Business Mastery

§6 Business Operations

Office Management

—

By Cherie M. Sohnen-Moe

SMA SOHNEN MOE ASSOCIATES, INC.

Office Management

Policies and Procedures

- Policy Manual
- Procedure Manual

Smart Technology Choices

- Telephones
- Computers and Tablets
- Business Software
- Internet Service
- Copiers, Printers, and Fax Machines

Office Organization

- The Paperless Office
- Get Organized Now!
- Protecting Your Records

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KEY

Terms

- ❑ App
- ❑ Ambiance
- ❑ Barter
- ❑ Benefits
- ❑ Bounced Checks
- ❑ Boundaries
- ❑ Client Interaction Policies
- ❑ Cloud Technology
- ❑ Compensation
- ❑ Confidentiality
- ❑ Conflict of Interest
- ❑ Continuing Education
- ❑ Co-workers
- ❑ Credit Terms

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KEY

Terms

- ❑ Desktop Publishing
- ❑ Documentation
- ❑ Dual Relationships
- ❑ Etiquette
- ❑ Exit Interview
- ❑ Fee Structure
- ❑ Gift Certificates
- ❑ Goals
- ❑ Gratuities
- ❑ Grievance Protocol
- ❑ HIPAA
- ❑ Insurance Reimbursement
- ❑ "I Owe You" (IOU)
- ❑ Mission Statement

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KEY

Terms

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Online Scheduling
- Package Plans
- Paperless Office
- Performance Review
- Personnel
- Policy Manual
- Procedure Manual
- Risk Management
- Safety Protocol
- Scope of Practice
- Sliding Fee Scales

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KEY

Terms

- ❑ Standards of Behavior
- ❑ Termination
- ❑ Tickler File
- ❑ Values

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Policies and Procedures

Clearly defined policies, comprehensive written procedures, appropriate technology and equipment, and efficient organizational systems are the foundation of a well-managed office.

- Policies direct your decisions and actions; they're built on the philosophy and values that guide your practice.
- Procedures are specific steps detailing how you want to run your business day-to-day.

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Policies and Procedures *(cont.)*

- A **Policy and Procedure Manual** provides a business framework by defining expectations, values, and standard business practices.
  - Formulate your policies and create a written manual, even if you're the only person in your business.
  - Critical for group practices.
  - Two general types of policies are: **internal company policies** and **client interaction policies**.

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Policies Checklist

Company Mission Statement

- ❑ Values
- ❑ Purpose, Priorities, and Goals
- ❑ Customer Service Statement

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Scope of Practice

- ❑ Laws and Regulations
- ❑ Training and Background
- ❑ Scope for Each Separate Type of Practitioner at the Company
- ❑ Continuing Education and Training Requirements

Documentation

- ❑ All Forms Used

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Policies Checklist (cont.)

Finances

- ❑ Fee Structures, Gratuities, and Gift Certificates
- ❑ Product Sales
- ❑ Credit Terms
- ❑ Bounced Checks
- ❑ Insurance Reimbursement
- ❑ Guarantees and Returns
- ❑ Barter

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Communication

- ❑ Boundaries
- ❑ Confidentiality
- ❑ Hours and Availability
- ❑ Discharge and Referrals

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Policies Checklist (cont.)

Ambiance and Etiquette

- ❑ Noise, Children, Food, and Drink
- ❑ Clothing, Fragrance, and Hygiene
- ❑ Cancellation and Lateness
- ❑ Inappropriate Client Behavior (e.g., cell phones, smoking, altered states)

Personal Relationships

- ❑ Dual Relationships
- ❑ Social Activities

Personnel

- ❑ Qualifications (e.g., training, license, insurance)
- ❑ Compensation and Benefits
- ❑ Performance
- ❑ Scheduling and Time Off
- ❑ Conduct, Behavior, and Conflict of Interest
- ❑ Relationships
- ❑ Separation (e.g., termination, notice requirements, exit interviews)

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Creating Personnel Guidelines

Relationship between the Organization and the Practitioner

- How does the business ensure practitioners have proper licensure, credentialing, insurance coverage, and continuing education?
- What procedures are in place for regular peer or employee review?
- What is the expected use of parking facilities by practitioners and clients?
- What constitutes overlap of services or retail competition among practitioners?
- What pricing policies exist to prevent undercutting of other practitioners?

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Creating Personnel Guidelines (cont.)

Relationship between the Organization and the Practitioner (cont.)

