



BKB Syndrome - Ref 205

with Gilly Woodhouse

1st December 2021

TRANSCRIPT

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Steven Bruce

I have back the amazing Gilly Woodhouse. And I think the last time Gilly was on the show was something like two years ago.

Gilly Woodhouse

It must have been two years, a good two years.

Steven Bruce

Now if you don't know Gilly, she's going to correct me in a minute, I'm sure. Gilly started out her business largely based on social media, but that business has now expanded hugely. And although it's called Osteobiz it's primarily directed at osteopaths and chiropractors, and probably a few physiotherapists, maybe the odd one, I won't say they're all odd, because it might be one or two watching. But it has expanded in what it does and who it operates to. And it has proved phenomenally useful for a whole load of osteopaths and chiropractors. So Gilly, welcome back.

Gilly Woodhouse

Thank you very much. It's lovely to be here.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. How's things been with you recently?

Gilly Woodhouse

Oh, hectic.

Steven Bruce

You were telling me earlier you haven't got in the car for two years since the lockdown.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, and I work from home anyway.

Steven Bruce

I bet you're blinking in the daylight.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah.

Steven Bruce

And is business going well for you?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes, really well. We are so busy, particularly on our mastermind. Yeah.

Steven Bruce

We're going to come back to mastermind. Well, because I've done mastermind myself, not with you, before I met you. I found it very useful as well. But your business has expanded, originally you started out largely on social media, didn't you? Social media purely.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah. It was sort of loosely based on business development, but a lot of it was focused on marketing to be fair, early on. I just cracked social media very quickly and could teach it fast and get results. So that's what sort of catapulted it. But then it's eight years on now. And now, my scope of practice is much bigger. And we look at a complete solution for clinic growth now.

Steven Bruce

And without wanting to spend too long, just singing your virtues, actually, you have the street cred in the business of helping people grow their practices, which many other people don't do. And I know that there are plenty of people who have offered to teach people how to use social media or Google Pay Per Click. People have wasted a lot of money on there, largely because they're generic businesses, possibly, whereas yours is focused on clinics like mine, for osteopaths and chiropractors, which is great. And we'll come to what the scope of that is over the course of the next 90 minutes, I guess. So BKB syndrome. What's that then?

Gilly Woodhouse

Busy, Knackered and Broke.

Steven Bruce

Which I'm guessing you see quite a bit of?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, it's something I've noticed recently. And I started putting that on social in response to different posts that I saw. I suddenly thought, yes, that's a bit of a thing I'm noticing at the moment, as there's a lot of people that are running to standstill, they're really busy. They're trying to run everything themselves and treat. And they're up all night, working, trying to catch up, trying to do social media on a Sunday afternoon, they've got the kids nagging them, they're getting really exhausted. And there's all the worries what's going on next, we've already had two years of higher stress than normal. And then sometimes their business model's all wrong anyway. So at the end of all of that, they're not really earning a huge amount.

Steven Bruce

So is there one business model that you'd recommend for people or does it depend?

Gilly Woodhouse

It does depend on the size of the practice and what they want, and so on. But it's got to be that at the end of the day, the margins are there. And quite often I see, they're very small. So there's very little profit coming out at the end of the day, and there's people at the moment I know are thinking, do I scale up now? Because there is a high demand for osteopathy and manual therapy generally, because people

can't get help from GPs in the hospital like they did before. Or, you know, is this all just too much aggravation and hassle and stress? And am I better off scaling back, cutting costs?

Steven Bruce

Most of your members, clients, customers, whatever you call them, are they solo, one man bands, one woman bands or are they big practices?

Gilly Woodhouse

Both.

Steven Bruce

Okay.

Gilly Woodhouse

Good mixture of both.

Steven Bruce

Who do you reckon has the best opportunity for growth?

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, they both do for different reasons. The small one can keep their costs low. Often, they are operating from just a small room or from home even. But the bigger practices can really grow if they've got the right things in place and start thinking a bit outside the box, make that, I mean, I'm a great believer in making every room earn its money.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, and I think Claire and I learned this early on in our own business, we set out with the intention that we would build a big practice, because it meant that we would not have to spend all our own time in the clinic, and, frankly, I now spend hardly any time in the clinic because I'm too busy doing this. But there are drawbacks to that, aren't there? Because as soon as you get a big clinic, you start, you've got personnel problems. And then you have to have a receptionist, you have to have practitioners who are sick. And of course, there are all the other things that go with running a big business. What's the best way around it? I mean, I'm sorry, I'm going to bang on a little bit because the whole busy, knackered and broke thing, I recognise that from years ago. And you think, ok, I can afford my food and get the salary sorted. And you think, I'm working bloody long hours and actually, there ought to be more in this for me than just the satisfaction of making patients better.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah. I think there's a few things. One is that time has got to be taken out of clinic hours for running the business. And I think most don't, I know some who do. And there's that balance then that they're not working outside of the 40 hours.

Steven Bruce

There's that great saying, isn't there, you shouldn't always be working in the business, some of it, you've got to be working on the business. But if you don't set aside time to do that, you'll never finesse it sufficiently.

Gilly Woodhouse

The same happened to me, I got to the point where my diary was rammed full with clients. And then all was like, but I haven't got any blogs done. I haven't done this. I haven't done that, I haven't put anything on social, I haven't thought about what I'm doing next month, let alone in the next quarter or six months, and I've not done any forward planning. So it's all a bit gung ho. And I just thought one day, number one I need to get someone else in to help me. And number two, I need to close my diary sometimes. So that I can just go those few days or whatever it is, I can actually focus on the business and where we're going next. Because if you're not at the helm running it, then you're literally just in that hamster wheel.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes, exactly. But when you get to a certain pitch, okay, when you're starting out, you're saving every penny, but when you get to a certain pitch, you have to get rid of tasks that are costing tiny amounts. Cleaning the practice, there's still a lot of principles, cleaning the practice at the end of the day. Accounts, sending out newsletters, looking after the nuts and bolts of the booking system, all manner of things that can say actually, how much do I earn an hour as a practitioner? And how much does it cost to get, you know, a mum down the road who wants to earn a few pennies?

Steven Bruce

Do you find that a lot of the people who come to you for help are spending too much time on the trivial tasks?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah. I call them 10 pound tasks.

Steven Bruce

That's generous, some of them are less than that.

Steven Bruce

There's a knack to finding the right people to do that, isn't there, because I suspect that you've had this in the course of your experience, you can always get someone down the road to design your website. But actually, they might not be as good as that firm, which is gonna cost you a few thousand quid and you end up with something which doesn't really achieve what you want it to. And similarly, when you look for someone to do your books or design, you need to have someone who's competent, and we've been through, god, some some awful people doing the books in our clinic. And it's only when you get someone who's better you realise just what they were getting wrong. I won't go into details on that but we now have a superb bookkeeper. And she and our accountant are just phenomenal at keeping us on the financial straight and narrow.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah. You've got to know what it is you want and advertise for that specifically, not just bring in a warm body.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. And now, before we go any further, I just want to point out that we might have a superb bookkeeper, but no, she doesn't have any space for any other clients. I'm not letting her take on anybody else in case she neglects us, because she does both APM and the clinic.

Gilly Woodhouse

She sounds busy then.

Steven Bruce

So, Busy, Knackered and Broke. We've got people who are ticking along, managing to pay their bills or perhaps not quite managing to pay their bills in some cases. What's the remedy, what's Gilly's answer?

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, I'm big on operations now. I like to have a system put in place in the practice that runs things efficiently. It's time saving things that need to happen. And that's something that's always interested me throughout my life is efficiencies and time saving. So that's what I look at. Just to make systems work better. Now, there's a lot of places that still got diary and pencils. So inefficient. People texting. I know a fellow who had a new girlfriend and she said, does your phone always ring ding, whatever, all the time. And he went, yeah. And then he came back to me and said, maybe online booking's a good idea. It takes care of all of that. And then he could focus on her.

Steven Bruce

There is, as you said, isn't there, there must come a transition point, where you start out as an osteopath, chiropractor, whatever, and your diary is only partially full. So actually, comparing your hourly rates as an osteopath with the hourly rate for someone who manages the diaries is irrelevant, because you've got all this spare time to do it and you might as well not pay extra money. But once you start getting more and more booked up, the last thing you want to be doing is doing the 10 pound an hour tasks yourself, because you're making far more money treating the patient while you pay someone 10 pounds an hour to do what you were doing before.

Gilly Woodhouse

A lot of the smaller practices forget that.

