Developing Your Business Accent: Tips & Tools for Offering Accent Modification Services

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Developing Your Business Accent:
Tips & Tools for Offering Accent Modification Services

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Introduction/Background

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Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify key components of accent modification and the SLP role in service delivery.
- Describe various models of accent modification practice, key elements to consider when starting a business offering accent modification services, and resources/tools to establish/grow an accent modification business.
- Identify mindsets & myths for the SLP to consider when offering accent modification services as part of a business.
Outline

1. Define Accent Modification & Related Terminology
2. Describe Need/Value of Accent Modification Services
3. SLP Roles/Necessary Skillset in Service Delivery
4. Myths Related to Accent Modification Business
5. Mindsets/Mindset Shifts for Success
6. Elements of Accent Modification Business/Models of Accent Modification Business
7. Resources/Final Thoughts/Q & A

What is Accent Modification…

- **Accent Modification**: “an elective service sought by individuals who want to change or modify their speech patterns”

- **Accent**: “variations in the execution of speech characterized by differences in phonological and/or prosodic features…”
  - “We all have an accent”

- **Modification**: neutral term implying “making changes to increase communicative effectiveness”
  - intelligibility, comprehensibility → clear, natural speech/accent

(ASHA; McKinney, 2019; Shah, 2012)
What is Accent Modification…

- Related Terminology
  - Accent Modification also referred to as:
    - accent reduction -- accent elimination -- accent coaching
    - dialect training -- accent enhancement -- pronunciation training

- Regional vs Native

- Accent Training - teaching an accent/dialect for a role

- Clinical vs Corporate SLP/Speech Trainer

What is Accent Modification…

- Need/Value of Accent Modification Services
  - Clear Communication
  - Workplace Communicative Effectiveness/Efficiency/Safety
  - “A desire to be understood”
  - Increased Confidence/Self Esteem
  - Increased Self-Perceived Communication Competence
  - Counteract the presence of bias/discrimination

(Grogger, et al. 2020; McKinney, 2019; Freysteinson, et al. 2016)
Accent Modification:
SLP Role/Needed Expertise

- Self-study of specialized training
- Certification available, but not necessary
- Awareness of own biases/cultural awareness
- At least 3-5 years minimum clinical expertise

- Assess, Set goals, Train, Modify, Determine Outcomes
- Need to be able to refer if/when necessary
- Need to be able to counsel
- Need to be able to advocate
- Need to be able to market/sell/manage business

(Chakraborty, et al., 2019; McKinney, 2019)

Accent Modification:
SLPs are Uniquely Positioned

- TESOL & Voice/Speech Trainers also provide services

- SLP:
  - ASHA Scope of Practice
  - Knowledge base of articulatory/phonological systems, speech sound production, voice/resonance
  - Training/Cueing Hierarchy
  - Assess, Plan, Modify, Determine Outcomes
  - Counseling, Advocacy

  Need to have further study & practice in training suprasegmentals

(ASHA; McKinney, 2019; Sikorski, 2006)
Popular Myths related to Accent Modification Business

- It is therapy
- Insurance will cover the services
- SLPs are the only professionals who provide Accent Modification services
- Requires to have adult therapy experience
- Must be bilingual
- More lucrative with less effort
- A brand-new accent mod business will be sustainable in isolation

Having the Right Mindset/ Making Mindset Shifts for Success

- You are running a business
- Apply clinical expertise to drive practical outcomes (clinical lens in a non-clinical setting)
- Different set of clients/audience to different expectations
- Focus on what the customer wants/what are the most functional outcomes for customer
  - Functional Load (McKinney, 2019)
  - Client Benefit (Westfall, 2018)
7 Key Accent Modification Business Elements

1. Mission / Value Proposition

2. Registration and Regulatory
   (State filing, insurance, etc.)

3. Services offered
   (accent mod., dialect training)

4. Service Delivery
   (brick & mortar, online)

5. Marketing and Networking
   (social media, etc.)

6. Economics (cost and pricing)

7. Business Processes and Contracting

Business Elements:

1. Mission/Value Proposition

   • Mission:
     - determine your goal; what is it that you wish to offer/achieve with your business

   • Value Proposition:
     - “a promise of value” to be delivered, communicated, and acknowledged”
     - also “a belief from the customer” about how value (benefit) will be delivered, experienced and acquired” [Wikipedia]
       □ Developing your Business Strategy/Business Model
       □ Establishing your Niche
The sky is the limit!
Potential Target Clientele...