- What recordkeeping responsibilities do practitioners have?
- What situations constitute a conflict of interest?
- What responsibilities do team members share for care of common areas, e.g., lobby, waiting room, bathrooms, kitchen, or breakroom?
- What procedures are established to create a healthy, safe, and secure working environment?
- How does the organization encourage community involvement?
- What guidelines are provided regarding personal relationships between practitioners and clients?
- What policies govern client/practitioner relationships when the practitioner leaves the practice?

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Creating Personnel Guidelines (cont.)

Standards of Behavior for Practitioners

- What is the dress code?
- What is the policy regarding use of fragrances?
- What are the expectations regarding timeliness?
- How are absences handled?
- What are the expectations concerning noise in the office?
- What are the expectations regarding sobriety in the office?
- What are the expectations regarding language in the office?
- In what off-site situations are practitioners considered representatives of the office? What kind of image should practitioners exhibit in these situations?
- Are there limitations to practitioners advertising in a common waiting room to all clients or one waiting for another practitioner?

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Creating Personnel Guidelines (cont.)

Relationships with Co-workers

- What hierarchy exists among group members? In what circumstances is this hierarchy invoked?
- What referral patterns are acceptable among practitioners? What behaviors are considered poaching clients?
- What lines of communication exist for resolving internal conflicts between practitioners?
- What are appropriate reporting avenues when practitioners suspect or know of unethical behavior on the part of a co-worker?
- What policies exist regarding trading services with co-workers? How are discrepancies in value handled?
- What guidelines are provided regarding personal relationships between co-workers?

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Sample IOU

I, Darlene Dunning, agree to pay the sum of $70 per session for each treatment I receive between May 1, 2020 and July 11, 2020 in the following manner: Beginning July 14, 2020, I, Darlene Dunning, pay the sum of at least $30 every two weeks until the entire amount is repaid. This amount is in addition to any charges for treatments received after July 11, 2020 (which are payable in full at time of service). In the event of nonpayment, I, Darlene Dunning, agree to pay reasonable attorney's fees and costs for making such collection.

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Policies and Procedures *(cont.)*

- A **Procedure Manual** defines operational best practices and methods to accomplish daily, weekly, and monthly business tasks.
  - Clarifies what needs to be done and how to do it.
  - Written procedures aid in the training of new personnel and ensure a comfortable and consistent experience for clients.
  - May choose to have a separate procedure manual or simply add these types of items to policy manual under procedures.

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Procedures Checklist

General Procedures

- ❑ Opening & Closing
- ❑ Cleaning & Maintenance
- ❑ Equipment Use & Repair
- ❑ Safety Protocol
- ❑ Purchasing Supplies & Retail Inventory

Front Desk Operations

- ❑ Phone Etiquette
- ❑ Scheduling
- ❑ New Client Protocol
- ❑ Maintenance of Client Records (HIPAA Compliance)
- ❑ Payment Collection & Processing
- ❑ Bookkeeping
- ❑ Client Interaction Instructions

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Procedures Checklist (cont.)

Personnel

- ❑ Documentation Requirements (e.g., license, insurance, CE)
- ❑ Work Hours and Scheduling
- ❑ Dress Code, Hygiene, and Scents
- ❑ Parking
- ❑ Charting
- ❑ Performance Reviews
- ❑ Disciplinary Actions
- ❑ Grievance Protocol

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Sample Client Policy Statement

My requirements of clients

1. Sessions begin and end at scheduled times. Sessions that begin late because the client arrived late end at appointed time and are full price.
2. Clients are present (not under the influence of alcohol or drugs).
3. Clients provide a health history and update when necessary.
4. If cancellation is necessary, client gives 24-hour notice or is charged for the appointment (unless it can be filled). Emergency cancellations are determined at the practitioner's discretion.
5. Payment is due at the time of service unless other arrangements have been made prior to treatment.

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Sample Client Policy Statement (cont.)

My requirements of clients (cont.)

6. On outcall appointments, if a client does not arrive within 15 minutes of the appointed time, he is charged for the appointment.
7. Sexual harassment is not tolerated. If the practitioner feels her safety is compromised, the session is ended immediately.
8. This office is a nonsmoking environment.

For touch therapists, also include

9. Clients are clean, having showered the same day as the treatment.
10. Clients do not eat a heavy meal less than 2 hours prior to the treatment.

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Sample Client Policy Statement (cont.)

What clients can expect from me

1. I provide clients with a competent and professional session every appointment, addressing a client's specific needs for each session.
2. I am available to clients between the hours of 8a-6p, and clients may reach me through my answering service on a 24-hour basis.
3. I return calls within 24 hours, unless I am out of town.
4. Clients are treated with respect and dignity.
5. I charge a fair price for my services and offer a sliding fee scale when appropriate.
6. I accept cash, checks, and credit cards.
7. I do not provide direct billing for insurance. I will gladly assist clients in filling out the appropriate forms for reimbursement.
8. Appointments are confirmed the day before the session.

