

## Inbound Marketing Strategies for Schools

Chances are you don't have someone on staff with a marketing degree whose sole job is marketing your program to prospective students. If you do, congratulations! For everyone else, these responsibilities probably fall on your shoulders as a school administrator, or are split between several members of your staff. As you navigate the ever-changing environment of prospective students, it's important to keep your marketing strategies up-to-date. One key way to do that is with inbound marketing.

### Inbound vs. Outbound Marketing

As the audience you're marketing to changes, your marketing plan also needs to change. Traditionally, schools have used only outbound marketing strategies that focus on finding students through paid promotions like advertising, mailings, etc. What's more effective these days is inbound marketing—marketing strategies focused on *getting found* by students. Instead of paying to deliver your message, you increase interest in your program by creating materials that will intrigue prospective students and then posting them in places they'll be found. Examples include blogs, newsletters, articles, ebooks, videos, podcasts, and other content-based resources.

### Why Inbound Marketing Works

One of the reasons inbound marketing works is because it isn't a hard sell. It's not you putting out materials telling others how wonderful your program is; it's people learning about your program and discovering it's wonderful by reading an inspirational blog or informative article or watching an educational video. People are attracted to your program and want to learn more because you've given them content they're interested in and intrigued by. Think about your own behavior as a consumer: if you want to learn about something, you probably start with an Internet search, right? Which of the results are most attractive to you—an ad, or an article, blog, or video? People are driven to look at informative and entertaining content.



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ABMP is proud to offer our Instructors on the Front Lines workshops in conjunction with both of the American Massage Conferences (AMC) this year. We'll also have a booth in the AMC vending area, so stop by and say hello!

Atlanta, Georgia:

May 17–19, 2013

[\(ABMP workshop May 16th\)](#)

San Diego, California:

September 13–15, 2013

[\(ABMP workshop Sept. 12th\)](#)

Visit [www.americanmassageconference.com](http://www.americanmassageconference.com) for more information.

Register separately for the Instructors on the Front Lines workshops at [www.abmp.com/instructors\\_on\\_the\\_front\\_lines](http://www.abmp.com/instructors_on_the_front_lines).