Steven Bruce

Gilly, I went to all that trouble to set up this studio. I realised now I screwed up. Because I carefully set my iPad up here because it was right in my line of sight when I was looking at my camera. I can't see it when I'm looking at you. So Claire won't be able to tell me off. I'm now going to move it over here. Claire gets so upset when I put things in the wrong place. Here's a great question, someone has said, and they haven't given their name, what's wrong with paper and pencil?

Gilly Woodhouse

It's inefficient now. And I always worry about Bob at 3am. He's in pain, he can't sleep, he's at the end of his tether, he's fallen out with his wife, he's grouchy with the kids, he's kicked the dog, and he can't sleep. And he's just on his phone at 3am looking for help. And he lands on the website and it says ring this mobile phone number or send us an email, he can't fill in the boxes at 3am in agony. He needs to be able to book in. So if he lands there, he's going straight back to his Google results and going somewhere else. And they're losing Bob and his ilk now.

Steven Bruce

What do you think about the information control as well, because actually, I've just gone through a process of getting, I almost said I did it myself, I didn't, I'm getting our old paper diaries shredded because they contain identifiable data on the patients and so we need to get rid of them securely. And of course, there are risks with having things online. But most of the systems we use that are online are pretty damn secure. And it would be very hard to lose them. They're not even on your own computer generally, they're in the cloud somewhere, aren't they, with people who are GDPR certified. So you've immediately got some security there around information, it can't be left open where patients can nick it or whatever else, however unlikely that might be. Okay, what else we're going to do?

Gilly Woodhouse

What, to improve...

Steven Bruce

To improve the life of people who are Broke, Knackered and Busy?

Gilly Woodhouse

They need to make sure they've got time off in their diaries. That's something that often people are running to stand still and not having time off. So they get more exhausted. So that's important, even if they factor in a long weekend or a week here and there to make sure they're off because I know that what they worry about is not earning once they're off. And that's difficult. But then they're getting more and more burnt out because they're running, running, running all the time.

Steven Bruce

That's almost seen as a virtue in the NHS as well, isn't it? And I was, again, I'm constantly mentioning Adam Kay's book, the first one was, This is Going to Hurt. The second one was The Night Shift Before Christmas. And it almost seems that junior doctors are made to work 100 and something hour weeks, and they're sort of proud of how hard they work. I wouldn't trust a doctor to operate successfully on me at the end of a 100-hour week. I want them fresh and sharp. And he's not actually having to run the business. He's just having to do the medicine part of it. Whereas the people we're talking about are having to run their business, they're having to plan their marketing and do all those things you talked about. Oh, it says here, when Gilly talks about Cliniko, I should say the reason we went for Jane is simply that it's better for bigger clinics. We've an APM offer for Jane, do you think Cliniko will give our members an offer? And this is from Claire. Do you talk a lot about Cliniko, is that what you recommend?

Gilly Woodhouse

I do like it still. We regularly look at all the systems.

Steven Bruce

Does everyone know what Cliniko is, do you think?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes, sure.

Steven Bruce

They should.

Gilly Woodhouse

It's very well known.

Steven Bruce

So it's an online diary management for clinics.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I do like that. We do look at all of them. Every now and again. Jos and Seraiah, our tech fairy, check them out but none of them are perfect.

Steven Bruce

If I said I had a tech fairy, I'd get some serious complaints from the production booth. I'm probably not allowed to say that. We're all gender neutral here.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah. So yeah, that makes running a clinic so much easier. You got reports, you can see what you're doing, you can see what your figures are and you can see what associates are doing as well. So that gives you a good inclination as to whether or not they're bringing back patients that need to come back rather than just saying see how you go.

Steven Bruce

As Claire said, the reason we went for Jane, certainly at the time we went for it, which was a couple years ago now, perhaps longer, because of course two years, that's just when COVID started. And that time seems to be evaporating. We went for it because at the time Cliniko was not brilliant for big clinics. It was great for individuals, and I've no doubt that they've come on since those days. But certainly the interface from both of them is very, very good. And I was talking to somebody on that Simeon Neil Asher course last weekend, who was still using PPS, which is what we used when we first started. And I'm afraid as much as I liked the people from PPS they have never moved on with that system. And migrating to something like Cliniko or Jane is probably very easy. Depends on the size of the clinic. But if that's when people have experienced in terms of online diaries, then they need to have a look at the other ones.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, we move a lot of people off PPS or Practice Pal or TM3.

Steven Bruce

Yes, I think we looked at TM3vsomevtime ago. It's not a patch on Jane or Ciniko.

Gilly Woodhouse

And it's expensive. So that's part of what we do now. I used to say, go away and set up Cliniko. And now Seraiah the tech fairy just goes, I'll set it all up for you and I'll migrate you from the old system. And so we can now give them a much more seamless service, which is good. Saves a lot of angst for the clinic owner.

Steven Bruce

I have a comment here from Bob. He says, can I reassure you that this Bob is okay and he hasn't needed to book an appointment at three o'clock in the morning.

Gilly Woodhouse

I always call them Bob. I bet that's my Bob. Yeah, no, I always call them Bob. Just makes it easy.

Steven Bruce

Better than John Doe, I guess. We talked for quite some length before we went on air actually about apps. So I mean, you actually had some thoughts about apps, didn't you? You want to share those?

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, I was backing an app. Big time, I've invested a lot of money in an app, which was going to be a sort of groundbreaking thing, which was an umbrella app, where underneath that, clinic owners could have their own app for their patients to log into, and look at content from them, video, exercises and book in. So a booking link in there and meet the team and all that, and I was able to, with quite an investment, but I was able to offer any clinic to have their own app within my app. And we hit glitch after glitch over 18 arduous months. And in the end, things were just not coming together. Time and time again, there was like a problem here and a problem there, we'll fix it, we'll fix it. One day, I suddenly realised that, you know, the sensitive data that each clinic owner would have in their app, I couldn't guarantee that it was completely safe. And it's only two or three months now since I suddenly realised my reputation would be on the line. If it all went wrong, and people could access other patients from other clinics information, then that would be me down the drain. Everything that I've been working for for eight years.

Steven Bruce

Well, that whole business of information control and GDPR and so, although too much fuss was made about GDPR, in my opinion, we do have to take it seriously. And as you say, patient data being available to the wrong person is... So well done for you not to have gone ahead in that particular regard. But you've made it sound as though apps are generally bad.

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, no. That was why I wanted one because I thought this was going to be amazing.

Steven Bruce

What was it going to do for the clinics?

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, they would each have their own app so they could keep in touch with their patients on their phones. I thought how great that'd be so we did have some using it. They were beta testing it for me. And their patients were loving it because they didn't have to find a website anymore. They just clicked the app and they went straight through to their practice, because they'd registered with them. And they were booking appointments, and they were watching the videos. And it was a great idea.

Steven Bruce

As you know, the reason I led you down that route is because that's exactly what I think a lot of people want to hear. Justin will tell me in a minute how much it cost us to develop the app, which we are launching in the next couple of weeks. But a great advantage to us is that when you get a reminder email from an autoresponder, as they call the things in the cloud, lots of those are blocked by people's own email servers, aren't they? And also, it's easy not to see an email. But if you've actually got an app which you physically set up on your phone, you're going to get a memo on your phone that says remember your appointment in 15 minutes, or whatever you set it up to do. I just think that's so useful. You could even use it, I presume it if you went down this route, you could use it to remind people about their exercise schedule.

Gilly Woodhouse

Or you could get them to do anything you want, really. Yeah.

Steven Bruce

So they are good. Your app was a particularly complicated one but it was an overarching subsidiary, I will find out how much we spent on developing ours, but it was less than a couple of grands.

Gilly Woodhouse

Mine was eye watering. I'm going to have to try and get that back. You know, I hate making mistakes. But that was one, it turns out.

Steven Bruce

I think, it was a couple of grand, I've just been told by Justin, but I think there was also an ongoing maintenance cost of something like a hundred quid, but from APM's point of view, we constantly get messages from people saying that they didn't receive our emails and of course they look in spam and find out that Outlook has squirreled it away because it's come from Infusionsoft, which we use. There's some questions here. Vlad has said he's got a question about Cliniko. Can we set up pre paying for appointments booked online? Do they only use that stripe system or are they thinking of taking a different payment to platforms?

Gilly Woodhouse

As far as I know, it is only stripe on Cliniko. Yeah, I quite like booking ahead, you can't even get a pizza these days without paying up front for it.

Steven Bruce

What's wrong with stripe though?

Gilly Woodhouse

I think he's possibly thinking about the fees. But I do think it works really well. I changed my tune. I've done a 180 on that since before COVID. I used to say I think it's off putting to ask people to pay up front. But since COVID, you can't get a pizza without paying up front. And we're all used to doing that now. So we've been retrained to just go, I'll book that and pay for it.

