

Working in Practice

How and when to Advertise a Practice

Advertising can be costly, time consuming and ineffective if done poorly and without a strategy. Some key questions must be asked?

- Does the practice actually need to advertise at all? Often, the best form of advertising is the quality and value of the work that is done. One satisfied client can often bring in many referrals. Starting with a few clients enables the practice to grow and gain confidence, and once established the existing clients could be approached for recommendations.
- If advertising is essential to gain the first clients, define where the practice's key geographical working area is.
- Think carefully about the type of work the practice wants to attract and then make sure the advertising is best attracting that work.
- The type of client the practice is trying to attract will dictate the medium used to advertise – i.e. local papers versus trade magazines.
- Be inventive about where you advertise, don't just assume the local papers are the only place people look. There are a number of area based trade directories that can be used, along with skills registers. Placing adverts in locally based pamphlets, guides and fund raising leaflets which are cheap and delivered to the local area. Go to the local DIY/Plumbing outlet and leave an advert or cards on display.
- Leaflets can be a useful medium, although they need to be targeted (local Business Parks) and clearly state what the practice does (Sage experts, Payroll)
- Word any advert very carefully to clearly state what the practice does best, and attract the preferred client base. I.e. sole traders, self assessment, SME consultants, partnerships etc.
- Express what the practice does well in non technical language, and stress any expertise in an industry or trade.
- Always be aware of the potential for Money Laundering and the laws surrounding it.
- Use the same methods of selection when dealing with potential new clients to avoid personal prejudice. Clients can always be let go later if the relationship does not work.