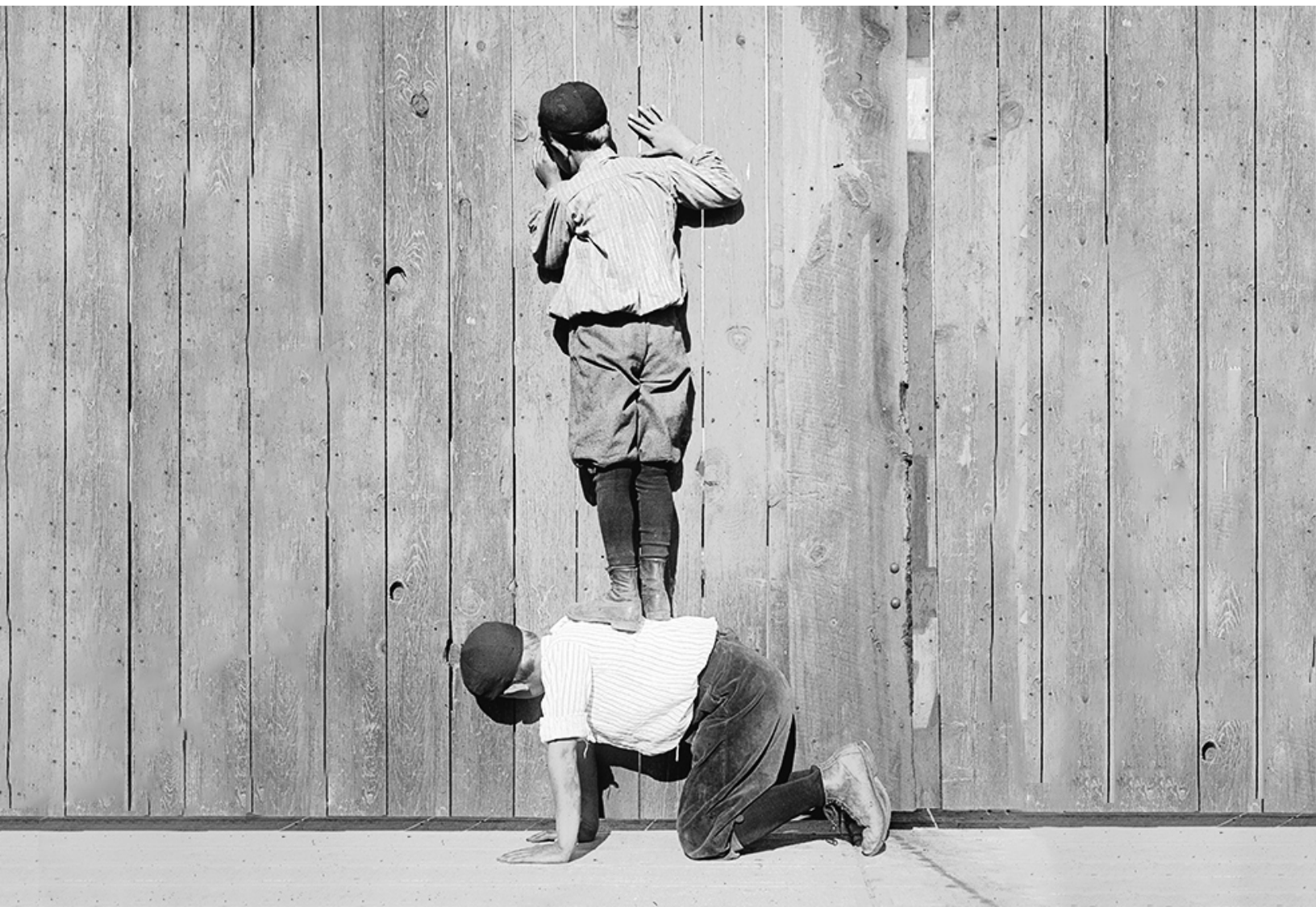
I really love this idea. We've seen "support local business" type posts all over social media in the past couple weeks. This idea has the potential to set-off a chain reaction, which means the act of buying one gift certificate will help at least 2 businesses and maybe many more if the idea catches on in the community.

The Cross-Promotion Promo

This is another idea centered around local businesses supporting each other, and is also very easy to implement. Businesses that must remain closed like restaurants and hair salons are in the same tough spot as massage therapists. And they too are likely trying different promotion ideas. The opportunity here is combining your efforts, which will extend your reach and help gain new clients for when you are back open.

The promotion structure is simple: your new partner business offers their customer a \$10 gift certificate for massage with the purchase of a meal, an online order, a food delivery, etc., and you would offer the same \$10 gift certificate for their business when someone buys with you.