Steven Bruce

But there is also a big difference between phoning a physical receptionist and booking your appointment, she says, can I take your card details. And going online to a platform, which is largely no different from any other online purchase where you are expecting to click the thing and put your card details in and make your appointment. And I think as you say, I don't think patient's have object to it.

Gilly Woodhouse

No, they don't. Where we've done it and we've done it a lot. It saves time. So they're out the door. And also there's a subtle difference when you come out you don't actually have to pay, it's this different feeling to it. Like you haven't paid but you know you have, it's a weird thing. But I've experienced that myself when you sort of come out to the dentist and I think oh yeah, I've already paid so I don't have to rummage in my bag for my card.

Steven Bruce

I also feel that I have never liked as a practitioner taking the money from my patient. I think that breaks down some degree of the relationship you have with the patient. When you say right now that's gonna be 50 quid, please. Whereas when it's done online, they don't associate it directly with the practitioner.

Gilly Woodhouse

It's nicer, it keeps it separate, because a lot of practitioners feel the same way.

Steven Bruce

And once again, if I'm taking that fee from you, it means there's another X number of minutes during my consultation, where I'm not writing up your notes or whatever. I'm actually doing some administration which is one of those 10-pound jobs.

Gilly Woodhouse

It's another efficiency.

Steven Bruce

Marina says she agrees that Jane is better for the larger clinic and she's moved back to Cliniko just because of that and Cliniko is so easy to use. Victoria says, does anyone find that an online booking system increases the risk of the patient canceling at the last minute etc?

Gilly Woodhouse

People get more bookings as a result because it's easier. You have to make it easy for the patient to come to see you. And the easier the better. If they've got to ring you up and then it's 11 o'clock at night. Ugh, I forgot to ring, they can just go didldoo on their phone and they're in. They book the time they want. It's highly efficient. We have to make everything patient centered.

Steven Bruce

Absolutely, yeah. And every business, in fact, since I had this drilled into me as part of my mastermind groups and other marketing training, it now really irritates me when I go to a business where they clearly haven't hoisted in that the customer has to be paramount. Making the whole journey easy for the customer is really, really important. It's impossible to say how many patients would not come to my clinic if we didn't do things this way.

Gilly Woodhouse

But there would be.

Steven Bruce

And as you say, if every time you ring you get a hold message, or leave me a voicemail, or worse, press one for an osteopathy appointment. I don't know if anybody does that, but those things actually annoy people.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, they just want to make the appointment and everyone's time poor. So they want to make that appointment as quickly as they can without hassle.

Steven Bruce

Claire's giving me hassle about my iPad being in the wrong place. I knew she would, that's because we didn't rehearse that shot before we started. Thank you, Claire for telling me that. What else have we got. I don't know who said this. But patients apparently in this person's clinic love paying online, it means, as you said, they can book late at night. And I guess actually, from their point of view, just as from our point of view, it means they have to spend less time after they finish their appointment, you can put the next appointment in the treatment room just like that, and it will automatically take the payment. So you don't even have to mention the fact that you're doing other than to confirm they're having to pay. Yeah, so we've done a lot on online bookings. And we'll come back to it. Someone here says interesting that both of you have said that the 10 pound jobs allow you to treat more patients. They also allow you to have time off worth mentioning. Yes, absolutely, not doing the 10 pound jobs and time off is worth a lot more than 10 pounds an hour if you're a decent osteopath, chiropractor, or business owner as yourself. And somebody else has had something similar earlier on about taking time off and how important it is to recharge your own batteries.

Gilly Woodhouse

Absolutely. And I think yeah, you know, what I've sort of absorbed over the last couple of years is, because there's so much tension and anxiety in the community that's being felt by the practitioner, and

raising their levels as well. So they definitely need to be taking time out, getting out into nature and shedding that toxic stuff that they're picking up.

Steven Bruce

But it's really easy, isn't it, particularly for small businesses, we're all entrepreneurs, and you spend almost your whole life thinking about your business, it's very easy just to sort of settle into a room and do nothing but business admin and not permit yourself to allow other people to do it. Some of it you have to let go of.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah. And you also have to understand that maybe the person you employ to do something won't do it as perfectly as you do. But that has to be done. You know, I've built my team up, and I've had to let go of aspects of what I always used to do, the things I used to be doing. And, you know, sometimes I'll go, oh, they set it like that, or oh, I'd have used a different image on that. But I haven't had to do any of it. I haven't had to spend the time doing it. Someone else has done it. So I can lead and innovate and carry on growing this and listen to what people want. What else can we help with?

Steven Bruce

How does that make you feel as a business owner?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, there's that. And then I have to step back and go, but I couldn't have grown as I have grown in the last few years if I hadn't delegated.

Steven Bruce

No, and that's really where I was going with that comment. While you're struggling away doing all the admin jobs yourself, actually yes, you feel busy and you feel virtuous, because you're doing that. But when you take a step back and take that helicopter view of the business rather than looking at it from ground level, you suddenly start to feel like a proper business owner, you suddenly start to feel actually, now I am moving my business on, rather than just keeping it running. And I think that's an important change.

Gilly Woodhouse

It makes a big difference. Yeah, I agree from that sort of just running, running, running hamster wheel stuff to actually running the business, having time to think about where you want to take it and reflect on what you want to provide for your community. What's missing in your practice that people want, especially now. Whatever else do they want you're not providing and could you?

Steven Bruce

I've got one for the audience, Stan, you sent in a comment a little while ago asking what Gilly thinks about larger or smaller clinics reusing online booking? I'm not quite sure what you meant by that. Could you just develop that, let me know where you were going with that question, please. Mags says she'd love to know if anyone else is working who's working part time has found Cliniko or similar cost effective? Or

does it just set earnings when you're not working full time. You must, I'm not sure your gang, the Osteobiz gang, you must have had some people on part time.

Gilly Woodhouse

I set them all up on Cliniko.

Steven Bruce

And they're happy that they...

Gilly Woodhouse

They're very happy. It's a game changer and they can grow quickly then. So that, you know, rather than...

Steven Bruce

But if they don't want to, they just want to work part time, maybe sole practitioners...

Gilly Woodhouse

It's still worth having, because they still need to get going, they still need those new patients to start coming in to grow. So we've got lots of startups that have come to us. And I still want them to set up all their systems correctly from the outset. So that they can grow as and when they want, you know, if they only want to work three days a week, great. It's still worth having. And they can, you know, they can grow when they're ready, but it's all done. And they know how it works. They know how to fix things. It's just easier.

Steven Bruce

Simon's put a comment on Facebook saying please take time out. He didn't and ended up having a heart attack last week. He is a marathon runner, and he is fit. It's not worth running yourself into the ground. Oh, my God. I'm glad you're still communicating.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I was horrified. And I hope he's doing really well.

Steven Bruce

I hope so too. Because I have a business guru on the show, I'm not going to mention this other business guru by name, but there is a thought out there that spending 90 minutes on your own business every day is a worthwhile thing to do. Do you recommend that, not necessarily 90 minutes, it could be 60, 40 or whatever, actually physically setting aside, making an appointment with yourself to work on the business, is that a good idea?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes, I don't think it has to be every day. But practitioners, depends on the size, I suppose, the bigger practices are going to need more time.

Steven Bruce

I guess depends on what size you want to be, not what size you are.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, that's true. So that you can grow it. Yeah. But yeah, definitely. I like time ring fenced in the diary, sacrosanct. That's when I'm doing business management work.

Steven Bruce

What would you be doing in that time?

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, planning ahead? What hav we got coming up Christmas, New Year, you know, have you got a newsletter out yet for your closing times because people are going to, we don't want people being in pain when Auntie Mable's around sipping the sherry. And all these things need to be done in advance and planned out and set up and done. So, you know, a lot of people get to Christmas Eve and think, oh, dang it, I never sent out a newsletter to tell people I'm going to be closed.

Steven Bruce

And you're right and Christmas comes as a surprise every year to me. And I say that because I mean if, for example, and let's take the move at my clinic, we recognised well in advance that we needed a newsletter to go out to advertise everything we're doing in the clinic. And of course, we never got it done in time. It's not entirely our fault. But Christmas again, if you want to get a newsletter done, you've got to get it written long beforehand. Then you got to get it printed and you got to get it distributed. And personally, I am a fan of printed newsletters, in addition to electronic ones, but I'm not using electronic ones solely because they're so difficult to get read.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I've already been nagging the masterminders to get theirs out this week.

