

# The **5** BIGGEST MISTAKES Practitioners Make When Opening an Office

*we have seen*



**CROSSFIELDS**  
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# THE **5** *we have seen* BIGGEST MISTAKES

Practitioners Make  
When Opening a New  
Office

*and how to avoid them*

**CROSSFIELDS**  
INTERIORS & ARCHITECTURE

Are you prepared to be successful? You're planning to open your new office. Or your business has grown, and you are ready to expand. You've gained and will continue to pursue a vast amount of knowledge on becoming a successful Doctor --BUT do you know what it takes to successfully open a physical office?

We have found that most of you don't realize all it takes to build or remodel an office facility.

*Every week we are approached by Chiropractors & Holistic Health & Wellness Practitioners that have a vision, but...*

*...they have signed a lease before they know they can successfully fit into the space they will soon have to start paying for.*

*...their budget is unrealistic, as it was developed by their contractor "buddy" that has no understanding of commercial codes. Then they find out they must renovate a bathroom to meet current handicap requirements.*

*...contacting the x-ray physicist has not even entered their mind and they need their approval to open.*

*... they spent so much time building their office and managing the looming deadlines that they never had enough time to effectively market and network with people in their community.*

To us, success means your space and the process to get there is efficient and effective; you are not spending unnecessary time and money; and you avoid frustration.

This eBooklet was written to help you be successful.

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They do not...

# UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS & TIME REQUIRED

As the process of opening an office is not something you will do often, you should not invest a great deal of time and money in learning everything there is to know.

However,  
*being an educated consumer will save you precious time, money, and a huge headache.*

Opening an office is a "event". What is an event? It is something that has a beginning and a definite end! If done correctly, you will not have to open a new office for some time. In fact, on average, businesses only change their office space every seven years by renovation, expansion, or moving.

**Event planning.** As with any event, there is much planning and coordination that goes into opening your office. We have identified 7 categories to guide you through the clinic opening process:

Dreams & Goals, Business Planning, Location & Leasing, Facility Development & Design, Permits & Governing Approvals, Construction, and Specialty Items/Misc.

Each category has a series of tasks with their own designated deadline. Understanding which events and tasks will influence the others, and how much time it will add, is vital to staying on track to meet your goals creates a systematic timeline.

**5 Phases.** To help make this huge endeavor manageable we developed a 5 Phase System that typically starts about 18 months prior to your grand opening.

1. Vision Phase - Fully develop your vision at least 12 months ahead of your target open date.
2. Definement Phase -Define the requirements & vision for your practice, then perform the due diligence. Complete 9 months prior to opening.
3. Search & Find Phase -Find the financing, find the location, then the space that works for your goals. Takes an average of 3 to 4 months & needs to be completed prior to signing your lease.
4. Design Phase - Create & document the design. Get Permits. Allow 2-4 mths.
5. Implementation Phase -construction & tasks to complete facility for opening. This can take 1 to 6 months, depending on level of work to be performed.



They do not...

## HAVE A REALISTIC BUDGET

*Is your budget based on facts?*

Oftentimes, the doctor's budget is based on what another colleague told them they spent on their space. Unless the conditions are identical - this is only data.

**Do your research.** One of the hardest things to pinpoint is the budget you really need to open and run your office. Establishing a preliminary budget is part of your business plan, as well as something you must know before you begin to seek out financial support. There is a difference between having a budget and having a REALISTIC budget. In a realistic budget, cost estimates are based on your specific needs and related experience, versus what someone else did or told you. Creating a realistic budget requires research.

**Know all your costs.** You first need to establish your specific needs which will include: your startup costs, your working capital, and your cash flow requirements. Start your research with all publications available to develop preliminary costs. As you move through the process of research and discovery, these costs will continue to be refined. Once you have established your specific needs and completed your research, we believe obtaining an expert opinion is critical. Experts will help you determine where to best compromise to help save you time and money. It will also help prevent you from unknown or hidden costs that could otherwise derail you and prevent you from opening your practice on time and on budget.

**How much will the facility cost?** When it comes to the facility itself, the range of costs to modify, renovate or build out is vast. The conditions of the space and the economic environment have as much impact as the finishes and furnishings chosen. The space you choose can vary the costs greatly. In our experience, if your landlord really wants you in the space, they could give you a generous TI (tenant improvement) allowance. In a raw space, TI can cover 50% to 95% of your build-out costs and you could have a dream office for the same or less money than a renovation.



They do not...

## DESIGN WITH THE FUTURE IN MIND

How much space do I need today?

How much space will I need in 5+  
years when my growth matches my  
business plan?

Where are the compromises?

**Create a master plan.** Once you know your theory of wellness delivery, the services you will offer, the flow of your practice and the number of patients you plan to see each day, week, month, etc..., you can begin to map out your space – or space plan. To “design with your future in mind” means to not only plan that space for your immediate needs, but also plan for your future goals. In the design industry we call this a master plan.

