



What Good Is The Internet?

By Robert Braile, D.C., F.I.C.A.

I can just hear some chiropractor saying, "Chiropractic has gotten along just fine for over 100 years without the Internet. Why should we bother with it now?" This is a tough question for me or anyone to answer to that successful doctor, who has a flourishing practice and is making a very good living. In fact, if individual success were the only benchmark, then for that successful doctor, there would be no reason to use the Internet.

But, is that the only reason our profession is in existence, to provide successful careers for chiropractors? I believe that if we look at the reason for our profession to even exist, it is to provide a better quality of life for the masses we now serve, and hope to serve in the future.

Let's ask ourselves some hard questions? Is the population at large healthier today than in years past? Are people taking fewer drugs than a decade ago? Are most children growing up with fewer chemicals in their systems? Are people relying on medical care less today because they use chiropractic?

If we are honest, the answer to each of these questions is clear. Our society is very much more drug dependant today than just a few years ago. Each year, the drug industry spends roughly the same amount of money to promote their products as the entire chiropractic profession grosses! Just think about that for a moment. If every chiropractor spent every dollar they collected on advertising, without taking out anything for living expenses, taxes, or overhead, we collectively would probably fall short of what the drug industry spends per year to convince people to take their drugs.

The only way we can conceivably compete with this reality is mass education. Notice I did not say mass advertising, or marketing. Believe it or not, the chiropractic profession has spent millions of dollars on marketing campaigns. If you do not remember ever seeing any of them, you're not alone. Relatively speaking, no one saw them. Advertising and marketing may help individual doctors to increase their own practice, but they are not the solution to bringing chiropractic to the masses.

There is a saying in chiropractic that goes, "If they knew what you knew, they would do what you do." Education about chiropractic is the only way we can change minds and move a society toward the truth. Education is the catalyst we can use to enlighten the general public and turn the tide away from the allopathic onslaught. Education is the means to ensure our profession's future, and this education needs to be on many fronts. It needs to be in our offices, in our literature, in our publications, and on the Internet.

Let's ask ourselves a question. If the Internet was around in the days of BJ Palmer, what do you think he would have done with it? I often say that if

the Internet were around in BJ's day, he'd have owned it! Certainly he would have used it to the maximum to educate the masses about chiropractic. BJ was never one to shy away from using a new technology. He embraced the communication technology of his day, and used it to spread the message of chiropractic world wide.

This brings us to a very interesting question. How are we in chiropractic using the Internet? Are we using it for education, or just merely self promotion? Are we using the Internet as only an online phone book, or are we using it as a resource to help people make

the transference to enlightenment?

The desire to grow a large successful practice and the goal of wanting to educate the world about chiropractic are by no means exclusive. In fact, they work hand in hand. Most practices today are referral based. So it is easy to see that the better educated your patients are about chiropractic, the more referrals they will make. In fact, the more people truly understand what it is we do, the more they will decide that they can not live without it.

Consider for a moment the possibilities. If over the next year, 50 million people learned about chiropractic and decided to make it part of their monthly routine by going to see a chiropractor just twice a month, that would mean that each of the approximately 50,000 chiropractic offices in the United States would be seeing about 500 patient visits per week just to handle that number. That is about four times the current national average.

Moreover, if that many people started to see chiropractors, and started to truly understand the chiropractic way

of life, the effect on the allopathic strangle-hold on the public would start to change.

The temptation to look at the Internet as a means to promote our offices is great. But I can tell you from working with hundreds of offices that a long term strategy of education is far more productive than short term promotion. Building a foundation of community awareness and understanding though good solid education will reap more benefits to the individual practitioner and to the profession at large than periodic promotions.

Those of us who have been in chiropractic for more than two decades would have been elated 20 years ago at the possibility of telling the chiropractic story to the masses. We now have just such an opportunity. Never before in the history of our profession have we been presented with a way to reach so many with our message. We can either spend this resource by enlightening the world, or we can waste it on self serving promotions that

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