Steven Bruce

Printed or electronically?

Gilly Woodhouse

Electronically.

Steven Bruce

Do they monitor open rates?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes, 20% is average. So some are getting more than that. It's dependent on the heading of the email. If it says send the newsletter, I ain't opening it. Boring.

Steven Bruce

But if it came through your letterbox do you think your open rate would be higher?.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes. Much higher. Because we don't get much through the letterbox anymore, expect from bills.

Steven Bruce

But also, it's far easier to attract attention, I think with a physical newsletter. Now I understand that there are greater costs involved. But actually, one has to balance the cost against the return on investment. And to just say, well, it's easy to give an email is not really addressing the whole problem, is it? I can have four or five boxes on the front of a newsletter so this subject might not grab them but the cartoon in the corner might and they might open to see what was in the middle and all our so far have been four pages, A2 is it or A3 folded in half?

Gilly Woodhouse

Oh, that'd be quite big.

Steven Bruce

Yes, A4 size, that's a full page. Well, I'm not saying it's best, that's just what we've done. We've always got, Claire will say we do measure the feedback. And we do measure it and she'll tell me that it's the feedback and the sort of return on the investment as always make them worthwhile. I suspect the return on the investment would have been greater if we had done more of them. So we'd done a regular series every other month, perhaps, or maybe a little bit less frequently than that. Because of course, you need people to sort of recognise the name of your practice and have it on the edge of their tongue whenever they think of whatever it is you do.

Gilly Woodhouse

I like quarterly. I think it's the seasons, it makes sense. Not too onerous.

Steven Bruce

Stan says, what do you class as larger smaller clinics? Reusing online booking, means how many rooms, practitioners or hours open would you consider a smaller or a larger clinic? I'm not sure what that's got to do with online booking necessarily? Do you have a ballpark for what you think of as a larger clinic?

Gilly Woodhouse

Okay, let me think. I would say small clinics, three or four people maximum probably.

Steven Bruce

Working simultaneously or three or four people in general?

Gilly Woodhouse

Just in the practice, and then start getting into six, going up with I think is a larger clinic, generally, but then you get much bigger ones that are 20 people, 30 people.

Steven Bruce

I think, possibly I'm thinking about that question from Stan, I think what he's asking is, at what stage do you, whether you're smaller or large clinic, at what stage do you need to start using online booking? To which the answer is right now. It does depend what you want to do with your time and how big you want to grow. If you're happy being a one person, one room, part time clinic, and you don't want to grow any further, you don't mind doing the 10 pound jobs, then I guess it's okay.

Gilly Woodhouse

I know a lot of those guys, and they're burnt out. They are burnt out. Yeah. Because there's so much minutiae to handle. Whereas if you've got that system, it's not just a diary. It's clinic management as well.

Steven Bruce

Okay, so I've just been told that it's because we said Jane is better for larger clinics. But I suspect there may be less of a difference now because Cliniko changed since we did the analysis and you did an analysis probably more recently than we did. Sorry if I'm failing to understand your question. Claire's asked me to develop that business about newsletters, what would you put in a newsletter? Let's say you're doing one of my newsletters or advising me on it and it's four A4 sheets.

Gilly Woodhouse

That's a lot of content?

Steven Bruce

You're never short of a word or two, Gilly.

Gilly Woodhouse

So I'm always thinking about what's your community up to in the next season that we're going into? That's why I like quarterly. So right now, they're getting ready to go skiing. Maybe. So what do they need? What help do they need? Do they need some help with training, do they need some advice on looking after themselves? Maybe warming up correctly? What do they do if they injure themselves? Anything along those lines. And that then you can use the same idea for what are they doing in the next quarter, what are they getting ready for? Are they starting to get ready for marathons? What advice they need for that then?

Steven Bruce

So that's a quarter of the front page? Add a little bit for a picture as well.

Gilly Woodhouse

Any news, anything that's going on, any new team members, introduce those. I just like them to be quite short and sharp. Because I think people haven't got time to read all this. Certainly online. Preferably just short sharp.

Steven Bruce

Shall I tell you what we do with ours? First of all, four pages doesn't mean four pages of densely packed text, because that's off putting. No magazine writes that way. There's a lot of whitespace as it's called, in the newsletter it might be blue or it might be yellow or something else, but it's not got text on it. There are lots of pictures. I already mentioned, we put cartoons in ours as well. So we actually paid for some cartoons which are relevant to healthcare and stuck those in there. My thoughts on this are that nobody wants to read densely packed text, which is all information. Some of it's got to be fun, surely, it's got to be entertaining. You've can have a list of the worst possible Christmas accidents, you can remember. People love lists like that.

Gilly Woodhouse

How to not ruin your Turkey, that's a classic one isn't it? Yeah, and I mean, this is relevant to newsletters and to website content and blog content is: make it easy for the speed reader now. So I changed tack completely in the last couple of years. More or less, I've got one sentence paragraphs and short sentences at that. So you can read a newsletter from me really quickly. With some bold, some italics.

Steven Bruce

They call that a dual wheel path, don't they? So if you want to read it in detail, you can, but if you're one of those people who skims, you've got the emphasis in the important bits, which takes you through the content. So when someone does a newsletter, how would you recommend they get it done? Because actually, a lot of this could be a ten-pound job.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I mean, I like MailChimp for that job.

Steven Bruce

No I'm talking about writing it.

Gilly Woodhouse

Oh, writing it. Well, you can try and get an associate to write something for you, if you've got a team. Or just look at what's in the news as well for ideas. Periodically, there's something like the overuse of ibuprofen and things like that, so you could write an article just loosely based around that, what they could do instead or...

Steven Bruce

I'll tell you what we talked about some time ago. I'm sure I talked about this with you on a previous show, but it's been so long, I've forgotten exactly what we talked about. Things like you just said, there's a news article on radio 4 for instance, about the overuse of ibuprofen. That's a really time sensitive piece of information, in my mind. And rather than put that in a newsletter, or as well as putting that in a newsletter, I think it's often worth calling your local radio station and saying that "I know about this, if you want someone to do a piece, then give me a ring." And that's worked for us, I think we haven't done it for a while now, which means we have to buck up. But actually, very often, they'll either do it over the phone or they'll send the person around with the recording equipment, they'll you interview on the subject and there you are: free, amazing, free publicity, which is going out to your local community on a subject which brings your clinic to their attention.

Gilly Woodhouse

Oh, that's fantastic. They're always looking for more content. And yes, if it's topical, it's in the news, people are talking about it, then definitely.

Steven Bruce

Obviously, don't do that if you're in the Northamptonshire area because I want to keep that to myself. But it's a sneaky little trick, because journalists I've always been led to believe are generally quite lazy. They

don't want to go looking for stories, if you feed them a story then very often, they'll take it up. And you can do that with newspapers as well, but of course newspapers, probably less...

Gilly Woodhouse

They're on the way out.

Steven Bruce

Yeah and you have to send them a well prepared article. Here's a good one: I'm going to do a case based discussion now. Because Allison has sent in a question. So you're going to talk Allison through what she could do. Allison says, forgive me, we may have already had this question. No, we haven't. Allison is a one-woman band and does everything. So what's her first step forward? For instance, she has no idea what Cliniko is.

Gilly Woodhouse

So first step is to set up Cliniko and to get that out online,

Steven Bruce

Right, what's Cliniko going to cost her? Roughly?

Gilly Woodhouse

29 pounds a month.

Steven Bruce

You've got to have a very, very poor patient list not to be able to afford 29 a month.

Gilly Woodhouse

Exactly, and your receptionist can still log in. So you don't have to have two people and go into the next band. So if you really are a one man band, then that's all it costs and it's worth it.

Steven Bruce

How long is it gonna take Allison, who has no idea what Cliniko is, to learn how to use it?

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, they've got tutorials and all the rest. But yeah, she could get it done quicker with us to be honest.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, she could get it done quicker with you, but I mean, these programs are, once you have sort of a little look through, they're quite intuitive.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, and it is easy, Cliniko. That's what we particularly love about it, because it's easy for the practitioner and it's easy for the patient. Some systems they make you put in all your details and then you go through to the diary and then you go, oh, they've got nothing for three weeks. Now they've got all my data. And

you might then go somewhere else. So I don't like that at all. I think once you've gone straight into a diary, picked your practitioner, picked your day, picked your time, you're delighted to give them your data.