**How much is too little?** The tendency when you start out is to get the minimum square footage as possible, which is good to keep your overhead low. However, this could potentially prevent future success in two ways. One, not all square footage is the same and it is only as valuable (to you) as you can make it. Imagine your dishwasher: sometimes reloading can allow you to get more things in than you originally thought and in other cases some things just won't fit because they are too high or long. The same thing is true for office space. The shape of the space and/or elements in the space will greatly affect the usefulness, flow, and efficiency of your finished space. This will impact your overhead costs—either positively or negatively. Additionally, the more efficient the space, the more your practice can grow without adding more space. Secondly, changing your office in the future, whether moving or having to remodel while open, is disruptive, costly, and can be an incredible drain on staff, patients and your energy.

**What can professional planning do?** The impact of your future needs can be minimized with proper professional planning. To plan accurately, you need to consider your goal and projected growth so that you can stay in your space comfortably for the next 5 years. A professional that understands your industry and is concerned with your long-term success can help you determine how your needs best fit into the square footage you are considering, where the limits are, and how to adjust to accommodate your future needs.



They do not...

## MARKET ENOUGH TO SECURE NEW PATIENTS

*So now that you have a beautiful new office...where are all the patients?*

Time is limited so what will you focus your time on?

Are you spending your time doing what only you can do and using resources for the things others can do?

**Marketing before your space is finished is crucial.** Marketing is an ongoing process that will continue throughout your career, but not marketing to secure patients before you open or expand is a huge oversight! Marketing should begin early with networking and educating others on what you do. As soon as you develop your vision you can begin marketing more specifically to your target market to obtain patients for your practice.

**Most of all, marketing takes time.** It is recommended that to establish your practice, 80% of your time should be spent marketing, which means you have little time to do much else! We often see young, eager graduates with big dreams and a small budget believing, "if I can just do all the work myself, I can get my office up and running for as little cost as possible". I am sure you've probably heard someone say this, or even thought this yourself. The reality is, it is more important for you to focus on obtaining patients for your practice, than to spend your time, and possibly wasted money, trying to do all the work to open your office all on your own, (i.e. do-it-yourself mode of thinking.) When the rent starts and the doors open, you want the space full of patients.

**Use your time building your practice, not your space.** Utilizing the expertise and skills of others, which can include family, friends and/or professionals, will ultimately make you money by avoiding the biggest mistake...not immediately marketing to secure patients! Don't get this wrong, you should be involved in the planning of your new office. You may even elect to do some things yourself, but spending little to no time at all networking, marketing and securing new patients will only leave you to open with little to no client base. Building that base is what will make you successful! So, forget being the handy-do-it-all-myself-person if it keeps you from getting the word out about your passion and how what you have to office can transform people's lives!!!



They do not...

## HAVE A SUPPORT SYSTEM

*How do you feel about a support team?*

Consistently, we have seen -  
The better the support system -  
the more successful the process  
of building an office is,  
and the more successful the  
practice becomes

Opening an office is a huge event and can be overwhelming. A key to making your opening go as smoothly and seamlessly is to surround yourself with a team of people - both professional and personal - to support your opening efforts. We call it a Power Team. A Power Team is simply people with expertise in many different areas that are willing to help you when help is needed. It's proven that everyone needs support and backing to proceed toward their dream, whether it is friends, family, peers, groups, professionals, or all of the above. Having available help on your side is a must.

**Build a Power Team.** A great way to build a Power Team is to get your friends and family involved and interested in your mission. Start networking. Seek out other individuals with similar goals and those that can help you in the process. Seek out other doctors who have opened their own practice. Get involved and ask for advice. Use your community to network, foster relationships and create professional contacts. Even if you are unsure at the time of what areas you will need to hire professional services, keep a list of professionals in each category that you may need to call upon when help is needed. To start a new office, we believe you need a real estate broker that represents you and your needs, equipment suppliers that are personally available (not just a website), management consultants/coaches, legal services, space and interior designers, and construction service providers. Having a team of people to support you and your vision of opening your office will give you guidance and motivation to accomplish your dream.





We hope you have found this little eBooklet useful.  
*If you found this resource helpful, please share with your network.*

**CROSSFIELDS IS THE ONLY INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL AND CONSTRUCTION FIRM THAT  
SPECIALIZES IN PLANNING, DESIGNING, BUILDING & EQUIPPING CHIROPRACTIC &  
HOLISTIC HEALTHCARE OFFICES.**

We are committed to Elevating the Holistic Health & Wellness Profession  
by Increasing your Success  
through Creating Practical and Impactful Environments so you can save more lives

We do this by educating the community on the successful process of building your office

Please contact us and see how we can help you.

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