- Academia
- Healthcare
- Business / IT Executives
- Researchers / Scientists
- Entertainment*

Business Elements:

2 Registration/Regulatory

- **Business Registration:**
  - Abide by State/Local rules/regulations
  - Ex: LLC, PLLC, Series LLC, S Corp, etc.

- **Professional Certification/Licensure:**
  - ASHA Code of Ethics/Scope of Practice
  - State/Local Licensure Laws
  - Area of Gray: ? Compact Licensure/Reciprocity
  - SLPs not only professionals providing this service
  - Various rules local/state/internationally for any type communication training

- **Professional Liability Protection:**
  - Professional organization discount
  - Will vary if brick & mortar vs virtual, etc.
Business Elements:

Potential Services Offered

- Accent Modification
  (including Counseling and Advocacy)
- ESL / ELL
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Accent Training
- Interview Skills
- Leadership Communication / Executive Presence
- Professional Writing
- Voice Projection / Vocal Aesthetics
- Presentation Skills
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Screening / Initial Consultation
Goals / Program Plans
Assessment / Baseline Data
• Training
• Modification
• Practice Activities
Outcomes Documentation/ Functional Results
Referral for Additional Services??
Business Elements:

4. **Right combination for effective Service Delivery**

   - Physical Location vs. Virtual Sessions
   - Individual vs. Group Sessions
   - Self Pay vs. Sponsored

Business Elements:

5. **Marketing and Networking**

   - **In Person**
     - Free Presentation/Sample Class/Lecture/Complimentary Consultation
     - Vendor Opportunities

   - **Cold Call/Unsolicited**

   - **Networking**
     - Network, network, network!
     - Specific groups designed to gain leads
     - Be ready always with ‘elevator pitch’- you never know who might find value in your services
Business Elements:

5 Marketing and Networking (cont’d)

- Website/Social-Digital Media
  - Know your demographic/stats related to social media platforms
  - Know SEO factors
  - Can be used for more than just marketing
    - Advocacy & Education
      - Client Population
      - More Effective Workplace Communication Practices
      - Corporate SLP Community
    - Networking
      - Can range from free/inexpensive to extremely costly
      - Timing/Scheduling
      - Reviews/Testimonials

(Onarewaju, et al. 2020; Chen, 2020)

Business Elements:

6 Economics

$ Cost
  - business registration, licensure, insurance, professional membership
  - website, phone, internet, technology, materials
  - continuing education/professional development
  - marketing & networking

$ Price
  - market research
  - low enough to have volume of clients
  - high enough to represent your value/gain income
  - packages vs per session
Business Elements:

Business Processes/Contracting

- Policies/Procedures specific to your practice
- Agreements/Contracts
  - Include factors such as:
    - Services Promised
    - Service Delivery Details
    - Payment Schedule/Method
    - Practice Agreement
    - Cancellation Policy
  - Signatures

Various Corporate SLP Business Models Can Coexist & Succeed!!

COMMUNITY > COMPETITION

Various Business Models in Corporate SLP
North Carolina Market

- School SLP: Accent Mod, Business Communication Skills for 30 years+ In Person/Online
- Living Abroad/NC: Accent/Cross Cultural Business Comm In Person/Online
- Voice Specialist: Accent Mod, Presentation Skills In Person
- Accent Mod, Business Comm: Accent Mod, ESL, Interview/Pres Skills In Students, Small Business Owners
- 50 years as a SLP & 20 years solely in Accent Modification In Person
- 30 + yrs of only Accent Mod Local/International
- Primarily Online

3/3/2020
What can we take away from this in terms of the Business of Accent Modification?

- A market exists within various groups of potential clientele
- There is value in this type of corporate/non-clinical service
- Different business models/service delivery methods can be equally as successful, profitable
- Corporate SLPs should have solid clinical experience prior to venturing into this corporate arena of service delivery
- Multiple corporate SLPs can co-exist within the same area—and work together to build COMMUNITY vs only serving as Competition
  - This further strengthens awareness of the value of a Corporate SLP and Accent Modification services provided by SLPs

Please refer to the addendum Resource Guide for additional resources.

Q & A

Thank You for your attention & participation!