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Sample Client Policy Statement (cont.)

What clients can expect from me (cont.)

9. I perform services for which I am qualified (physically and emotionally) and able to do and refer clients to appropriate specialists for work beyond my scope of practice or not in a client's best interest.
10. I keep accurate records and review charts before each session.
11. I customize my treatment to meet the client's needs.
12. I stay current on information and techniques by reading, receiving regular sessions (of services I provide), and taking at least 1 workshop yearly.
13. I respect all clients regardless of their age, gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, body type, political affiliation, state of health, or personal habits.
14. Privacy and confidentiality are maintained at all times.

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Sample Client Policy Statement (cont.)

What clients can expect from me (cont.)

15. If I need to cancel an appointment, I do so within 24 hours whenever possible. If an emergency arises and I cancel an appointment, I provide a 50% discount on that client's next session. For non-emergency cancellations of less than 24 hours, the next session is at no charge.
16. My equipment and supplies are clean and safe.
17. Personal and professional boundaries are respected at all times.
18. If a client is dissatisfied with a treatment, and no other arrangement can be agreed upon, a 50% refund of the treatment is honored.
19. Clients may return for refund any unused products (in saleable condition) within 10 days of purchase.

For touch therapists, also include

15. Clients are draped with a sheet or towel at all times during the session. Only the parts of the body being worked on are uncovered at any time

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Risk Management Factors

- Building condition
- Escape routes in case of fire
- How you position yourself as you work
- Ergonomic safeguards to avoid or minimize repetitive use syndrome
- Adequate malpractice, liability, and medical coverage
- Ample lighting (particularly if people work at night)
- Potential hazards for clients as they use your facilities
- Clearing parking area and walkways during inclement weather
- Employee stress levels
- Proper use of equipment

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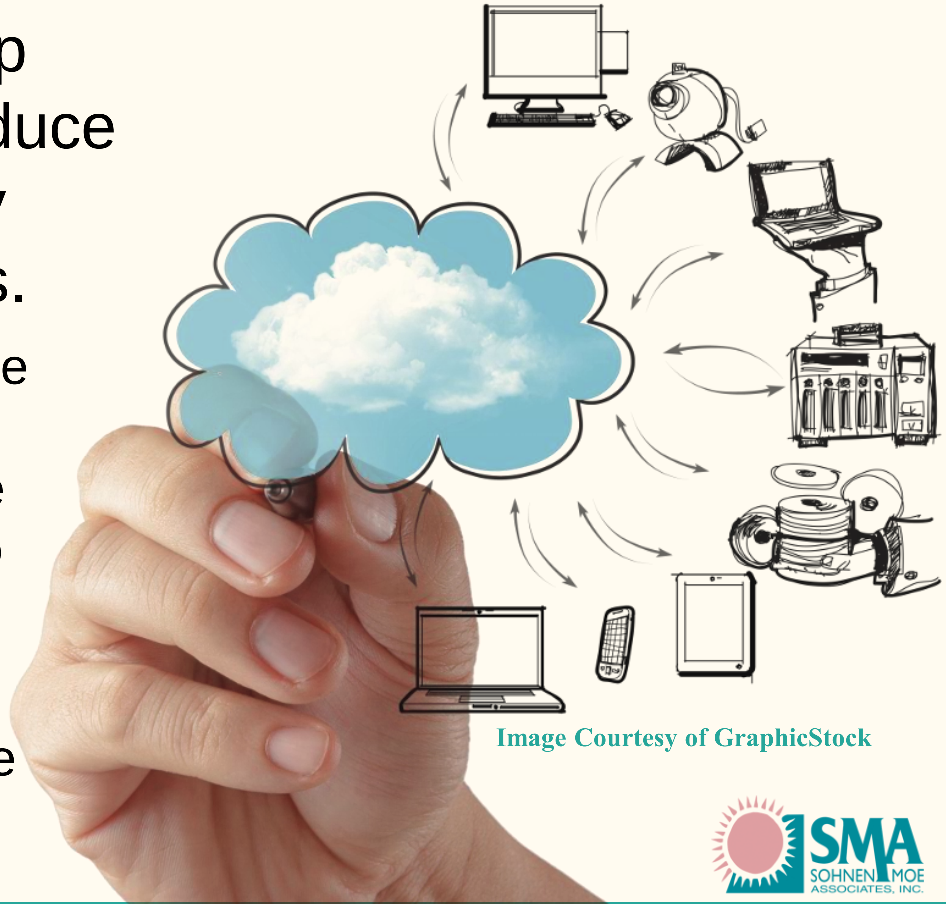
Smart Technology Choices

- Smart technology choices help simplify business logistics, reduce overhead, and cost-effectively market your wellness services.
  - Web-based capabilities, *e.g.*, online scheduling and marketing promotions, are strong competitive differentiators, especially for group practices.
  - Studies show that customers who can serve themselves on a website are 30-40% more loyal.