Steven Bruce

And to reassure anybody, I didn't know where Cliniko are based, is it Australia? At one point, I don't think they were GDPR compliant, but they are now. So there's no issues with handling data with an external server and all that bollocks that we talked about. So we've got Allison on Cliniko. I'm imagining Allison, you need to send us more and more information on this: you're a one-woman band, do you want to be a bigger clinic or do you just want to be busier yourself or do you just want to have more time off and still have some money to play with? You give us that information, but we'll carry on from a little while. What else can she do?

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, next I'd get on to Facebook and social media generally and crank that up, because that's the machine that's going to bring in more and more patients.

Steven Bruce

Facebook ads or just Facebook posts?

Gilly Woodhouse

Just posts. I've got systems that work fantastically well for organic reach, you don't have to spend a penny on it.

Steven Bruce

Tell us what organic reach is, because that can be a bit of a confusing term.

Gilly Woodhouse

Okay, it's it's having a strategy to put posts out there that people want to engage with and want to share or comment on or like, so that Facebook goes, aha, this is an interesting post that more people like them are going to like, so they show it to more and more people.

Steven Bruce

Do you have any qualms about using Facebook given all the comments about its ethics recently?

Gilly Woodhouse

No, not really, because it is word of mouth on speed. So your community is on there, so that's the quickest way to reach them.

Steven Bruce

I do like that because so many clinic owners I spoke to say "We don't want to do any of this marketing stuff, it's word of mouth that brings in my patients." Word of mouth on speed, yeah, you're right. Word of mouth is very powerful and Facebook magnifies that many times, doesn't it?

Gilly Woodhouse

Massively.

Steven Bruce

Provided you get it right. So are you gonna give us a clue on how we get it right? I don't want o detract from everything that you do as part of your business.

Gilly Woodhouse

Interesting memes. Things that, again, are topical or seasonal.

Steven Bruce

Fluffy kittens?

Gilly Woodhouse

Definitely fluffy kittens and your dog, of course.

Steven Bruce

Well, Max is the main focus of our facebook. Max and Badger, sorry, Badger the Dog has always been our mascot.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, but even, and you might roll your eyes and think "this is about my amazing professionalism and skill" but of course, it is social media. Clue's in the title. If it's social people will engage with it, because that's the platform.

Steven Bruce

Having said that, I don't do it because I dislike Facebook, myself, and so other people do the marketing for our clinic. It's very easy to get lost in Facebook, isn't it, and just follow all sorts of things. So presumably, anyone doing this has to be quite well disciplined and say, Well, I'm going to spend this much time per day, or whatever, doing my Facebook stuff and that's it. I'm not going to read everything else on Facebook.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, it doesn't have to take a lot of time. You can swoop in and swoop out. Definitely post every day.

Steven Bruce

Can you schedule content?

Gilly Woodhouse

You can, yeah, very easily now. You can schedule on Facebook and it goes straight onto Instagram as well. So that saves time as well.

Steven Bruce

Instagram's all about photos, images, and videos, isn't it?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, but so is Facebook. I mean, if you just put plain text up, you will find absolutely nothing happens. You need those images because people have going zip zip zip through the newsfeed, we need to make them stop. So that's why the pets make them stop. Or a meme that's got pink or something interesting going on.

Steven Bruce

What do you mean by a meme?

Gilly Woodhouse

It's an image with text on. Because we can absorb that in a nanosecond. Image, text that backs up the image.

Steven Bruce

And how often are you suggesting that people post a video, let's say, with useful stuff like how to stretch a hamstring?

Gilly Woodhouse

As often as possible.

Steven Bruce

Mixed up with the fluffy kittens?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah but videos, I've always said, video is king and it most definitely is. Because that's what people are engaging with, particularly since all the COVID thing happened and more people have been at home or working from home, etc.

Steven Bruce

I'm hoping that people are more familiar with the video now because we've spent so long doing Facebook and Zoom and Teams and stuff like that. But there are still people who don't want to get out and take a film of themselves doing something. Any advice for them?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I always say they're going to see you anyway when they come into the practice so why not let them meet you before so they know, when they come in and they see your face, that's Bob.

Steven Bruce

Not the same Bob we were talking about earlier on though.

Gilly Woodhouse

But here's my quick tips for that. You can keep them short, keep them under a minute if you're just doing a quick video "In this video I'll share with you one mistake footballers make" off you go, done. Doesn't have to be hours and hours of content. And my big beef is always you get the Instagrammers going "Hey

guys! Hey y'all!" No, it's just me on my phone on the bus going home or Bob sitting at work eatin his boring cheese sandwich looking at his phone. You're only ever talking to one person, you're not broadcasting to the whole world, which is what it feels like. Video, ahhh, all my peers will judge me and everybody's gonna be, who's that?

Steven Bruce

The same applies, I think, to newsletters. So many people start their email or their newsletter "Hi everybody"

Gilly Woodhouse

Does my head in.

Steven Bruce

Use bloody Mail Chimp or something else to say "Hello, Gilly" or "Hello, Bob."

Gilly Woodhouse

Or "Hello friend" if you don't know.

Steven Bruce

Or "Hello there." anything, but don't make it so generic as to sound as though you have no idea who's seeing it.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes , it's really annoying, I know. That's my big thing. Speak to me in the singular, please. I'm just one person looking at my phone or whatever, reading your email or looking at your video. Just talk to me. If you talk to me, I'm in. I've got a an exercise guru down in Australia that I follow every now and again. And she always says,"Come on, friend, you're doing really well!" I love her. She calls me a friend! And she motivates me.

Steven Bruce

Nobody else calls you their friend.

Gilly Woodhouse

No exactly! But now she motivates me because she's talking to me in that moment. She's not saying "Come on, everyone." I'm not everyone, I'm just me.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. So Alison, that's getting you started. I've just had a message come in here from Kelly, who said that she's a one person clinic and she moved to Cliniko during the pandemic, and it's been a complete game changer for her. I would of course, recommend you get someone to help you with this Alison, and anyone else who is trying to move on with their practice, but if you need help with it, we've got to Gilly here. Let's face it, you've helped a sod of a lot of people over the years, haven't you? You're making huge differences to their practices. Again, why waste time? Why waste two years trying to learn stuff that Gilly can help you do in the space of a few weeks? What have we got here? Fiona says, if you're sending

electronic newsletters are you confirming that all those recipients have agreed to email communication from... bloody GDPR again. Fiona, I know where you're coming from, what's your answer to? And then I'll give a Bruce's answer, which will probably be more ballsy still!

Gilly Woodhouse

It probably will be. Well, you do have a legitimate interest in the welfare of your patients. So yes, you're supposed to get them to tick a box but I think, frankly, no one's going to report you to the ICO for daring to send them a helpful and friendly nice email newsletter with maybe a booking link just at the bottom or something. I've never heard anything like it. They must have the option, so it must be a proper system like MailChimp, they must have the option to unsubscribe because if they've moved overseas, they don't want your newsletter anymore, much as they used to love you. They'll want to unsubscribe.

Steven Bruce

Unless you've only got half a dozen people in your mailing list, it's impossible to manage physically yourself, isn't it? And nowadays everyone expects there to be a single click to say I'm unsubscribed. I am constantly pissed off at those organizations, when I click the unsubscribe link, and it says, oh we'll unsubscribe over the course of the next week or two weeks or it might take 48 hours. No it doesn't. It takes an instant to unsubscribe, we use Infusionsoft, you talk about MailChimp, all those systems do it instantly. They're very easy to use. Well, Infusionsoft's not, MailChimp very simple. Yo yes, you already said what I would say about GDPR We think too deeply about it, we worry too much about it, people are not going to criticize you for sending them a letter like that. They will report you potentially if you continue sending it after they've asked to opt out. And that legitimate interest, as you refer to it is a technical term under the general data protection regulations, isn't it? And it simply means that you're sending them something which relates to an inquiry that they have made. So if a patient's coming to see you or see me and they've got a bad back and I send them a newsletter that's got a thing about bad backs in it, I could argue that's a legitimate interest. The fact that it is going to have other things in it as well, I can argue that that's okay.

Gilly Woodhouse

It's looking after them, giving them useful information. You're not sending them a spammy email full of buy, buy, buy.

Steven Bruce

One from Beverly. Beverly says Hi Gilly, do you have any advice on how to close practice for the weekend and/or holidays? I have auto reply for emails when I'm closed and have answering machine for landline but I know received many messages through text, WhatsApp etc. I've never given out my personal mobile number, but it's out there and now used widely by patients and I don't know how best to close the mobile.

Gilly Woodhouse

Sounds like she's got the same mobile for business and home. Not ideal. I've got two phones.

Steven Bruce

Actually, you don't need to do that, do you? You can have two numbers on the same phone.

Gilly Woodhouse

Not an iPhone though, which is annoying.

