

How to Start and Build Your Own Private Speech Therapy Business



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Introduction

Hello my fellow Speech-Language Pathologists,

Being part of a company in the Speech-Language Pathology industry, we've come across many Speech-Language Pathologists who have a part-time Private Speech Therapy practice, but would like to go full-time. They know the demand for speech therapy is growing and the money is better (in private practice), but they are constrained by the heavy caseload their work as an employed Speech-Language Pathologist demands.

I would know. I was one of them.

I was a busy community Speech-Language Pathologist working long hours and spending most of my time in my car. I was burned out and wanted to set up my own private practice from home. It took me more than 2 years of planning with my brother Greg and a maternity leave to get it going. However, we were setting up our online speech therapy company, TinyEYE Technologies, in order for me to work from home. I now work from home which has enabled me to stay with my newborn (Aiden) and be there for my 8 year old (Taylor). I hope my experience can help speed things up for you and get you going with your own private speech therapy practice.

This E-Book will give you a foundation on which to start and build your private speech therapy practice. I've included some marketing tips from our team at TinyEYE that will be of great value to you. I wish you the best of luck in building your private speech therapy business!

Sincerely,



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Private Practice Owner
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Part 1: How Do I Start a Private Speech Therapy Practice?

Figuring how to start can be overwhelming and challenging. This section of the e-book will break things down so you can comfortably manage starting-up.

1. Start Out of Your Home.

I assume if you are already an employed Speech-Language Pathologist, you don't have the time or resources to set up a physical location. Starting out of your home keeps your costs and risk low. You can grow from there if you wish or work from home like me!

Set up a room (if you have a den, this would be perfect) to be your office or somewhere where you can't be disturbed or distracted easily. You'll want your work space separated so you can focus on work. Working from home can be a challenge since it is very easy to be distracted. Having a dedicated space for work is important. You can also deduct a portion of your mortgage or rent from your income tax! *Please consult your accountant for details.*

2. Know Who You Want to Target

This may sound trivial, but focusing on who you perform therapy for can give you an edge in marketing. Do you want to focus on pre-school children or do you want to focus on stroke recovery? If you're buying or selling a house, would you go to a lawyer who does many things, or would you go to lawyer who specializes in residential real estate? You're most likely to go to the specialist right? The same can apply to your private practice. You could be the go-to private speech therapists for children. Where you are, your interests, and the market will have an impact on your choice. So, you'll have to research the best market for you. For example, if you want to specialize in children, parents who want private speech therapy may most likely be in a higher income bracket or in an area where public speech therapy is not possible (remote location, small population). Marketing to affluent neighbourhoods or being near affluent neighbourhoods may be of great benefit to you.

3. Know What Your Costs Are

Setting up a home-based business does have its costs. Here is a fairly complete list that will likely apply to a home-based private speech therapy practice.

a.) *Home-Business License*

Contact your city officials for information on setting up a home-based business. You'll have to choose what type of business structure you'd like to set up. You can start off as a sole proprietor, partnership, or corporation. *Please seek the advice of an accounting professional for the best option in your situation.*

Consult with your local Speech and Hearing Association to see if they have any other requirements/licenses you may need.

b.) Accounting/Bookkeeping Software

You will need to keep track of revenue and expenses and be able to invoice your clients. QuickBooks and Simply Accounting are amongst the top rated small business accounting software products on the market. You can find these products at Staples and other leading computer/office retail outlets.

c.) Name, Logo, Letterhead and Business Cards

You should aim to look professional and brand your business. Having a distinct name will give people a strong initial impression of your business. If you name your business, "Sally's Speech Therapy", you may not be taken as seriously as a practice named "SpeechCom: Speech Therapy Services".

Having a professional looking logo, letterhead and business cards will aid you in branding and name recognition. Having your name and logo on all your materials is important. If you have design skills, you can make your own in Microsoft Office or another design program. If not, hiring a designer may be a valuable investment.

d.) Speech Therapy Tools

You probably have an arsenal of tools you can use where you are employed as a Speech-Language Pathologist; however, you can't use those for your own private speech therapy practice. Find what you think are the best tools and invest in them. TinyEYE offers a growing range of online based activities to stimulate learning and an opportunity to provide therapy online. It also requires no initial investment and you charge your clients a nominal fee (on top of your regular fee) to use the service.

e.) Get Your Own Website and Professional Email Address

Having your own website gives you a marketing tool that is cost effective and can change at any time. Think of it as a place where potential customers will come to get more information so they can make a great decision when hiring you.

Many Speech-Language Pathologists who have a part-time private speech therapy practice have email addresses from free sites such as hotmail, gmail, aol, comcast, etc...This does not give you a professional image.

I will show you how to obtain a cost effective web site and professional email address in the next section.

f.) Gas and Mileage

If you plan drive to client's homes, your gas and mileage now become an expense.

These are the main costs associated with starting your private speech therapy practice (we assume you have a computer).

