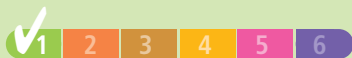


from **MASSAGE** magazine

by Cherie Sobnen-Moe

## SUCCESS CHECKLIST ✓

*The items below are goals, activities and skills that we suggest you accomplish by the time you are done with the first segment (1/6) of your education.*



- Identify your long-term personal goals.
- Learn how to do career planning.
- Begin collecting business cards and brochures of other massage practitioners.
- Catalog your personal and professional strengths and challenges.
- Know the advantages and disadvantages of various career options.
- Identify your career goals.
- Interview three successful self-employed practitioners.
- Interview three practitioners/managers who work in a spa setting.

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR NEXT ISSUE

- ✓ Demystifying Finances
- ✓ Start-up Costs
- ✓ Independent Contractor Status

## WELCOME!

**W**elcome to futureLMT.com! This series of newsletters is designed to guide you throughout your school term so that by the time you graduate you are well on your path to success in private practice, as an employee or a combination of the two. We are concerned about the high attrition rate in this profession. You are investing your time and money to begin a career in which you can help people feel better and enhance their well-being. We want to help you make a living doing this wonderful work.

Massage program durations vary from school to school: from several months to several years. We are dividing the school term into six segments. Each issue will provide a Success Checklist of goals, activities and skills that we suggest you accomplish by the time you are finished with that segment of your education. Thus, depending on the length of your particular program, your segment could cover a span of time from less than one



*Be sure to visit [www.futureLMT.com](http://www.futureLMT.com) for additional material related to the Success Checklist topics and a listing of website resources and exploration.*

month to more than four months. We will also include material related to the Success Checklist topics.



## SUCCESS 101

**S**uccess, what does it really mean to you? Are you successful only if you earn a certain amount of money, perform miracles in your work, look a particular way, are in a perfect relationship, drive a great car or live in the right neighborhood? In other words, what are your values? Is success a “thing” to be achieved or a way of being? Quite often we have conflicting ideas of what it means to be successful, and our requirements for success

may vary greatly in the personal, business and social realms.

As you begin this new career path, it's the perfect time to explore your values and how they relate to your success. Start by identifying what's truly important to you in terms of your overall life and then determine your career success markers. This activity also assists you in choosing whether you want to pursue opening a private practice or working for someone else. For instance, many people enter this field because they want the flexibility to take off on a spur-of-the-moment adventure or stay at home with a sick child. If this was an extremely high priority for you, it wouldn't be wise to take a job in a small company where you are expected to adhere to a strict schedule or work long hours.

Only you can determine what success is for you—although others might attempt to influence you. As the saying goes, “One person's junk is another's treasure.” For me, success is accomplishing what I've set out to do: it's a process of setting and achieving goals.

## THE ART OF GOAL SETTING

**G**oal setting is the means of turning your dreams into reality. Dreams are similar to wishes: they are things we fantasize about, yet do little to make happen (but we're certainly ecstatic when they do). Goals are those things to which you commit and take action to ensure their attainment.

Goal setting is tied into the reticular activating system. Our senses (particularly sight) are constantly flooded with a vast amount of stimuli, yet we are consciously aware of only a fraction of that data. Most of that information is not necessary for our well-being, so it gets screened. In essence, we have programmed filters (or in some cases, blinders) in our brains.

The inability to actualize goals is usually related to unclear goals, lack of commitment, conflict or negative conditioning. Very few people write goals, and those who do, don't always write their goals in a way that easily produces results. Sometimes they write what they think they should want or what their spouse, parent, boss or peers think they should want. Other times they claim to

want something, but what they really want is what that "thing" represents.

Occasionally conflicts exist in relation to the achievement of their goals. The attainment of one goal may preclude the fulfillment of another, or the consequences may not be viewed favorably by their immediate family and colleagues. Quite often people have a lot of negative conditioning to overcome.

There are people who write goals that aren't real for them—they "know" that they could never achieve them. They set unrealistic deadlines or have goals that are dependent on other people. Some have page after page of goals and yet hardly ever accomplish anything. And then other people are so detail oriented that they lose sight of the big picture.

