Marketing a practice or organization successfully depends on how well you communicate what you do and how the services you provide help people to the outside world. To do this, an audiologist will need many tools in their tool belt. The marketing tools that are ideal for an audiologist’s tool belt are the things that help generate business day-in and day-out.

Essential tools for audiologists in all practice settings will include business cards, stationary, fax cover sheets, practice management software, and practice brochures just to name a few. If you are starting a new practice or trying to grow an existing practice, it can become a daily chore to acquire and maintain the tools that you use each day. Up until this time, an audiologist has been forced to spend time searching many sources for these essential tools. Fortunately, the Academy has created an easy way to fill your marketing tool belt.

The Marketing Committee recently reorganized to form BEST, Business Enhancement Strategies and Training. A primary mission of the BEST Committee is to provide tools that will enhance the growth of existing practices and assist in the launch of new practices. Our goal is that when combined, these tools will become the keys to unlocking a strategy to take every audiology practice and organization from Better to Best.

In the upcoming months, BEST will offer resources, both short-term and long-term in nature, to assist in the growth and success of audiology practice. Most of these resources will be available via the BEST section of the Academy website (www.audiology.org).

We are excited to report that you can begin to fill your belts with some marketing tools NOW when you visit the Academy website. Take a look and you can find:

- **Custom Print Center**
  Templates for brochures, print ads, direct mail pieces, posters and postcards can all be customized with your particular contact information at this site. This is an easy and affordable way to promote your business or organization with materials designed specifically to promote audiologists in all practice settings.

- **Books, Brochures and Multimedia**
  The Academy produces a wide array of informational publications, some geared towards promoting audiology and the services we provide to the general public and others focus on expanding knowledge for audiologists.

- **Call Messaging Services**
  BEST has negotiated phenomenal rates and packages through Image Marketing International for on-hold messages. The quality messages of the stock scripts are not only informative but give the level of professionalism every practice and organization can benefit from. Image Marketing has also agreed to create customized on-hold messages for individual practices and organizations at very reduced rates.

- **Business Plan Templates**
  Any emerging practice or organization can benefit from the structure of a business plan. Even well-established practices may need to update or revise an existing plan. The Business Plan Templates provide numerous examples of plans specific to audiology practice.

- **Marketing Plan Templates**
  A marketing plan is critical for any successful business. Staying on track and implementing monthly, quarterly and annual marketing activities will help to ensure consistent traffic in any audiology office. Both internal and external marketing plans will be available. In addition, the templates will provide tracking forms that will help audiologists in all practice settings determine the return on investment (ROI) when re-evaluating events and establishing a marketing budget for future years.

- **Private Practice Checklist**
  For many Audiologists who are trying to begin a private
practice, it often feels that there are several wheels that need to be re-invented. The Private Practice checklist was developed to kick-start this process. The checklist also coincides with resources available on the Audiology Practice Essentials (APE) CD and the Additional Practice Essentials Too (APE 2) CD.

**OFFICE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**
Scheduling appointments, recording revenue, filing insurance claims and tracking referral sources are becoming critical for all types of audiology practices. This area will direct members to various office management software options that are customized for audiologists.

**Coming Soon – PRIVATE PRACTICE STARTER KIT**
The Private Practice Starter Kit will be available through the Academy at Audiology Now! Convention 2007. This starter kit will consist of everything necessary to either start a private practice from scratch or improve an existing practice. Tools in the Kit will include sample Employee Manuals, Business and Marketing plan templates, office forms available through the APE CDs, Infection Control manuals, HIPPA compliance tools and guidelines, CPA and Legal resources, office floor plan examples and equipment/supply check-lists.

The BEST Committee and the Academy are very excited to make these resources available to audiologists in all practice settings and looks forward to offering additional tools and solutions that will aid practitioners as their roles reflect the changing nature of our profession. Go to the Academy website (www.audiology.org) to find these helpful resources.

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**On “Being Outrageous!”**

After reading the Marketing Scene column by Gyl Kasewurm, entitled “Being Outrageous” (AT, 18:5, pg 43), I wasn’t sure what to make of it. It took a while to make this profession a doctorate level field and many audiologists have gone back to school to achieve this goal. To suggest to professionals to “have their favorite cookies fresh from the oven” when the patient arrives or when a scheduling error occurs to “have a limo pick them up for that appointment” may sound like nice ideas to make patients more satisfied, but I see it as something that very few, if any, in a professional field will even think of doing. I was astounded when the article suggested if a hearing aid is broken, fix it quickly and “lunch is on you” or if you receive a referral from a patient, to thank them by “delivering flowers and the note in person”.

These are only my opinions and I am certainly not trying to tell the author of the article how she should run her practice. My main concern is that an article such as this pushes the profession backwards from a doctorate level position to that of a customer service representative. I think Audiology Today would better serve readers by printing articles that provide more useful information.

—Jeffrey B. Kot, AuD, Clifton, JN