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Assessing Technology Needs

- Will it reduce my expenses?
- Will it increase my income?
- Will it save me time?
- How much do maintenance and supplies cost?
- How long will it take me, or how much will it cost to install?
- Am I willing to make the effort to learn how to properly use and maintain the equipment and software I need?

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Smart Technology Choices *(cont.)*

- Yesterday's optional phone services—such as caller ID, call waiting, call forwarding, and voice messaging—are today's standard features.
- High-tech solutions, smartphones offer combined access to phone, text, social media, web browsing, email functionality, and even credit card processing.
  - Consider answering services and voicemail

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Smart Technology Choices *(cont.)*

- Business software helps save time and energy.
- Decide what functions you want to computerize.
  - Consider different options.
  - Ask other wellness providers what user-friendly softwares have worked for them.
  - Make sure the software is compatible with your hardware.

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Software Capabilities

- Client scheduling
- Client forms
- Client database
- Client charting notes
- Accounting and taxes
- Human resources recordkeeping
- Insurance billing
- Project tracking
- Website setup & maintenance
- Automatic hard-drive backup
- Marketing materials design
- Automated marketing campaigns

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Office Organization

- Avoid clutter by designating a proper place for recordkeeping and establishing a routine for when and how you attend to specific tasks.
  - Consider going “Paperless” in your office.
  - Getting organized begins with establishing a space that’s dedicated exclusively to your business.
  - Dedicate time for managing: mail, phone calls and messages, projects, upcoming events, contacts, client files, finances, and resources.

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Tips for Going Paperless

1. Commit to a paperless scheduling experience.
2. Track client progress electronically.
3. Go cashless with smartphone credit card processing.
4. Trade your shoebox of receipts for Shoeboxed.com.
5. Manage your to-do list in the cloud.
6. Thumb your nose at the 80's with eFax.
7. Sign documents electronically.
8. Invoice via email.
9. Invest in a good shredder.
10. Keep important documents in Evernote.

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Filing Tips

Managing Paper

- File materials immediately with most current files in the front.
- Files should be in use or put away.
- Label and color code file folders.
- Separate active files from archive files.
- Don't overstuff folders—create subfiles.
- Ease filing by reducing oversized documents to letter size.
- When a project is finished or a client is inactive, remove extraneous material from the file and archive the rest.

Organizing Computer Information

- Use the same names for computer directories, folders, and files that you label your paper documentation storage.
- Eliminate or archive inactive files on a monthly basis.

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How to Protect Your Records

Emergency Contact List: Keep a list of who should be notified in the event of a disaster: insurance agent; lawyer; clients; colleagues; suppliers; employees; property manager; or owner.

Key Documents: Maintain a copy of key documents (e.g., bank account, loan papers, tax records, backup files) off-site in a bank safety deposit box.

Computer Back-Up: Regularly back-up your computer information onto a flash drive or external hard drive, and archive off-site or in a fire-proof box (a bank safety deposit box is good for this). Also, consider cloud-based back-ups. Regularly perform a minor restore operation to stay familiar with how it works; rather like a fire drill.

Insurance Recordkeeping: Store insurance related information such as photographs, major receipts, and identifying information of your insured assets (e.g., model number, year purchased) in a fire-proof box or off-site.

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Highlights

Effective practice management can mean the difference between a business that thrives or barely survives.

Optimize profit and increase your everyday productivity by identifying best business practices and setting up systems to implement them. A written policy and procedure manual that documents values, standards, and best practices is an essential business tool.

Highlights *(cont.)*

Internal Company Policies are those that define rules of operation, the conduct of personnel, and the procedures for getting things done efficiently and effectively.

Client Interaction Policies set boundaries that encourage trust, safety, and comfort.

A procedure manual defines operational best practices and methods to accomplish daily, weekly, and monthly business tasks.

Highlights *(cont.)*

Smart technology choices save time and money. They are the cornerstones of every profitable and smoothly running practice.

Business software is available for online scheduling, charting, marketing, accounting, human resources, recordkeeping, insurance billing, project tracking, and automatic hard-drive backup.

Two keys to avoiding clutter are to designate a proper place for keeping your records and establish a routine for when and how you attend to specific tasks.