Developing Brand ‘Osteopath’
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Inspired by

WE DON’T TREAT SYMPTOMS. WE TREAT PEOPLE.

DOCTORS OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

LEARN MORE
The awareness challenge

• A century of osteopathy in Britain
  – BOA established 1913; BSO established 1917
  – First regulation near miss 1935 (private member’s bill)
  – Osteopaths’ Act 1993; General Osteopathic Council 1998
  – BSO becomes University College of Osteopathy 2017

• 2 percent of population use an osteopath each year
  – 10 percent have ever used (YouGov poll 2014)
  – Patients like osteopaths a lot; Non patients know little (GOsC 2014)

• 2 percent of UK osteopaths work in the NHS (iO Census 2014/7)
  – Majority of GPs know little, some actively discourage patients
The marketing challenge

• Differing views among practitioners about how to ‘sell’ osteopathy
  – General impression that word of mouth is only effective tool
  – Concerns by structural osteopaths that ‘cranial’ diminishes credibility with medical establishment
  – Concerns by cranial/visceral/classical osteopaths that MSK is too narrow and will somehow destroy osteopathy

• ’Defining osteopathy’ has become a Holy Grail for some
The patient view

• Patients don’t care about techniques
• Patients do care about
  – Is it safe?
  – Is it effective?
  – If it costs, how effective? (cost/benefit, value for money)
  – What do those I trust (friends/family/doctors/others) say?
  – What does general opinion (web/media) say?
A century of isolation

• GPs/Rest of Health do not understand osteopaths
  – No understanding = No referrals

• Osteopaths do not understand Rest of Health systems
  – No understanding = Reduced opportunity for employment or multidisciplinary patient care

• BUT we know that osteopaths get great results working in a multidisciplinary setting
  – Nottingham QMC Spinal Surgery Unit
  – Back Pain service in West of England
The long game: Universal Recognition

• Creating the sense of familiarity with ‘osteopath’ and ‘osteopathy’ among the public
• Building the professional relationship with doctors/rest of health so that guard dogs become ambassadors
• Strengthen the institutional recognition by world (WHO) and national bodies of the global profession
• Universal Recognition = genuine patient choice
• A key project towards Universal Recognition
• Four strands:
  1. Deep *understanding* of the motivation and choices made by the public about health and wellbeing
  2. Develop a brand position/attributes based on *outcomes*
  3. *Multidisciplinary* working with key health professions
  4. Evidence and standards *education* of health institutions
  5. *Mobilising* osteopaths and osteopathic institutions
Understanding the public

• 90 percent of UK public have never used an osteopath
• World of mouth works well, but not well enough
• We have the opportunity to build awareness and recognition together
• We need to build a deep understanding of consumer motivations and choices around health and wellbeing
• Let’s change the conversation from ‘conditions’ and ‘techniques’: ‘back pain’ ‘cranial’ ‘joint pain’ ‘classical’ to..?
Multidisciplinary relationship with RoH

• Change conversation from ‘why don’t you refer?!’ to ‘how can we help?’
• Osteopathic knowledge and experience is invaluable to GPs, surgeons, nurses
• Key strands:
  – Engage with other professions at institutional and local levels
  – Develop ‘common language’ strategy (cf OIA-WHO glossary project)
  – Providing training for osteopaths around NHS practices
Influencing health influencers

• Continuing investment and support to NCOR
• Deploying the Osteopathic Foundation to support research and standards development that builds credibility
• Exploiting newly recognised AHP status with NHS England
• Feeding upwards the positive results from cross profession working and public engagement
• Collaborating on public health promotion
Mobilising the profession

• Developing the messages is one strand
  – Getting the message out is crucial
• Converting *osteApathy* into a profession wide collaboration
• The iO and other osteopathic institutions will provide the messages and tools
• We need the profession to use them
In summary

• We have an opportunity to create public understanding of ‘osteopath’ that is about
  – care and outcomes
  – genuine patient centred, whole person approach
• We need to focus on what the public/patient/consumer
  – need
  – want to understand
• We need to thrive together or we will weaken apart
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