Steven Bruce

Can you not?

Gilly Woodhouse

Well, I don't think so.

Steven Bruce

Claire, tell me if we can do that. Because I Claire had that on her phone.

Gilly Woodhouse

I'd be delighted if I could only carry one phone with me. But back to the question. Yes, you've got to retrain your patients. And maybe it would be better to use somebody like Best Reception for a while, at least. So that all those calls go straight to them and they book them in.

Steven Bruce

We've used a couple of different virtual reception organizations and we now use Best Reception. Neither of us, I think, get any kickback from mentioning them.

Gilly Woodhouse

But we should.

Steven Bruce

We should but they are genuinely very, very good. I can't say that they're the best because I haven't tried every other virtual reception out there, but they are good.

Gilly Woodhouse

They are good enough. And that's consistent feedback I get from clients that just say, yep, their charges are very reasonable.

Steven Bruce

And patients like them as well, don't they?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, they do because they know what they're talking about, because they're focused on practitioners. So yeah, I really like them.

Steven Bruce

So with the question about phones, I guess the answer is either retrain your patients or just get another number and bite the bullet and tell your friends what your new numbers. Yeah, whether that's a physical phone or whether it's just the number.

Gilly Woodhouse

But you're missing those bookings, I think, if you're having to deal with them on your phone, so train them to go and book themselves in. Because you've done it for them, not for you. We've made it easier for you to book in to see us.

Steven Bruce

Claire says, you can have an e-sim and a normal sim on an iPhone. I have no idea what an e-sim is. But clearly that means you can have two numbers on your phone. Matthew says, Steven, how do you distribute the printed newsletters? Have you got any thoughts on that?

Gilly Woodhouse

You can pay a spotty teenager to do that for you, who wouldn't mind earning some pub money. Or you're gonna have to put the stamps on.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, and the alternative is, what we have done is we've used a distribution company to do and we send out 20,000, which is a good selection of our local audience.

Gilly Woodhouse

The guys that stuff them through the doors?

Steven Bruce

Yeah. And you can pay a bit more if you have them sent out solo. So they go through the letterbox on their own, which means they're much, much, much more likely to get read. But a bit less if they go out in a clump with all the other stuff that they're distributing. But there's still a lot of value in the printed newsletter

Gilly Woodhouse

Are you putting those in an envelope?

Steven Bruce

No not at all. Largely my thoughts on this, unproven by testing, because we haven't tested one against the other, but my thoughts are, if you've got eye catching material on the front page of your newsletter, then it's going to get looked at. And it's cheaper than putting it in an envelope. If you put them in an envelope, I think one of the problems with envelopes is, if you're going to do that, then almost certainly the way the address is applied to the envelope is going to give away the fact that it's marketing material. Because unless it's handwritten, people will say it's printed, it looks as though it's part of a huge list. I'm not saying doesn't work.

Gilly Woodhouse

No, on balance, I would say you've probably got the right thing there. I don't agree with leaflets at all, I think they are a massive waste of money. But actually, a newsletter, I think I'd be interested to see what kind of return you get on those. Because there is something that yes, if it's...

Steven Bruce

What's the problem with leaflets, surely, they're just a newsletter in short form?

Gilly Woodhouse

They're not really, they're just an advertising piece of A5, which I scoop up about 10 off my doormat every day and shove them straight in the bin, in recycling. Because if I want something I'll either Google it or I'll ask someone. But I think that newsletter idea's a bit different, because it's gonna have some eye catching things, like you're more likely to be intrigued, so have a look at the cartoon or, again, it's got a good heading, so there you go. You're intrigued to read more about it and all your marketing is about educating and informing your community.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, and the key, just like an electronic message, an email, is that you've got to get people to read it. With ours, one of our articles was about the fact that our podiatrist made pavlova and we had a picture of her with pavlova, a comic picture of her on the front with pavlova. We've had Badger the Dog treating me, because one day spontaneously he just jumped on the treatment table and put his hands on, his hands, his paws on my back and he's got the whites of his eyes showing. It's really eye catching so we've used that. And my thoughts on this are, actually now the person reading it is not thinking I need an osteopath, a podiatrist, a chiropractor or whatever else. They're thinking, Oh, I know someone who could benefit from that. And so it goes a little bit further than just targeting the person who read it, particularly if the woman of the household gets it because I think still typically, women are the health providers of the family, aren't they? If you put something in about children, rucksacks and schools or whatever it might be, mum is likely to think, I know somebody who could benefit from that.

Gilly Woodhouse

And put a Did You Know question because they don't.

Steven Bruce

Claire has sent in some information, very important information. She says we make back our costs and the same again on our paper newsletters. But she says, I have to emphasize that they are very fun. And that's how you get attention, people love funny.

Gilly Woodhouse

Absolutely.

Steven Bruce

So, Matthew, I hope that's answered the question about distributing newsletters. I mean, there are numerous firms out there, I would always recommend if you're going to use a firm, and they are more reliable than spotty teenagers, who might just shove them in the local wastepaper bin and go down the pub with the money, nowadays, they GPS track the people who deliver the things so that they know that they've gone door to door, you know they're going to go through the letter boxes. Elizabeth says Skiing! What about the people struggling to survive? How do we attract them and show them we can help them?

Gilly Woodhouse

So talk about health. How do we keep ourselves healthy in these times? What do we need to be doing? We don't know. We don't know. My sister's got COVID at the moment, I say to Jos, what's my sister supposed to be doing? Because we don't know what we should be doing to get through this winter.

Steven Bruce

Who's Jos?

Gilly Woodhouse

Jos is my colleague. Super Jos.

Steven Bruce

Have we had Jos in this show before?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes, you did.

Steven Bruce

She's lovely. Kathy says, have you had success using Clinko Letters? She's really struggling with the setup process, her logos too small, the text is all squished to one side. She says it's a formatting nightmare. So there's our first critical review of Cliniko.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, so I don't recommend using Cliniko for newsletters. No, I like to bolt in MailChimp for that. It's much more efficient.

Steven Bruce

Do you use the free version of MailChimp?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, up to 2000 emails is free. So that's alright for small clinics and then you start getting to bigger clinics, it's worth paying a few quid.

Steven Bruce

I'm not sure I understand what Kathy is asking to some extent, because when she says letters is she talking about newsletters or, Kathy I need to ask you not Gilly, or are you talking about letters to GPs or letters to patients?

Gilly Woodhouse

Sounds like she's talking about newsletters. So I would always use MailChimp for that.

Steven Bruce

Another one from Matthew, who says, Can you really keep your personal Facebook page separate from your business page? He still has the practice page he made on an APM course, but he's never used it. People might find out what I'm really like. True.

Gilly Woodhouse

They might like you,

Steven Bruce

They might, mightn't they? Nothing has to be perfect, does it? Very often, if what they see of you is not perfect, they realize it's the real deal. It's not some marketing expert who's slick in front of a camera or slick on paper or just looks good in film.

Gilly Woodhouse

Be yourself. That's all I've ever done. Just be yourself.

Steven Bruce

Keeping the personal and business pages separate?

Gilly Woodhouse

They are separate. So whilst you build your Facebook business page off the back of your personal profile, that's so Facebook knows who owns the business page. But it doesn't mean your patients come and look at you. However, you'd have to have a slightly more unusual name, but we'll use Bob Smith as an example. Someone said, you really ought to go and see Bob Smith, he's on Facebook somewhere, you can use Facebook as a search engine. So you putt in Bob Smith at the top, you land on his personal profile and you can see all his kids, his dogs and what he had for lunch, we don't want any of that. So I would say you can lock down the privacy settings on your personal profile so that you don't have patients trying to friend you, unless you want that. But most people wouldn't. But do make sure that the About section is fully complete. I find this so often, where there's no website on there, there's no job, there's no link to the business Facebook page where you want to direct those potential patients to come and have a look at who you are and what you stand for, etc and find the booking link or the phone number or whatever. So always have that About section fully complete, so even if you've locked down everything else, so no one does see your kids unless they're your friend already, then it will just funnel them through to your business page, where they can deal with you professionally and appropriately.

Steven Bruce

Is it easy to learn how to do all that?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah.

Steven Bruce

Good. I know that I would lose interest within a heartbeat.

Gilly Woodhouse

You've never been on my Facebook course, have you?

Steven Bruce

No, I haven't. And genuinely I would go on it iff I didn't have somebody, good old Claire, sorting out our Facebook. Sue says, could we also talk about how to cope with too many patients? Should she put her prices up?

Gilly Woodhouse

100% Yes.

Steven Bruce

That's almost the answer to any question for any reason, isn't it.

