

The



CAM Coach

How Technology Supports Complementary and Alternative Practice

Mark Shields



In 2012, The CAM Coach book was launched in the U.K. This book has become known as the “Business Bible” for all Complementary and Alternative Medicine practitioners as it helps them to understand the fundamental action required to set up or run a success business. My co-author Simon Martin and I had realised a need for this sort of toolkit for therapists, practitioners, Life Coaches and Psychologists, as many of them were leaving university or college with their qualifications which they knew inside out but when it came to their business knowledge this seemed limited if at all present.

THE LAW OF (TECHNOLOGICAL) ATTRACTION

I write for many publications, and was looking to contribute for an internationally based publication. The Law of Attraction came into play when I was approached by the TILT Editors through Twitter and asked to write an article for them. Once again technology had a part to play in this new exciting path as it does with many of the projects we find ourselves involve in. I would like to share with you how technology directly supports our company with the work we do, as well as how our clients can utilise it within their own practices and clinic businesses to be successful.

Social media is something I consistently promote at my seminars to practitioners and coaches as it is one of the fundamental key tools to use when getting yourself out there and known in your marketplace. It is a great way of gaining a local audience for your services; helps you to keep up to date with industry news and events; and may lead you to making important business connections and relationships that may lead to fruitful ventures down the line.

THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS

I only learnt to use a computer in my late thirties which was well into my career at the time, and even today I do rely heavily on my business partner to help me with technical matters within our business. However, I recognise the importance of embracing technology as it is fundamental in running a clinic and helps to keep running costs to a minimum. Examples of this are:

- We use time saving accounting and booking software to take care of the monthly cycle of invoicing and booking appointments.
- We have become our own marketers by learning and utilising social media platforms such as Twitter, blogs, You Tube, and Facebook. We can pinpoint exactly who our target market is and send them the marketing messages about our services that fit into their demographic at any time, all at the touch of a button. Furthermore, we do not need to be sat in our office to do this.
- A large part of our business is conducted over the internet via teleconferencing using



Skype. We keep in touch with our Associate team across the UK this way, in order to save time and money travelling. We also have various international appointments set up in this way with clients.

- We run our "Success in Business" webinars which are a great way to offer CPD to therapists and practitioners worldwide and in an easy to use format.



workshops to order to develop and enhance their creativity to write poetry. The issues that these young people face today is being translated into poetry as a tool for other young people to relate to and increase their awareness and understanding that they are not isolated in their own experiences or feelings. This project will be using a software program called “Blurb” which allows the user to produce and publish their book. No longer is it necessary to wait for a publisher like Random House to accept your idea.

- Finally, we also use apps for clients with smart phones to monitor their progress in nutrition and exercise which offer additional support to help them achieve their weight loss goals.

EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY FOR SUCCESS

Technology allows us to keep in touch with our audience in a variety of ways, anytime, and anywhere, which enables us to give a super-fast response time when we have been contacted for an appointment.

- Monthly newsletters are created using Constant Contact, a template designed software whereby we can design our own branded newsletter and send it to our email database weekly, monthly or quarterly. The newsletter facility also includes use of You Tube so we can include videos within our newsletter as well, which offers the viewer variety. Furthermore, you can send

a link of the newsletter to your social media followers, connections and friends via Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook as well. This software also offers a facility to send surveys to our demographic so we can create conversation and interact directly with them.

- We are currently working within a local secondary school on a project where we are using mindfulness

This prevents the enquirer from going to the competition.

For all of you who have read The CAM Coach we offer an international Mentoring Program and there are several key areas that we look at when we mentor new mentees. Below are the first four areas from The CAM Book where technology plays a fundamental key role in running a clinic:

1 Website set-up, structure and on-site SEO

A website is your window to the world 24/7. Think of it as your online business card or brochure where you can tell your potential client base everything they need to know about you and your services, giving them an insight into your offering before they meet you. Add testimonials from any previous clients as a great way of building your credibility, as well as displaying the logos of the Professional Bodies you belong to.

Remember customers buy YOU first, then your product and then the company. So, always advertise a landline telephone number and not a mobile. It makes the client feel that you have a static base and adds credibility.

You can use a website to sell products online such as webinars, supplements, books, podcasts, and videos. Your audience can download a FREE web-brochure in a pdf format which is a cost effective way to get your message out there in detail and can be updated and changed limitlessly.

From a website you can collect a database of contacts which you can target for future promotions, workshop announcements, discounted products, health tips etc.

There are a variety of ways in which you can develop a website to suit all budgets, from creating your own through software like Wordpress, using an online company such as, www.Webhealer.com or hiring a Web Developer. If using the latter here are some points to remember:

- Ask for a quote first
- Provide the developer with a good complete and detailed brief
- A good web-developer will look at your needs, look at your content (text, images etc.), and consider your potential audience. Only then should there be any design work. This is in fact the part that (should) take

the most time if it's done properly.

