



Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Common Pitfalls

- Insufficient preparation prior to opening
- Insufficient financing for the first year
- Insufficient experience
- Opening a practice for the wrong reason(s)
- Relying too heavily on one revenue source
- Not being aware of developing financial trends
- Not paying “professional dues”
- Not writing reports or inappropriate self-presentation
- Administering a practice in areas where the practitioner has no expertise
- Not being able or willing to devote sufficient time and energy to the practice

Preparation

■ Marketing

■ ?Reputation with

- Colleagues
- Other professionals
- Referral sources

■ No reputation → adequate marketing

■ Market analysis

- Locating underserved community areas
- Identifying underserved needs

■ Establishing contact with other SLPs, other pros, and referral sources

Preparation

- **Operational manual (administrative issues)**
 - Written policies (could be revised, if needed)
 - No-show
 - Nonpayment of fees
 - How to manage routine activities
 - How to manage emergencies
 - When to leave the practice?

Finances

- Need to have funds until practice could generate enough revenue
 - Opening costs
 - Operational costs
- Obtain funds before opening
- Start SMALL then grow, otherwise:
 - Greater cost for year 1
 - Higher fees than other SLPs

Insufficient Experience

- Relationship with other SLPs is essential for
 - Referrals from them
 - Referrals to them
- Lack of training and experience:
 - Ethics dictates referral → loss of revenue

Reason for Opening a Practice

- Right reason:
 - Autonomy outweighs risks
- Wrong reason:
 - Need a job (desperate)
 - People view: ?NOT Competent
 - To get rich quick
 - Unrealistic
 - People view: ?SLP unethical

One Revenue Source

- Balanced caseload in regard of payment responsibility
 - Allows to compensate loss of revenue from one source by increasing revenue from other
 - E.g., 1980s: hospitals started hiring SLPs
 - → many private practitioners went bankrupt

Not Forecasting Financial Trends

- Financial trends could potentially reduce revenue
 - E.g., national healthcare policy

Professional Dues

- Being active at all levels in the professional and local communities
 - → Become better known to
 - Professional community
 - Local community
 - Those whose services I need or they need me
- If not done → professional and personal isolation

Reports and Self-presentation

- Best marketing tools
- Reports:
 - Accurate
 - Best professional writing
 - Best professional skills
- Contacts:
 - Professionalism, Professionalism, Professionalism
 - Know what your practice can and can NOT do

Know Your Strengths & Weaknesses

- Clinic:
 - If not trained to handle a patient →
 - Have someone on staff who is
 - Refer outside practice
- Administration:
 - Some areas need experts:
 - Accounting
 - Legal issues
 - Financial planning

Allocated Time and Energy

- Balance between:
 - Practice time
 - Family time
 - Physical abilities of the practitioner