



Finding Employment as a Massage Therapist: Hire Me!

By David Kent, LMT, NCTMB

Keeping It Simple Series

At the end of my seminars, I ask attendees to fill out a brief performance-review survey. The final question asks what therapists believe is the biggest challenge facing the massage industry. The question usually elicits a wide range of responses; however, at a recent seminar, the response was overwhelmingly the same: "finding a job."

This article will review some simple but proven techniques to help tilt the scales of successful employment in your favor. Remember: There is a difference between knowing what to do and doing what you know. Your time and energy are valuable and must be spent efficiently. So why not take the time to ensure that you stand out above the competition?

Have a plan.

Before you do anything, create a written plan so that you will stay focused on your goal. Generate a list of the spas, clinics, and chiropractic and medical offices that you would like to visit. Contact them ahead of time to determine if they are hiring; then ask each prospective employer about the qualifications they seek in a therapist. This information will help you narrow your search.

Put yourself out there.

There is a common saying: "You will miss every opportunity you don't take." This might seem obvious, but you need to hit the ground running and not stop until you find a job. You might have had a couple of great interviews; you might think you have the job "in the bag," so to speak. But until you've been officially offered a position, nothing is certain. Continue to seize every opportunity until you've found the job you know is right for you. Additionally, contact local massage therapy schools, instructors and associations and ask to be added to their email blasts announcing new jobs in the area.

Get informed.

Before meeting any potential employer, do your research. Read the company's ad in the phone book and visit their Web site. Learn the company's history,



read the staff bios, learn what services are offered, and research any other information that you might need to know for an interview. A common interview question is: "Why do you want to work here?" Researching the company

ahead of time will prevent you from being caught off guard, intimidated or unprepared, which will ultimately help you to market your skills, experience, strengths and interests more precisely during an interview.



Arrive prepared.

This may sound like a no-brainer, but a lot goes into preparing for an interview:

- **Look the part** – You are a professional healthcare provider. Take pride in yourself and your appearance. When you look good, you feel good and you present yourself to the world in a positive way. Before you leave the house, take one last look at your hair, nails, and teeth. Are your clothes and shoes neat and clean? Is your overall appearance polished?
- **Act the part** – Smile, relax and maintain a positive attitude. Remember to make eye contact while talking. Practice your introduction in front of a mirror or with a friend. When employers look to their pool of applicants, they will select only those who have made a good first impression.
- **Bring the necessary documentation** – Don't forget to bring the essential paperwork: social security card, picture ID, massage therapy license, proof of liability insurance, etc. Bring extra copies that you can leave with your application.
- **Be ready to perform** – During one of your interviews, you will inevitably be required to give a massage. Bring your own lotions or oils, and have a routine ready to go. Finally, treat your interviewer as you would any client. Listen to their complaints, ask questions, and administer your massage based on the feedback you receive. (Read "Questions with Direction," MT, September 2008).
- **Leave a card** – Business cards are a useful, professional tool for enabling people to contact you. A variety of styles are available online or at local printers.

Assess your performance.

Every interview provides you with a valuable learning opportunity. Regardless of how good or bad you think your interview went, take a few minutes after each encounter to assess your performance. Ask yourself what you might do differently the next time. What changes can you make to improve your performance before your next interview? Use these newfound skills to your advantage, and don't let negative self-talk affect your attitude, which leads me to my next point.

Ask quality questions.

Your attitude is determined by your focus and the questions you consistently ask yourself. You must replace negative questions with quality questions and affirmations that produce positive outcomes for finding employment. Replace "Why can't I find work?" with "Who can I call or visit today that I have not yet contacted? What resources can I use to help direct me toward work? What articles can I read to help me stay motivated or give me more tips? What are three more things I could do to help me find a job?" (Read "The Power of a Minute," and "The Power of the List,").

Stay immersed.

You've heard the saying, "If you don't use it, you will lose it." Keep your skills sharp by practicing. Exchange sessions with other therapists, volunteer to practice on a mentor, who will be happy to give you feedback and guidance. Read articles, manuals and textbooks. Review anatomy, postural analysis and trigger point charts so that you are comfortable using them. Watch DVD programs and take continuing education hands-on seminars, where instructors can give you feedback. Attend association meetings so that you can network.

Reading this article has brought you another step closer to achieving your goal of finding a job, but now you must put your thoughts and words into action. Commit a certain amount of time everyday to finding a job. Take time daily to review your goals and strategies. I wish you all the best in your search. Please let me know which tips you used that helped you find the job of your dreams!

David Kent, LMT, NCTMB, is an international presenter, product innovator and writer. His clinic, Muscular Pain Relief Center, is in Deltona, Florida, where he receives referrals from various healthcare providers. David is President and Founder of Kent Health Systems which teaches Human Dissection, Deep Tissue Medical Massage and Practice Building seminars, and has developed a line of products, including the Postural Analysis Grid Chart™, Trigger Point Charts, Personalized Essential Office Forms™, and DVD programs. Visit www.KentHealth.com or call (888) 574-5600 for more information.



Kent Health
— S Y S T E M S —

KentHealth.com | 888.574.5600