Gilly Woodhouse

But my big beef about osteopathy in particular, is it's too cheap, way too cheap, there's massive demand for it now. And my rule of thumb is if you're about a pound a minute, you're too cheap. And I'm on this mission now, because it's really getting my goat at the moment how low prices are. When you think the cost of the handbag hanging off the lady's arm, the cost of the sleeve of tattoos? How much was that? And then you're worried about going from 39 to 40 or something. Don't get me started.

Steven Bruce

And I think it affects the public perception of our therapies if we price ourselves too cheap and that quite possibly has an impact on the success of treatment. If they come to you and think this is no different from a simple aromatherapy massage. And I'm not putting those down, it's just that's not what we do. They aren't perhaps going to get the results that they should.

Gilly Woodhouse

That's one of the other critical reasons that people are busy, knackered. Because they're too cheap.

Steven Bruce

Are there a couple of ways of looking at this? A lot of practitioners, a lot of practitioners I know, are really concerned about taking money out of the patient's wallet or purse. You've addressed that, it is not for us to decide what they spend their money on and yet, and so many outlets, you can see people spending lots of money on things like handbags, tattoos, beer in the pub, whatever it might be. They choose where to spend their money, if they can't afford it, they won't come. But they can prioritize their health and well being over all those other things. There's another thing I was going to say about pricing ourselves as well, but I can't remember what it was now.

Gilly Woodhouse

People will value you more. And I also think that for a great many of your patients, you will get them sorted in three or four treatments and often that works out at probably less than 200 quid. Bargain for an outcome like that, especially for people who have been in pain for a long time.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, the other thing I was going to say, and this makes me sound as though I'm entirely mercenary about this and I'm not, it's just putting things into perspective, is that if you've doubled your prices and that puts patients off and you half the number of patients, well, that's a bargain too, because you've got half the time at work for the same amount of money. So you've got more time to either build the business or... And I'm not suggesting people should do that.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I've got examples of that, where I've got one client, who was in the sticks, charging twice as much as another person I know, in London. They don't have to work five days back to back to back to back all day. They can do what they want, they can go out sailing or gardening or doing whatever hobbies they want.

Steven Bruce

And while we're in this for the patient's wellbeing, we're also in it to have a lifestyle of our own. And I think sometimes we think that's unacceptable. We think it's not fair of us to have our own lifestyle.

Gilly Woodhouse

Particularly later on there's a huge amount of osteos now that are at least 25 years in, and there's plenty that are 30 years in, and there's a lot that are 40 years in. And goodness me, there must come a time where you go, you know what I know my stuff, I can look at someone and go, here we go sort that, off you go.

Steven Bruce

And I went to a consultant some years back for a knee examination. I saw the consultant for I think, probably 30 minutes, it cost me 250 quid.

Gilly Woodhouse

I've just done the same today!

Steven Bruce

Well, I think your son is a different case because he did nothing that an osteopath or a chiropractor couldn't have done in examining my knee. I mean, we know the same orthopedic tests, we know how to analyze what's going on. Those people who were on Simion's course last weekend, he demonstrated how you can diagnose, through simple palpation and a few little test, things that other practitioners, medical practitioners, consultants, will send you off for an MRI or ultrasound to find out. You don't need that. We can do it with our fingers. So why are we valuing ourselves so low? I'm not saying necessarily we can get away with 250 quid for a half hour appointment, because I suspect the public would rebel, because they don't regard us in the same way as consultant orthopedic surgeons.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I think incrementally, we can certainly get those prices raised.

Steven Bruce

And it's not unreasonable. Yes I want to be able to help people who don't have huge amounts of money and there are lots of people who couldn't afford that consultant's appointment.

Gilly Woodhouse

No and you can use your judgment, because certain people, you know need to have a concession and then you can make the judgment on that.

Steven Bruce

I can't believe we've only got a quarter of an hour left. It's amazing when I'm talking to you, the shows go so quickly. I've got a load of questions here, probably more that have been waiting in the pending pile.

Gilly Woodhouse

The APM Time Warp.

Steven Bruce

It is, yeah! Dawn has said she's with Cliniko and Xero. Apparently Xero, the accounting package, which you'll be familiar with, others may not, have said they're going to stop integrating with Cliniko. Do you know if QuickBooks would be better for integrating account transactions?

Gilly Woodhouse

I haven't heard that. And I shall be onto my tech fairy immediately if not sooner to find out. Because we certainly like to integrate Xero. I haven't heard that.

Steven Bruce

Here we are talking about Xero, which I suspect a number of people won't be familiar. I can't sing its praises highly enough. I don't know about whether it integrates with Jane, I suspect someone will tell me very shortly. I was on this show once and I was interviewing the guy from Jane, we interviewed a few not just him, and he was saying, "Well, you can do this and this and this." I said, "God, I need to get people doing that." I got this angry message from Claire saying, we're already doing it, you idiot! So it may be that Jane intergrates with Xero, I don't know. But Xero is a fantastic bookkeeping package. My bookkeeper was very skeptical. She's brilliant and she was very skeptical when we first said, we're using this, but she loves it. It makes everything so simple for her. Means your accounts go in me the day after they're due basically.

Gilly Woodhouse

As long as your accountants happy with that package, I always say, but I do like that one.

Steven Bruce

Do you have any views on what people should look for in an accountant? What should they be paying for an accountant?

Gilly Woodhouse

Not particularly, no. Obviously, if they already deal with other similar practitioners, that's going to have an efficiency in it, because they already understand everything and know where they can claim back money. But I would highly recommend that people do get an accountant. Because, again, there's so many practitioners up till two in the morning trying to do their accounts at the last minute. And they will not know, they will not have the knowledge that the accountant has, that you can save on this, you can claim that back, you can put a proportion of your home office onto your tax return as well and claim that back. And they know all these things, and it changes all the time. And, frankly, it's a complete pain anyway. So once I got to that stage where I was trying to grow, and I needed to save time, that was the first thing I got rid of.

Steven Bruce

It's tough finding a good accountant, isn't it? Both Claire and I, separately and jointly, have used some very expensive accountants. And we've now moved on to lady who is, effectively she's a one-man band, but she's absolutely stunningly brilliant. She's very, very responsive if we have questions, stupid questions, about accounts, she gets our accounts done very, very quickly. She looks for the little loopholes, not loopholes, the ways of us not paying tax we shouldn't be paying. But they're hard to find. Phil has said, there are people, and I think he's talking about videos online, who are sharing techniques being done or pre and post results of treatments, and they get a lot of new patients, not sure how he knows that, but they seem to get a lot of new patients. Is that a good idea or is it frowned upon? And I suppose there's two sides to being frowned upon: frowned up by Facebook and Google and frowned upon by our statutory bodies.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I personally abhor those neck clicking ones that some people are doing. I don't think it's good to be demonstrating that out there for people at home to go, Oh, come on, love, lie down. I'm gonna crack your neck for you.

Steven Bruce

It certainly puts people off as well.

Gilly Woodhouse

It does, it puts me off. If my kids crack their knuckles, I can't stand it.

Steven Bruce

Also, because the public don't understand the degree of training that goes behind what we do, I think those can easily be misinterpreted. But let's say it's not that, let's say it's Simeon Niel-Asher's frozen shoulder technique which doesn't involve clicking, you couldn't demonstrate the whole thing on video but to show pre and post results would probably, we had a stunning outcome on Saturday. This woman was in tears because the technique was so beneficial over one treatment, and she'd had two years of problems with her shoulder. So I'm not just advertising his next course, but that's how good it was. You could easily have put that on Facebook. But of course, you've got to anticipate in advance that it's going to be worthwhile.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, I think showing something that's beneficial is one thing. Having something that's a bit more of a circus type thing, I don't really like that. I think always in the back of your mind: educating and informing the community. Showing and demonstrating what you do. How you benefit people. What's the value? If I give you 50 quid or 100 quid, what do I get back? And then once they understand the value, they're in, doesn't matter.

Steven Bruce

I'm going to drag you back to Alison, because I got some follow up from Alison. Thank you, Alison. That's very helpful. Alison, I mean, this must be a breed of dinosaur that I've not actually come across before. Sorry, Alison!

Gilly Woodhouse

You're in so much trouble!

Steven Bruce

She's on her own. She has no website, no Facebook. Works on word of mouth. And to be fair, she's busy. She's a total tech novice, how does she go about getting a website, linking Cliniko, Facebook, etc? She's obviously at the bottom of a very steep learning curve.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah. And there are quite a few that are still managing because they're in an area where they are well established, and everyone knows them. But there can come a time, not necessarily definitely, but there can come a time where those new patients drop off and once that happens, you're in freefall, because people can't find you. If you can't be found on Google, you don't exist. And if you're not doing any marketing, then no one's going to know about you. So, yeah, we're doing websites now, if that's of any help. Just simple WordPress websites don't go down the super cheap route of Wix and Squarespace. They don't get found as easily on Google. And I do keep checking this.

