

Building a Private Practice

A 21st Century Guide to Equipping Sport Psychology Consultants

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Overview

- Graduate programs are adopting an interdisciplinary curriculum to better prepare students for applied careers in sport psychology (Aoyagi et al., 2012).
- Over 500 students graduate annually with a sport psychology-related masters or doctoral degree (Directory of Graduate Programs in Applied Sport Psychology, 2011).
- Fewer than 25% of graduates find a faculty or applied sport psychology job (Williams & Scherzer, 2003).
- The insurance and financial planning industries have mature consulting models that can be adopted by applied sport psychology practices.
- The current presentation reinforces and extends many of the “best practices” from Neff and Weinberg (2008), and adds several new technological and business breakthroughs.

Ideas to Adopt

Mental Training, Inc. is an example of one company that has:

- (a) Developed an extensive training manual for its Mental Trainer® certification process that prepares consultants to use effective business skills to attract, sign and retain clients;
- (b) Built video conferencing programs so consultants can offer services to groups of any size as well as to diverse clients anywhere in the world;
- (c) Built automated mental training services to lower the cost of mental training & establish passive, recurring revenue streams;
- (d) Created a mobile app that enables consultants to monitor the mental training progress of all their clients;
- (e) Supervision and support from experienced consultants who are full-time in the applied sport psychology industry;
- (f) Established marketing systems that produce new client prospects for all sport psychology consultants;
- (g) Provided professional liability insurance coverage, revenue sharing & continuing education for all consultants on staff.



References

1. Aoyagi, M., Portenga, S., Poczwardowski, A., Cohen, A., & Statler, T. (2012). Reflections and directions: The profession of sport psychology past, present, and future. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 43, 32-38.
2. Neff, R. & Weinberg, R. Best Practice(s): Using the Internet to Build Your Applied Business. AASP Conference, Louisville, KY, 2008.
3. Williams, J. & Scherzer, C. (2003). Tracking the training and careers of graduates of advanced degree programs in sport psychology, 1994 to 1999. *Journal of App Sport Psych*, 15, 335-353.

What Most Graduates Have

- Understanding of sport psych theory & application
- Some supervised work with college athletes
- Love of enhancing athlete performance
- Dream of making a living as a sport psychology consultant

What's Missing?

- How to market and sell mental training services
- How to on-board and retain athlete clients
- Business training: legal, accounting, staffing, payroll, liability insurance
- Website creation & SEO
- How to consult with large groups & non-sport clients
- How to speak publicly
- How to run webinars
- How to create passive income streams (books, apps, DVDs, etc.)