It's a marketing tactic you can use all the time. It's a great way to support each other and at the same time acquire a new customer for only \$10!



Support Your Community: The Cross-Promotion Framework

Create 3 different cross-promotion ideas that you can share with businesses in your area.

PROMOTION #1

Promo name: _____

Promo summary: _____

Launch date: _____ End date: _____

Promotion Schedule

DATE	CHANNEL (i.e. email, social media, etc)

PROMOTION #2

Promo name: _____

Promo summary: _____

Launch date: _____ End date: _____

Promotion Schedule

DATE	CHANNEL (i.e. email, social media, etc)

PROMOTION #2

Promo name: _____

Promo summary: _____

Launch date: _____ End date: _____

Promotion Schedule

DATE	CHANNEL <i>(i.e. email, social media, etc)</i>

STRATEGY PART 3

SUPPORT YOURSELF



STRATEGY PART 3 – SUPPORT YOURSELF

I'm sure we'll all binge a little Netflix while business is shut down, but it's important to remember that this time is valuable. Businesses on the green line will schedule time each day to better their business so when they reopen they are a new and improved version of themselves.

Learn Something New

This time off is an excellent opportunity to expand your skill set. In fact, I've heard so many massage therapists talk about CEUs lately that I made a personal goal to find an online CEU provider and negotiate a price for the massage community.

If you go to <https://www.massageceu.com/clinicsense/>, you'll get 60% off CEUs with Panda CEU. This brings their rate of \$10 per credit hour down to \$4. They are approved by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork as a continuing education provider (#1326), plus several State Boards. Courses can also be used in Canada towards programs like STRiVE.

I'd also suggest looking into American Massage Therapy Association's catalog of courses here: <http://amtamassage.org/learn>. I strongly recommend using the time now to learn about what it takes to be a winning business owner. That means learning about marketing, sales, business expansion, up-selling, or new revenue streams. One of the best things you can do for your clients is ensure your own long-term success so they can have continuity with their treatments. You can also learn on websites like Coursera, Udemy, or even YouTube.

Create New Marketing Strategies

Once you've taken a course on marketing, sales, etc., you'll have plenty of new ideas to grow your business once you're back open. It's important that you document the ideas and are ready to execute on them when your business reopens. Here are strategies I've seen work well for ClinicSense customers that you may want to consider implementing:

Treatment packages	Sell a bundle of sessions at a slightly discounted price. It's a win-win: you secure multiple appointments from a client and they get to take advantage of some savings.
Referral program	Reward your clients for referring their friends. A referral offer is generally two-sided, for example: when you refer a friend, you get 10 extra minutes on your next session and your friend gets 10 extra minutes too!
Loyalty program	A loyalty program is a means of rewarding your repeat customers. For example, many cafes use stamp cards - if you collect 9 stamps, your 10th drink is free! The same concept can apply to massage therapy. For example, get 30 free minutes on your 10th appointment.
Partnerships	Are there businesses in your area that attract the same type of clients that come to see you? For example, if you do lots of work on athletes, is there a gym, yoga studio, or exercise facility in your neighbourhood? You can create a special offer for their members in return for them promoting your offer.
Availability campaign	An availability campaign is an email that goes out (usually automatically) every week or every two weeks to let your clients know what time slots you have available for the following two weeks. It's amazing how much a simple reminder can fill your calendar.
Google Adwords	Adwords can be incredibly effective if done right. There are people in your neighbourhood searching for "massage therapist" or "best massage therapist" and Adwords gives you the opportunity to show up first in the

search results. Couple that with a beautiful website and online scheduling and you can achieve an incredible return on your investment. [Here's a voucher where Google will match up to \\$150 of your ad spend](#) (or [here](#) if you're in Canada).

Print advertising

It may seem old-school, but there is still merit in print advertising. One option is to design a door hanger and print it for very cheap at a place like VistaPrint. Then all it takes is an afternoon of walking around your neighbourhood and hanging them on the doors of the homes close to your business. They are most effective when coupled with an offer such as an introductory price, additional minutes at no extra charge, or a free add-on service.



Support Yourself: New Marketing Strategies Framework

Create 3 different cross-promotion ideas that you can share with businesses in your area.