Steven Bruce

Why? What's the difference between Wix and...?

Gilly Woodhouse

It's just the way they're set up, I think. Wix tend to be just one long page, really. You can jump down to different sections, but it doesn't have the separate pages with a separate search engine optimization on, that you can have with WordPress.

Steven Bruce

I thought the trend now was for long page websites?

Gilly Woodhouse

Not that I've seen. I just like a simple four- or five-page website, it doesn't have to have masses of text and stuff on. Images, tell 1000 words.

Steven Bruce

Can I offer two pence on this?

Gilly Woodhouse

You can.

Steven Bruce

And you can tell me whether I'm right or wrong. If I were Alison, I would pay some money, whether it be to you or to someone else, to set up this website, but the first thing I would do is, I'm assuming Alison that you're an osteopath, avoid that boring front page that says "Andrew Taylor Still founded osteopathy..." Nobody wants to read that. But I would have a really nice, possibly professionally taken, photograph of you, either on the homepage or certainly on a Meet Allison page.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, several.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, so there'll lots of pictures. There'll be some of Alison treating somebody at the clinic, thee'll be one of just Alison smiling happily at the camera, probably on the page that says what she's done, what she does, who she treats, and I would try to make the focus of that website all about how I help you, the reader of the website, rather than all about my skills or me personally.

Gilly Woodhouse

100% It's your shop window. But it's Bob looking in at three in the morning, always think about Bob. They'll all think about Bob now.

Steven Bruce

And I also make sure there's a contact number on every single page they visit and it stays there. Alison won't be familiar with this, but you can have a sticky line at the top of the page so that as they scroll through, your contact details stay there and they're linkable. And it's got to be mobile friendly.

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes.

Steven Bruce

Which is why you need professionals to do it, because it's gotta look right on a mobile phone as well. Otherwise, people will be put off. And I have no data, you might have this, I have no data to say how many people don't go down a route just because the website looks old fashioned and clunky.

Gilly Woodhouse

I don't have data on that.

Steven Bruce

I think it's impossible to get, isn't it?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah. But you've got about three seconds to keep a person on your website, they've done their Google search, they've gone through, had a look. If it's impossible to navigate, and it's just huge chunks of text in small squirly writing, and it's in pale brown on a cream background, and it's got lots of skeletons all over the place. Brain fog. They go back and look somewhere else. So lots of whitespace, as you said before, clean lines, plenty of images, just sharing what you do. Particularly for treat children. You can't say much, but the pictures can. Lots of pictures, babies, children all over it and then it's obvious to the parent landing there.

Steven Bruce

And I would, where possible, and again, I would be prepared to shell out several hundred quid for this, I would get a professional photographer to take those photographs of me in my clinic with the babies or the animals or the elderly patients or whoever, because stock images always look like stock images. By which I mean, the images that you can buy from iStock or Shutterstock and you can pay a one off fee and stick it on your website, and they're always a band of happy Americans scampering through... And you only have to look at it to know they're Americans.

Gilly Woodhouse

Or they're bodies with red blobs on to show pain. There's one there, there's one there, there's one on the knee. And I just think they're horrible.

Steven Bruce

Whereas if we see a picture of Alison treating a patient. We think, oo!

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, she looks nice. Know, Like, Trust, I'm always banging on about and if they come to your website, they can see you, they know you're there, they know what you do, they like who you are, because you've got a nice smiley face, and they trust you because of everything that's written on there. They're in. If it looks a bit dodgy and there's some funny old pictures on there that are stock images and no testimonials.

Steven Bruce

I'm guessing we could do a lot more for Alison between us, you could do a lot more for Alison if she could contact you. So I'm going to get Justin to put your website details up. It's a short link to get a chat with you, I think?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah, they can book into my diary and have a chat. No obligation, I can tell you how we can help you and if you want help, we'll sort you out in short order.

Steven Bruce

I mean, my instinct is that that chat would be worth a lot to Allison, not least because it's free. But I mean, she would be able to make a very informed decision as a result of that. And anyone else who wants to use your services. And I think, it'll be on the screen, but it's a bit.ly link, isn't it? So it's bit.ly/gilly-biz. So

that will get through. Dominic says, should you increase prices each year and what percentage should you increase the fee by?

Gilly Woodhouse

No, don't go by percentages, I go a bit more gut instinct.

Steven Bruce

It's a tough one though, isn't it? We're always reluctant to do it.

Gilly Woodhouse

I know. I mean, I certainly would go a couple of times a year, because I think so many people have been stuck at 35, then 36 and 37. And meanwhile, inflation's overtaken, costs have overtaken and you're probably now earning diddly squat compared to what you were when you started five years ago. So I would say keep increasing your prices. You know, go a fiver at a time. Don't have 51 quid or something. Let's get up to 55 and 60.

Steven Bruce

What would you think about, this would only work if you were using Clinko or some online software like Jane, if you said to people, we're going to be putting on prices in a month's time. If you book now you'll get it at current prices. So you could just put provisional appointments for whatever you think you're likely to need, you could always change those appointments. That means a) you get a chunk of money up front and they get it at the current rates. Have I just had a brainy wheeze?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yeah.

Steven Bruce

You had to say that didn't you? One in from Mischief Maker! I don't know who Mischief Maker is, but he says, what do we charge these days as a general osteopath? Well, personally I'm only a colonel. As a general osteopath, have you put your prices up since COVID? That's really a question for the community. I don't know what the... I suppose prices in London will inevitably be a lot higher than they are anywhere else.

Gilly Woodhouse

You'd think so, not all of them are. Well, I said my rule of thumb is if you're a pound a minute, you're too cheap. So I tend to go on gut instinct. I sort of talk to the practitioner, I think about where they are, I don't research what everyone else is charging, because that's how one very affluent county in the southeast has managed to keep all their prices down. No one is prepared to put their head above the parapet and charge another fiver or a tenner.

Steven Bruce

Quite often patients will look at the higher price and say they must be better than the others. We've only got time for one more question and I've just seen this one come in and it's so blindingly obvious, that I

just want you to spend a couple of minutes on it. I don't know who asked the question, should we get reviews from patients?

Gilly Woodhouse

Yes. My husband is a typical case, he buys nothing without he's read reviews. Nothing. So yeah.

Steven Bruce

How would you get them?

Gilly Woodhouse

So if you were all automated, you could send out a survey. And then if they came in at eight out of 10 or more, you could then send them to your Google and say, please give us a five star review. Remember, if you ask people to do something, they're more likely to do it.

Steven Bruce

And if you don't ask them, they won't.

Gilly Woodhouse

They won't, no. And if you're doing it slightly more low key, if you've got the patient in the room and they jump off the couch and they're delighted, then I always say: ask them "Would you mind giving me a testimonial, because I would love to help more people like you?" because they don't care about you, oh I want to build my business.

Steven Bruce

And you do it on your iPhone, on your smartphone. You can do it there and then on your smartphone. The fact that they're standing in front of the camera doing this and you said it's a testimonial, that is good enough as consent to be put on the wherever it is. So, yeah, as you just said, you can't overrate those reviews, they are so important to build that confidence in potential patients.

Gilly Woodhouse

That builds the trust part of the Know Like Trust, it really does.

Steven Bruce

Well, I'm sorry to those people who haven't had time to get their questions, we haven't had time to get their questions asked, because there are quite a lot of them in the list. Hopefully, some of them will get in touch with you now and Justin can stick your website short link up again, so they can follow up. Again, we don't bring people on the show in order to promote their business or anything like that. But I can honestly say that we trust your business and therefore I would have no qualms about recommending you to anyone. You may actually be the last person to ever use this studio with APM, because it's nearly Christmas, we move into the new studio on the first of January. I'm hoping to heaven that we've actually got it set up, but the equipment will all be there and we'll possibly have to use the same set but we will be in the new studio. And I think our next broadcasts are virtual. You've been a long part of APM's history, haven't you, because you were with us very early on, as well as a couple of times over the years since and it's been a great pleasure having you on the show again, Gilly.

Gilly Woodhouse

Thank you very much for asking me to come, I've been delighted.

Steven Bruce

We should do it more often, because it's a laugh and people enjoy us having a laugh, hope. But I mean having a laugh and also offering such valuable information, it's not often you find someone who can do that.