We have a tendency to get so caught up in the list-making and the things we "ought to do" and "should do" that we don't always take into account the overall picture and consider what would be the most appropriate action to take. Life isn't about just getting by, making it from day to day. It's about reaching for and attaining our full potential at all levels. Often we do something out of

habit, or because it's easy, or because we do it well.

Effective goal setting is the groundwork for success. I advocate that you actually have written goals in addition to any other techniques you employ. The written word is powerful! By inscribing your intentions, you say to yourself and the world that you know you deserve to have these things happen.

Sometimes people are afraid to write down their goals because they don't think they can achieve them, and they don't want a written reminder of their failure. Failure, per se, doesn't really exist in goal setting. Usually when you don't accomplish a goal it's due to setting an inappropriate deadline, having inaccurate information, experiencing blocks, encountering conflicts, not really wanting the goal, or being unwilling (or unable) to do what's required to accomplish the goal.

Having written goals can only serve to support and teach you, enhancing your self-knowledge. What is crucial is the way you actually state your goals and the individual steps necessary to accomplish them. Follow the suggested goal setting techniques and most important of all, be sure they are YOUR goals. Setting goals can be creative and exciting; it is a necessary component of success, but it doesn't have to be a burden. Remember, the purpose of setting goals is to make your dreams become reality.

## PROVEN GOAL SETTING TECHNIQUES

1

Always state your goals in the positive **PRESENT TENSE**. If you write in the future, they may remain in the future—never attained.

2

Personalize your goals: use a pronoun (I, we, they, your name) in every sentence.

3

Do not use the terms "try," "will," "not," "never," "should," "would," "could" and "want."



"By recording your dreams and goals on paper, you set in motion the process of becoming the person you most want to be. Put your future in good hands—our own."

Mark Victor Hansen

4

Make your goals real: something you know you can accomplish on your own, without help or without someone waving a magic wand over your head.

5

Include deadlines whenever possible.

6

Keep your goals **SMARTER** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Tangible, Enthusiastic, Rewarding).

# PRIVATE PRACTICE vs EMPLOYMENT

## PRIVATE PRACTICE

**R**unning a private practice is very different from working in a clinic or spa. You still have to perform the basic practice management activities, though in a different manner for each arrangement. At some point in their careers most massage practitioners work alone, either in a private office, home or out-call. A private practice provides freedom and flexibility (e.g., you choose the attire, clients, environment, music, modalities, fees and scheduling), and you can essentially do anything you want as long as it's legal, ethical and moral. In addition to the general practice management activities, the sole practitioner must contend with other issues as follows:

**Autonomy** Along with the freedom of being on your own is the potential for loneliness and isolation. You are the one responsible for making certain everything is done, which often means YOU get to do it all—until you can afford to hire an assistant.

### Finances

When you are the only source of revenue in your business, you may not have the cash flow to purchase items when you want them.

Often you need to delay financial expenditures such as expensive equipment (e.g., an office copier, computer or hydraulic table).

**Marketing** When you are in private practice, you are responsible for all the marketing activities to get new clients as well as retain your current clients.

**Safety** Safety is a concern for any business owner, but even more so for the person in private practice. You don't

always know who the clients are the first time they come to your office or the neighborhood you'll be entering if you do out-calls or on-site services.

**Benefits** The only "employment benefits" you receive are the ones you pay for yourself (which kind of defeats the whole concept of "perks"). As a sole practitioner there are no true paid vacations, holidays or sick days.

## EMPLOYMENT

**S**ome people kick-start their careers by working at a spa or clinic, others take part-time jobs to augment their private practices, and there are those who prefer to only work for others. Spas are the number-one employers of massage therapists, followed by clinics. Working as an employee provides many benefits such as the possibility of walking into a full practice with little marketing; the ability to provide a larger scope of services for your clients' well-being; starting out with a ready-made professional image; being part of a team with clear and established boundaries;

reduced paperwork (there's usually an office manager); the ability to focus on hands-on work; access to better and more varied equipment and supplies; an excellent built-in referral base; support staff to do the scheduling, place confirmation calls and

handle financial transactions. Working in these settings also requires conforming to a set image, policies and procedures. You might need to alter your style and scope of practice to align with the company's vision and schedule.