TREATMENT PACKAGE

of Treatments: _____

Price: _____

REFERRAL PROGRAM

Existing client gets: _____

New client gets: _____

LOYALTY PROGRAM

After _____ appointments, client gets _____

PARTNERSHIPS

Business name: _____

Type of business: _____

Offer details: _____

Business name: _____

Type of business: _____

Offer details: _____

Business name: _____

Type of business: _____

Offer details: _____

Improve your Online Presence

I recently spoke with Janet in Massachusetts about how she was using the down-time. She responded:

"I'm taking time to go back and make improvements to my online accounts. For example, I searched my business name and found some profiles that were either out-of-date or just not complete. These are profiles like Google Maps, Yelp, etc. So I spent some time getting them all right and even adding some photos. I also noticed there were some reviews that I hadn't replied to. So I wrote replies :)"

Next, I spent some time on my website. It's been a while since I updated it. I did some research on best practices for websites like mine. Here are a few tips I found:

- The main goal of the website is to have a clear "call to action". Pretty much, what do I want the website visitor to do on my site. For me, this was clear: book an appointment. So the first thing I did was make sure my Book Appointment button was highly visible on all of my web pages. I also changed some of my copy to be more direct. For example, the end of each service description says some variation of 'Book an appointment today'.*
- Next, I removed about 50% of everything I wrote on my website. I've learned that people don't really read, they skim. So each of my service descriptions is now only 2-3 sentences and I only talk about the most important things. I also cut down on my "About me" section to highlight the things the customer is most interested in: how long I have been in practice, what differentiates me (so I highlight my continuing education), and then one paragraph that tries to make a personal connection.*
- I also learned you should use the same phrases that people are likely to search for when using Google. This will help your website show up in the Google search results. For me, this meant taking out some more technical words and replacing it with terms people are more likely searching for.*

After making those changes, I knew I needed to update the look. I was able to find a new template using my website builder and it wasn't too much work to change over to it.

Finally, I changed up my Facebook and Instagram profile photos. It had been a couple years, so I was due for a new photo of myself :)"

If your website is due for an update, here are a few website builders that have nice, modern designs and are super easy to use: [Weebly](#), [Wix](#), [Vistaprint](#).

Support Yourself: Improve your Online Presence

Fill out this checklist to ensure your online presence is up-to-date.

WEBSITE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Book appointment button in a highly visible area
- ☐ Contact details are highly visible and accurate throughout the website
- ☐ Colors are simple and not hard on the eyes
- ☐ Your website's color scheme is consistent with your brand
- ☐ Fonts are easy to read
- ☐ Social media share icons are working properly
- ☐ Company logo is linked to the homepage
- ☐ Content is up-to-date and at the correct readability level for your clients
- ☐ Web copywriting has been proofread. Spelling and grammar are correct.
- ☐ Paragraphs, headers, lists, and other formatting are correct
- ☐ Images are in the correct places and are the correct resolution
- ☐ All forms, if any, are working
- ☐ Pages have unique page titles (less than 70 characters & include keywords for Google searches)
- ☐ Google Analytics added to the website
- ☐ Your website is responsive (it adapts to the clients screen size i.e. computer, phone and tablet.)

SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST

- ☐ Google My Business
- ☐ Yelp
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn

Get More Organized

It's hard to be a business on the green line if you're not incredibly organized. You can use the time now to analyze each part of your day and identify where you were losing the most time and which tasks were causing you the most stress. Then think about what changes you can make so you're spending less time on administrative and tedious tasks and more time with clients.

If you haven't tried using clinic management software, now is a good time check it out. When people sign up to ClinicSense, I usually recommend that they don't do the trial with real clients anyways. I suggest they book **themselves** in for an appointment and then test out how to make a SOAP note, email a receipt, sell a gift certificate, etc. At the free trial stage, you're just trying to get a feel for if it's a good fit for your business.

Once you're using clinic management software, you'll find that you will:

- Cut the amount of time spent on paperwork in half
- Stop playing telephone tag
- Reduce or completely eliminate no-shows
- Reduce your stress at tax-time
- Not have to deal with stacks of paper and filing cabinets
- Feel the relief of being more organized

While businesses remain closed due to COVID-19, ClinicSense has extended our free trial from 14-days to 30-days. If you'd like to try it out, you can start a trial [here](#). This way you're well-prepared for when you reopen. Since our business has slowed down as well, we can dedicate more time to guiding you.

Next Steps

Now that you've made it to the end of this e-book, it's time to go back and complete each of the frameworks. It may seem like a lot of work when looking at it from a high level, but everything can be accomplished with a commitment of only 1 hour per day or less.

If you are stuck, or have any questions, the team at ClinicSense is happy to help. Please reach out via email at team@clinicsense.com and we can schedule a time to chat to help you overcome any obstacles.

**About the Author**

My name is Daniel Ruscigno, and my company ClinicSense helps massage therapists automate their administrative tasks (scheduling, intake forms, note-taking, invoicing, and more) so they can spend less time on paperwork and more time doing the things they love.



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