- You can help your web-developer by looking at other websites and make a note of those that you like and those that you don't like to give them an idea of your taste.
- Ensure you make it clear to your designer or host that you want to be able to make changes to the website whenever you choose. This will enable you to freely make the changes you need to make whenever you want without waiting for and paying someone else to do it.

A Web developer can charge anything from £300 to £1000 depending on what features you require. If you are just starting your business Webhealer are a great website company who will set up and host your website from as little as £15.00 per month.

2 Pay per click/Digital Advertising on Google

Once your website is completed and registered on Google, it can take many weeks and months before it reaches the front page of Google, so if you are about to qualify it is a good idea to start



building the website as soon as possible.

Teach yourself how to get your website onto page 1 of Google, let's face it how many of us really check pages 2 and 3? You can do this by searching for free information on the internet using terms such as "Google Adwords webinars".

So, **what are Google Adwords?** Google Adwords are based on Pay per Click system (PPC) – you only pay money to Google when someone clicks on your ad, so you should have a much higher chance of selling something to the people who click through on your ad than you would from a normal ad. Google Adwords are a very popular means of getting immediate traffic to your website.

They are the advertisements that you see on the right hand column of the page when you do a search on Google or at the very top of the page in a different colour. You have the ability to run multiple ads targeted with one or more search keywords and Google's step-by-step demos walk you through the process of creating a successful ad campaign.

The nice thing about an Adwords campaign is that you can have it up and running in

minutes, and you can let it run for as long (or as short) as you want.

So to Summarise:

- You are in Complete Control of how much you spend
- You can start and stop a campaign at any time
- You can set a max daily spend
- You choose the words you want to sponsor
- You Design your own Google Advert
- You can run as many adverts as you want at any one time
- You only pay when someone visits your website
- You get statistical support to help you improve your campaign
- You can choose the best time of day to advertise EG Weekends

3 Social Media Marketing

Quite often our mentees call themselves "technophobes". Technology design for consumers has come a long way since the day of the BBC microcomputer. These days it is consumer friendly and designed for even the youngest

of users to understand. There really is no excuse to be given for not having a go. All the Social Media platforms offer step by step tutorials, as well as, help and search boxes where you can type anything you are looking for and it will offer that subject matter. The only frustration about Social Media is time, as it does require that to learn the platform. Once you have the basics most of your learning is done through using the platform, plus any mistakes you make can always be deleted.

As a business owner in today's modern world we are so blessed to have such a tool at our disposal, mainly, because it is FREE! We can now tell the world about our product or service not just our local town or village. Our reach is far greater and with it we can create more opportunities than ever before.

Social Media is here to stay and it adds volumes to your business. Twitter and Facebook are great ways to build a client base in your local area. You Tube, Instagram and Pinterest can offer free information in the way of videos of techniques to use at home, cooking demos, photo recipes and educational snippets. Finally, for those of

you wishing to enter into the corporate market, LinkedIn is a great way to pinpoint the large corporates in your area.

4 Practice Management Software & Organisation

All successful practitioners need a robust system to manage all facets of their business from appointment making to invoicing to record keeping. This is often done manually to keep costs down.

It is common however these days to have a software management system in place to take care of all of your business needs within the parameters of one system. Common features and benefits to look for in a system should include:

Easy patient / client management

- Clients Record Creation and Management

- Client letters, reports, notes, Communications, flags and alerts

Diary for everything

- Event/Appointment Diary
- Online booking
- SMS Client appointment reminders
- Billing, reports, letters

Quick and Accurate Finance

- Invoicing
- Payment records
- Electronic billing
- Charging

Sorting and tracking Continuing Professional Development

- Plans, logs, events
- Professional body reports

The software we currently recommend and use ourselves is provided by the Private Practice hub - [www.](http://www.privatepracticehub.co.uk/reviews.php)

privatepracticehub.co.uk/reviews.php and is known as "Click". See Visit their website at www.click-hub.com

So there you have it, a quick overview of the importance technology has in the successful running of a Private Practice or clinic. It offers cost effective business solutions to target your demographic and run your business in an organised and time effective way. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARK SHIELDS is the Founder of The Life Practice Group (<http://www.lifepractice.co.uk>). He is nationally respected as a successful Life and Business Coach & Trainer, Media Expert, Author and Motivational Speaker, appearing regularly on television and radio. He has worked successfully with clients from CAM, the Financial World, the Entertainment industry, as well as with world champion athletes, senior business leaders, famous musicians and senior government politicians. As the CAM Coach, Mark helps CAM practitioners to achieve success in their respective CAM businesses by sharing models, tips and business advice.

If you would like to know more about The CAM Coach Book please visit our website www.thecamcoach.com where you will find our book shop, further reading and videos and news about our latest CAM Coach courses and webinar series.