**Client Contact** You may be required to alter your treatments in terms of style, modalities and length. In a clinic setting the time you spend with clients and the actual work you do may be determined by the lead primary care



## QUESTIONS

### Questions to ask when interviewing MTs in private practice:

- How long have you been in practice?
- What obstacles did you have to overcome?
- What are some of the smartest decisions you made in terms of business success?
- What are some poor decisions or mistakes you made that I should avoid?
- What are the keys to long-term success in this industry?
- At what point in your career did you first feel successful?
- What would you suggest I do while in school to prepare for being in business?
- How much has your business model changed since you first started?
- What advice do you have for me about gaining the best results with a business support group?
- If you could do it all over, what would you do differently?

### Questions to ask when interviewing spa/clinic therapists/managers:

- In regard to the process of seniority, how did you endure the slow days in the beginning when you were not scheduled for many massages?
- What advice do you have for adjusting to this environment and management (e.g., rules, personalities)?
- What advice do you have for "getting ahead" in a spa/clinic setting?
- What attributes do you look for in a person to work in a spa environment? Are these attributes different from those for a private or contract setting?
- Can you tell me what to expect in a job interview in a spa/clinic setting?
- What is one thing a person can do to ruin an interview (with you)?
- What is one thing a person can do to prevail in an interview (with you)?
- What do you suggest I do while in school to increase my odds of getting hired quickly?

► from page 3

provider. The most often cited complaint from spa therapists is the lack of control over the scheduling, such as being required to work several 50-minute sessions without a break. Another concern is receptionists booking a specific service even if it isn't clear that the practitioner on duty is proficient in that technique or if contraindications are present.

You rarely get to choose your clients. In spas there is little chance to mark progress or make lasting connections because clients don't return very often. Some spas also require massage therapists to perform other services when not doing their primary service. They often expect practitioners to promote services and products to their clients regardless of whether the practitioners like them.

**Finances** Some spas hire therapists as employees and others as independent contractors. Compensation varies greatly. If the spa isn't well-known with a high guest count, there might not be a lot of work available for the practitioners—meaning your shift would not be filled. Spas often base salaries and preferential scheduling on seniority.

Working in these settings does avail certain perquisites. You can receive discounts on services and products. If you work at a spa, you usually can use the facilities and get free or low-cost meals. When hired as an employee, benefits can include health insurance, paid

vacations, paid sick days, pension plans, profit sharing and reimbursement for continuing education.

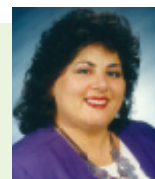
**Logistics** Most spas have staff for the day-to-day activities of running the business (e.g., preparing the office for clients, stocking supplies, cleaning), but in some spas (and many clinics) these activities are shared by everyone. You need to know what's expected of you when you're not directly working with clients (e.g., paperwork, janitorial chores, clerical duties, assisting the other practitioners, providing treatments for staff and marketing). Whether you get paid for these activities depends upon your employment status.

You usually have to share the treatment room with other practitioners. This can be challenging if the layout doesn't suit you well. The rooms may not be adequately sized or insulated, and the equipment may vary from room to room.

**Marketing** In a destination spa, you don't have to do the marketing or scheduling of clients, but there is no guarantee that your work hours will be filled. Successful spa therapists excel at marketing to current guests for repeat sessions. Many practitioners (particularly in clinics and day spas) discover to their dismay that to increase their client flow they need to market their services actively.

Cherie Sohnen-Moe is an author, business coach, international workshop leader and successful business owner since 1978. Her company offers innovative support for increasing success through home-study courses, books, workshops, coaching, and free resources on their website [www.sohnen-moe.com](http://www.sohnen-moe.com).

Cherie was in private practice for many years as a massage and holistic health practitioner. She has served on the faculty of several schools and has written 100+ articles that have been published in over 15 national and international magazines. She is the author of the book, *Business Mastery* and co-author of *The Ethics of Touch*.



Cherie Sohnen-Moe

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