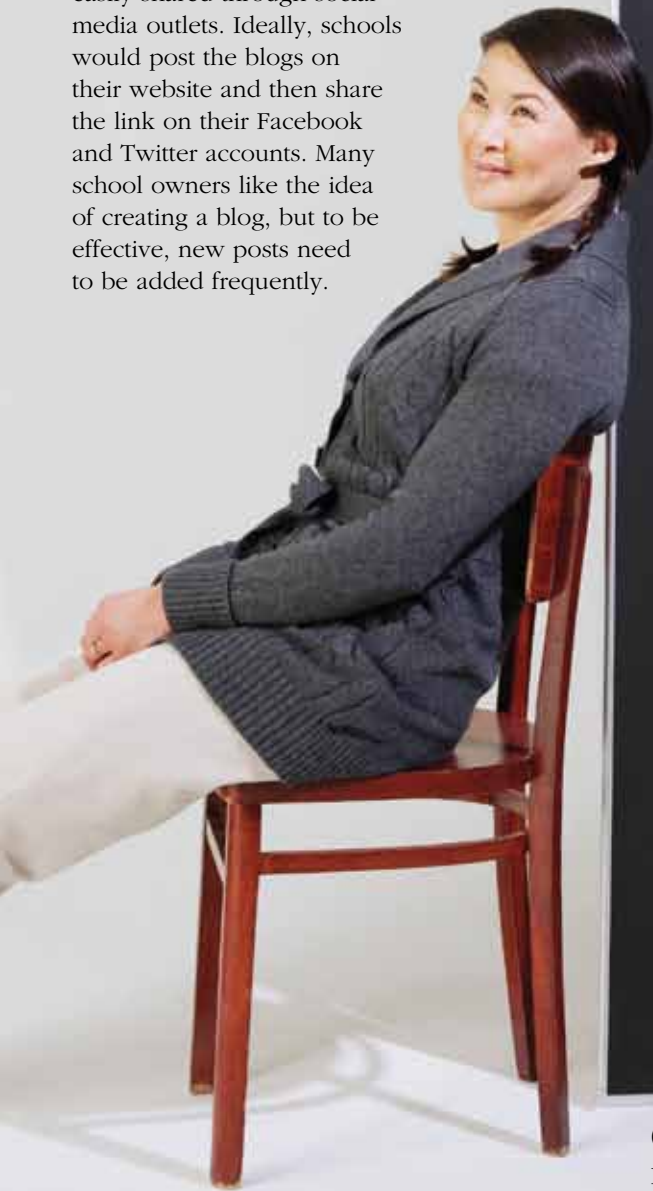


## **Inbound Marketing Components**

Three components of successful inbound marketing include content, social media, and search engine optimization.

### **1. Content**

When creating content-based resources—like blogs, articles, newsletters, and videos—the key is to speak to your audience and provide solutions and information. Blogs are popular and effective because they're short pieces of content that are easily shared through social media outlets. Ideally, schools would post the blogs on their website and then share the link on their Facebook and Twitter accounts. Many school owners like the idea of creating a blog, but to be effective, new posts need to be added frequently.



Not up to writing a new post each week? Have others help you keep up by asking instructors, graduates, and current students to do some guest writing. Prospective students would love to read multiple points of view.

### **2. Social Media**

In this digital age, where an estimated two-thirds of US Internet users regularly use a social network, schools need to have a presence on various social media outlets including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Having a page isn't enough, though; posts need to be scheduled and consistent. Rather than making random posts, create a marketing plan for the kind of content you want to share and when you'll post it. In addition to your own original posts, share relevant content from other users, sites, and pages. Commenting on other pages and sharing content will also increase your exposure to new populations.

### **3. Search Engine Optimization**

Search engine optimization (SEO) makes it easier for potential students to find your website and content. It's the practice of building your site and inbound links to your site to maximize your ranking in search engines. Many school owners are aware of the importance of using relevant content, key words, and meta tags on their website, but may not be aware of the impact inbound links have on SEO. Having your website address on other sites linking back to your site can increase your ranking in search results. Putting inbound marketing content out on other sites—like YouTube and your social media sites—will also help build your SEO.

### **Lead Generation**

Another important aspect of inbound marketing is lead generation on your website. Instead of just having a call-to-action form for more information on your program, consider increasing the value to your prospective student by including some interesting content they'll receive or be able to download in addition to information about your program. Offer content that will educate them or help them solve a problem, such as a guide to career options in the field. More prospective students will be motivated to take action and will view your school as a supportive and educational ally, rather than just a program that is trying to enroll them.

Inbound marketing is a cost-effective way to earn the attention of prospective students and increase interest in your program by providing valuable, and often inspirational, resources. Ideally, schools will blend outbound and inbound strategies to create a successful marketing plan.

## **Get Started Today**

Ready to start using some inbound marketing ideas but don't know where to start? Inbound marketing agencies, like SpinWeb ([www.spinweb.net](http://www.spinweb.net)), offer helpful content and downloadable ebooks on their websites to help you bring your target audience to your door. ☘

# Human Trafficking & Massage Education

Awareness of the horrors of human trafficking and its perceived connection to massage and massage education has increased in the last few years, but many in the profession are still unclear about what it really means, how prevalent it is, and how schools are sometimes involved.

## The Scope of the Problem

According to the US Department of State, human trafficking is said to have more than 20 million victims worldwide at any given time and is defined as the "recruitment, transportation, or harboring of individuals via force, coercion, fraud, deception, or abuse of power for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labor, or involuntary servitude." It encompasses the sexual exploitation of women and children, as well as forced labor situations, like the worker who is held hostage to work off debts or the maid who has her papers confiscated by her employers. It's estimated that in California alone, up to 12,000 women a year are brought in from other countries with the promise of legitimate employment, only to be forced into prostitution.

## The Connection to Education

Most in the massage and bodywork profession are aware of the use of illegitimate massage parlors as fronts for prostitution, but not as many are aware of the connection between human trafficking and massage schools. Investigations have uncovered numerous instances of businesses posing as massage schools and selling transcripts to traffickers so their workers would appear legitimate. There has also been at least one reported instance where an unethical employee of a legitimate massage school was selling transcripts illegally.