Remember, all these investments are tax-deductible. SO KEEP YOUR RECEIPTS.

Part 2: How to Create a Cost-Effective Web Presence

The most important aspect of a private speech therapy practice's website is how quickly users can find the necessary information. In your case, what you do, your credentials, and how much you charge are the key factors.

If you do not have any web design skills, you can start with a blog based website (a blog is basically an online diary) that allows you to communicate with your potential customers and give them the information they need to make an informed decision when thinking about doing business with you. You can set that up at wordpress.com or blogspot.com. TinyEYE helps all private speech therapists who use TinyEYE get set up (at no extra charge).

Cost: \$0

Buy a domain name such as speechcom.com from any web-hosting company (do some research on Google to find the best deal-they can range from \$3-\$40). You won't need any actual hosting if you go through blogspot.com or wordpress.com. You can just set up a redirect on your domain name to your wordpress.com/blogspot.com account. These hosting companies can also create an e-mail redirect system where you can still have your hotmail or Gmail account, but your customers will see a professional email like, sally@speechcom.com. Ask them if they have this service.

Cost \$10/year (you can find lower)

Set up extra pages on your wordpress.com or blogspot.com website pertaining to your rates, services, bio...etc. You can use the blog to educate parents on tips to practice at home, your daily thoughts, etc...I have a blog you can see at <http://tinyeye.wordpress.com>.

Cost: \$0

Search Optimize Your Website for Potential Clients.

- 1.) Have lots of good educational content that is relevant to speech therapy and your private speech therapy practice.
- 2.) See if you can get link backs from other businesses that are complimentary (physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology..etc)
- 3.) Use words that you think people will search for in Google. E.G Private Speech Therapist in Colorado.
- 4.) Continue to update your website with new blog postings to show Google that your site is relevant

Cost: \$0 or you can hire a Search Optimization Specialist.

Total cost: \$10/year.....Not Bad hey?

Part 3: 10 Cost-Effective Marketing Tips for Your New Private Speech Therapy Practice.

1. Maximize Your Business Card

Don't just have your Private Speech Therapy Business name on the front. Make sure you have all your contact information and your website address. Use the back to offer an incentive to refer other people. Offer 10% off your service if someone refers you a client or something like that. Be creative. Give your business card to everyone you know.

2. Tap Your Current Network

You definitely know other Speech-Language Pathologists. Some of them don't have a desire to be in private practice and could be happy to send you clients. You don't know unless you ask. I'm sure you also know other health professionals like Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Audiologists, etc.. Ask them to refer clients and give them a small gift in return.

3. Join Organizations Related to Your Service

You already belong to your local Speech-Language Pathology association, but what about being on the board or committee of an Autism charity? Not only will you make great contacts, you'll support a great cause.

4. Niche

I mentioned this earlier. Define your private speech therapy services as specifically as possible. Maybe you want to specialize in improving adult communication for business or maybe you want to focus on children only. Find what appeals best to you and cater to that. If you focus and become the expert private speech therapist for children, you may eventually get higher paying clientele versus a general private speech therapist.

5. Co-Op Advertising

Put together a brochure or direct mail piece that includes complimentary businesses. For example, your private speech therapy practice could partner with a private Audiologist to save on costs while promoting both of your businesses.

6. Use TinyEYE's Virtual Homework to Give You Passive Income.

Once you have a client and want them to practice at home, offer them TinyEYE's Virtual Homework. Your clients can login and play the homework activities you've assigned them. You can also monitor how often they are doing it. TinyEYE actually gives you a commission for each client using it. Not only do you not pay upfront, you get paid too!

7. Re-Sell TinyEYE's Preventative Online Video Series

Parents of pre-school aged children with speech problems can use the information to help their child at home and come to you for therapy as well.

8. Know What Benefits you're Providing.

You're helping people get over their speech problems or to speak better right? So in your marketing, always remember the benefit you are delivering to your target market. Focus on the features of your service is not as important as promoting the emotional benefits.

9. Create an E-mail List

Provide tips to practice at home via an email list. This way you can keep your clients thinking about you after therapy is over. In your emails, always ask for referrals in a non-pushy way.

10. Online Directories

Submit your site to as many speech-related online directories as you can (search Google for them). If there is a speech therapy website that accepts links, make sure you submit yours. The

more links that are linked back to you, the higher you will be positioned in Google when people search.

9. YouTube

Create videos of yourself giving instructions for parents and put them on YouTube. Make sure you tag them with your business name and location. YouTube videos help create more chances of you being in Google search results.

10. Find Other Private Speech Therapists in non-competing areas

Having a circle of non-competing private speech therapists will give you a support group you can lean on when you need it. They will be in a similar situation and you can help each other grow your respective businesses.

We hope this gives you a good start when setting up your Private Speech Therapy Practice. We invite you to contact TinyEYE Technologies to show you how you can expand your business even further.