



80/20 Rule

By David Kent, LMT, NCTMB

Keeping It Simple Series



Target the 20% of the tasks, that product 80% of the result



Lets examine the 80/20 rule,

which is also called Pareto's Principle or Pareto's Law, after Italian economist and sociologist Vilfredo Pareto.

Pareto's original principle applied to land ownership and wealth distribution when, at that time, 20 percent of the people owned 80 percent of the land; however, I've discovered that the general theme of Pareto's Principle can be loosely applied to other circumstances. In fact, the 80/20 rule has saved me valuable time, energy and money, while helping me improve my practice and produce a better return on my investment.

I first understood how I could make the 80/20 rule would work for me when I realized that I was spending far too much time on a specific project without any positive return. Although I was dedicating an exhaustive amount of time and effort to this project, it was costing me money, and my business was also suffering because I wasn't focusing on other areas that needed my attention. To utilize the 80/20 rule in this new way, I determined that I would have to focus 80 percent of my efforts on 20 percent of the tasks that matter most to me.

Consider that it is 20 percent of the actions we take that produce 80 percent

of our results; however, it is learning to tap into that 20 percent that is pivotal to making this philosophy work. What 20 percent of tasks can you focus on to have the biggest positive impact on your practice?

Let's start with clients: Do 20 percent of your clients produce 80 percent of your income? If so, work on nurturing those relationships by making follow-up phone calls or offering occasional treatment discounts. Do 20 percent of your referral sources send you 80 percent of your clients? If so, what 20 percent of your actions can you take to help maintain and improve those relationships while producing new ones? Do you apply 20 percent of your techniques 80 percent of the time? Then become a master at utilizing those techniques in your practice. And remember: No matter what type of massage practice you have, the 80/20 rule can work for you.

Saying "Thank You"

One of the easiest actions you can take is to send a thank-you card to new patients, as well as the person or business that referred them. Include your business card with each thank-you note, and consider also sending a gift certificate for a complimentary treatment. Each

week, I strive to make contact with current referral sources. Usually, I deliver a healthy snack when I visit, so that I can demonstrate how valuable these relationships are to me. Likewise, send your new clients a thank-you card for giving you the opportunity to be of service. Let them know that you will do everything possible to merit the confidence they have shown in you.

New Business

Don't dismiss the importance of spending a portion of your 20 percent researching potential new leads. To obtain referrals from the medical community research physicians in your area to determine who would be a viable resource. Seated massage therapists may want to research various professional office buildings to determine where seated massage might be a good fit. I will be discussing more about showing gratitude to your referral sources and generating new business in my April column—you won't want to miss it!

Education

To avoid spending too much time on less-than-quality educational and supplemental training materials, look for programs that give you more bang for your buck. DVD programs are very popular and have multiple benefits. And some DVDs may double as educational tools for your clients to demonstrate trigger-point locations or stretching techniques. Select programs with clearly indexed menus and supplemental materials that complement the DVD, such as manuals or workbooks.

The dissection lab is another great place where I can apply the 80/20 rule because the amount of knowledge I gain from the time I spend in the lab is invaluable, and it gives me more confidence in my hands-on abilities. Just ask Edgar Moon, a blind massage that I wrote about in my second



article for *Massage Today*, "Feeling is Believing." Edgar, who "sees" with his hands, attended a dissection seminar and said that it helped enhance his kinesthetic skills tremendously.