## What Can You Do?

As massage school administrators and educators, the first thing you can do is educate your employees and students about human trafficking. Educated professionals with an awareness of the issues can act as eyes and ears for local law enforcement. Advocate for the enforcement of state and local regulations. Often there are regulations in place to handle illegal massage parlors and trafficking situations, but the resources to enforce those regulations are lacking. Vet your employees well, and review the transcript and certification processes at your school. ❌

◀ In-depth articles on this topic are available in the January/February 2013 edition of *Massage & Bodywork* magazine, found at [www.massageandbodyworkdigital.com](http://www.massageandbodyworkdigital.com).

## Team-Building Activity for Faculty and Staff

Organizations use team-building activities where staff members work together to improve communication, boost morale, and improve productivity. Team building becomes even more important in a massage education environment where you often have a group of adjunct faculty who don't work side-by-side every day. Fostering communication within a department and across a full faculty and staff is critical to the success of your program. This "One Question" activity is an example of a quick task you can use to begin your next faculty meeting. Alternatively, you can create teams and have them post their answers on a bulletin board in the faculty lounge.

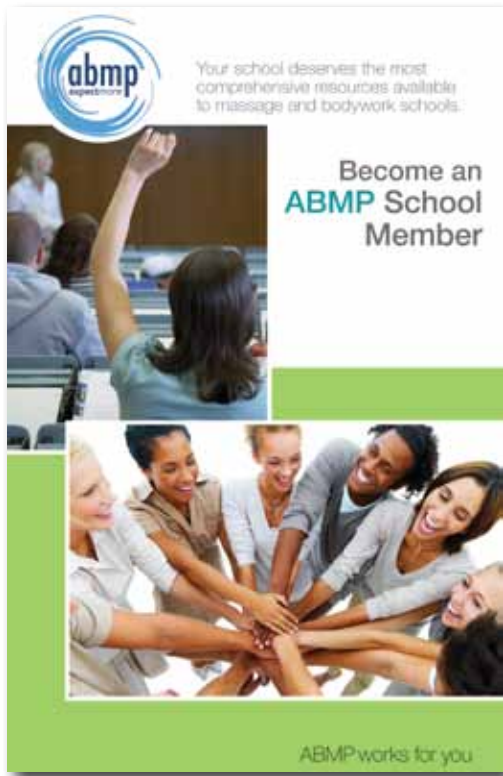


## One Question Activity

Group your faculty and staff in teams of two (or individuals if you have a small staff). Pose this question to the teams: If you could ask just one question to discover a person's suitability to give massage and bodywork, what would your question be? Have each team share their question with the group and discuss. Take it a step further and have the overall group select one or two of the best questions to use in prospective students' interviews.

Share your favorites with us by sending them to ABMP Education Facilitator Kristin Coverly at [kristin@abmp.com](mailto:kristin@abmp.com). ❌

# ABMP's School Membership Program



The flyer features the ABMP logo at the top left. Text reads: "Your school deserves the most comprehensive resources available to massage and bodywork schools." Below this is a photo of a woman in a classroom raising her hand. To the right, it says "Become an ABMP School Member". At the bottom is a photo of a diverse group of people huddled together, and the slogan "ABMP works for you".

Are you aware of all the benefits that are available to you as a massage and bodywork program? Become an ABMP School Member and unlock your access to a wealth of support materials and resources.

## Membership benefits include:

- \$75 discount on your 2013 ABMP School Issues Forum registration
- Complimentary advertising of CE courses in the online calendar that reaches more than 80,000 ABMP members
- Free access to on-demand webinars on topics for administrators, instructors, and professionals
- Student Success Curriculum Teaching Kits on 12 topics, including study skills and time management to increase student retention
- Study forms, digital flash cards, and other resources to enhance student success
- Website with unlimited pages at no additional charge
- Newsletter and brochure generators to create customized resources for prospective students and student clinic clients
- Resources for your admissions and placement teams
- Subscription to *Massage & Bodywork* magazine
- Discounts on products and services: on-line scheduling program, cell phones, etc.

Contact ABMP School Liaison Kathy Laskye for more information: 800-458-2267, ext. 649, or [kathy@abmp.com](mailto:kathy@abmp.com). Information is also available in the "Educators" section at [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com).



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