Employment Opportunities

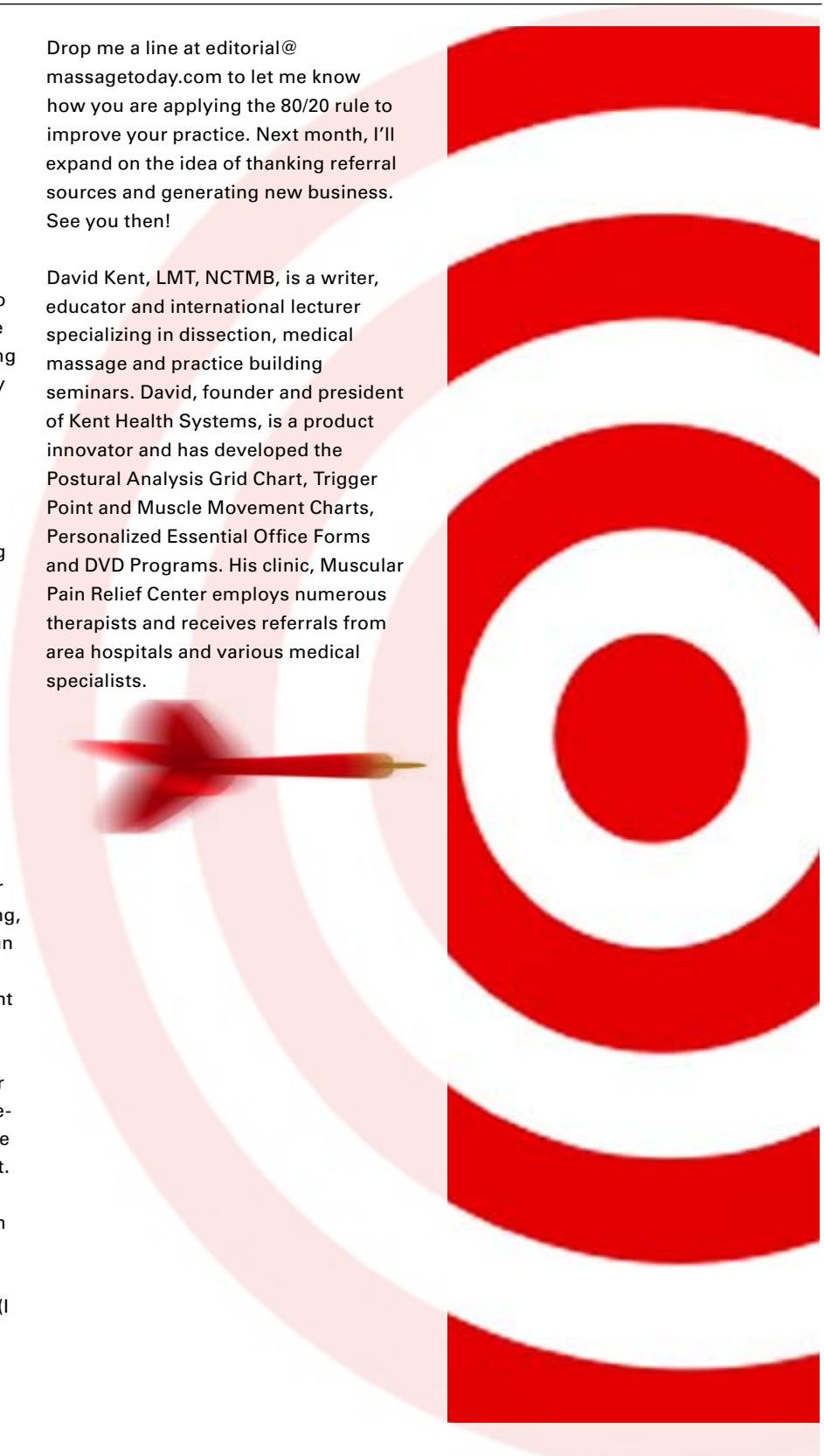
As everyone knows, we never get a second chance to make a good first impression. And it doesn't take much to be prepared: dress professionally; have all of your paperwork with you, including copies of your massage license, liability insurance and certifications; and do a little homework to learn everything you can about your potential employer. Does the clinic provide a certain type of therapy that matches your skill set? Do you already have the proper training and experience? What current skills do you have that can benefit your future employer? The most important 20 percent of this exercise will be during the interview, so make it count! Prove that you are ready to work!

Recognizing the importance of and focusing on that 20 percent will make a huge difference in your life. It will revolutionize your practice and give you maximum return on all of your investments of time, energy—everything, really. Review your goals every day, plan your outcomes, and then ask yourself, "What items on my list are the 20 percent that really count?" I invite you to read my previous articles at *MassageToday.com*, such as "The Power of the List" or "The Power a Minute," for more practice-building ideas. Each article supports the other, so make sure you check them out.

Additionally, visit www.KentHealth.com where you can listen to free podcasts that provide additional tips to keep you focused on the 20 percent that counts. (I recently interviewed a CPA who is also an LMT, and she shared the 20 percent of things that will save you money at tax time!)

Drop me a line at editorial@massagetoday.com to let me know how you are applying the 80/20 rule to improve your practice. Next month, I'll expand on the idea of thanking referral sources and generating new business. See you then!

David Kent, LMT, NCTMB, is a writer, educator and international lecturer specializing in dissection, medical massage and practice building seminars. David, founder and president of Kent Health Systems, is a product innovator and has developed the Postural Analysis Grid Chart, Trigger Point and Muscle Movement Charts, Personalized Essential Office Forms and DVD Programs. His clinic, Muscular Pain Relief Center employs numerous therapists and receives referrals from area hospitals and various medical specialists.



References

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto_principle