

'A SOPHROLOGIST'S KEYS TO SUCCESS'

by Florence Parot

As a profession, Sophrology has really taken off, but schools are finding many of their trainees are concerned about how to find openings, tackle competition and actually get started in the field. Sophrology offers many opportunities in a wide range of sectors and may be used in different ways. However, many newly qualified Sophrologists, whether using the technique in parallel with another profession or as a standalone therapy, are finding themselves in the position of the founder of a new business where the actual knowledge of the profession is not enough: They also need to be administrators, sell their services and basically think like a company director. So what are the different routes to success in the field of Sophrology? How can errors be avoided? We have put these questions to different professionals in the field who have been practicing for many years and whose reputation is a true measure of their success.

MIREILLE BARREAU : 'Don't be afraid - just go for it!'

Her keys to success:

- **Dare!** Free yourself from the expectations and judgements of others and don't worry about making contact with people. If you are convinced about what you're doing, they will be too!
- **Create a network of professionals:** present yourself to doctors, to social workers etc and let them try a session to help them understand what it's about.
- **Specialise:** Build a reputation for excellence in one or two fields, forge the tools you need to succeed and become irrefutable!
- **Diversify:** Wherever you practise, don't only have one place of work. Sessions are easily cancelled, time-tables difficult to manage. Don't depend on a single type of activity and adapt to the local context.
- **Continue your training and progress:** don't underestimate the importance of supervision and personal development which are both indispensable to any Sophrologist who wants to stay at the peak of their performance.
- **Adapt your vocabulary** according to your audience: be able to present yourself and Sophrology in simple terms, with everyday words.

ARNAUD HAYAERT: 'Business and Sophrology are not incompatible!'

His keys to success:

- **Create a network and work as a team:** Make contact with other professionals in the medical field as well as with other therapists in your area. Be careful, inform rather than persuade You are not there to sell Sophrology but rather to get them interested enough to want to try it! The important thing is to create long-term relationships, and this can take time. Collaborate rather than compete with other Sophrologists; think about how you complement each other.
- **Make yourself known:** through conferences, workshops and also via your website, social networks, blogs and smart phone Apps. Make yourself visible 'any know-how should make itself known'!
- **Adapt to your audience:** When you present Sophrology, adapt what you say according to who is in front of you – don't use the same vocabulary for everyone; be aware of what is and isn't appropriate.
- **Persevere:** keep working on yourself, assess yourself every day, learn from your mistakes and keep on going.
- **Be authentic:** Don't try to do everything or what seems to be most popular but instead be true to yourself and try out different routes until you find what is right for you.

NATHALIE BERGERON-DUVAL: 'The future is bright for Sophrology!'

Her keys to success:

- **Use Sophrology as a tool:** in the corporate arena, use Sophrology within the training schemes which are well-adapted to the business context. For example, Sophrology sessions before a brain-storming session or to promote team-building. Sophrology techniques can also be used to enhance management training or for stress resilience. Remain clear about the principles and techniques of Sophrology and how they should be used – never disguise it as something else!
- **Offer 'taster' corporate workshops** to encourage more long-term training opportunities.
- **Look professional:** ensure that your website, business cards and names plates appear professional and that their style is consistent. Blogs should be specialist rather than general. Presentation is vital in the corporate world as is an understanding of where we stand on a global level; what Sophrology is used for and how.

- **Keep your approach and vocabulary simple** and relevant, adapted to the corporate world. Talk about results and encourage learning.
- **Establish a network**, make contacts again and again. It is time-consuming but don't be afraid to approach people. Don't give up – you WILL get there in the end.
- **Use your common sense:** Concentrate on your areas of competence and don't waste energy to no great avail.

GAMZE RIPOCHE-FERRIDUN: 'Meet, exchange and share.'

Her keys to success:

- **Be patient, give yourself time to succeed:** Start small if necessary and progress step by step as you develop your skills.
- **Make quality your starting point.** Work on yourself; your knowledge will speak for itself. Extend a word-of-mouth network.
- **Adapt to demand:** have a solid platform of training which will enable you to adapt to the wide diversity of practice that the job entails.
- **Exploit local community information.**
- Don't think in terms of competition but rather how you and other practitioners in the area can complement each other. They will have other specialties so get to know them, exchange and share with them.

As I was saying above, the work of a Sophrologist is multi-faceted and can be done in many different ways. Isn't this exactly what makes it so exciting? However, in order to steer your line of work in the desired direction it is vital to have a precise vision of what you want to do right from the outset. Once this has been established you can start looking at how to go about it.

In a word, even though it goes without saying that to be a good Sophrologist with a rich and fulfilling career solid training is essential, being a true professional implies being proactive throughout the process of building your career and then making sure you get the necessary means to succeed.

The witness accounts brought together say it all: *'Dare to do it! Go for it! Make yourself known to those who could help you on the way!'*

First of all, don't neglect networking and cooperation. Build a network of both Sophrologists and other complementary health practitioners. The strength of one's network, the support and exchange, represent for many some of their biggest achievements.

It is an illusion to think that we can do everything on our own or solve the problems of the world. Specialising in one or a few precise areas allows us to become better known, to be noticed. Using appropriate language and adapting our presentation and prices for our target audience are also essential. Don't hesitate to get help from other professionals (e.g. in marketing or IT): We cannot know how to do everything.

In all of this, never forget the most important thing: Believe in yourself and what you do! The driving force remains your passion and this is what will enable you to persevere and not give up just before the finishing line. It is this passion which gives sense to everything else and pushes you in the right direction. So don't wait for things to happen on their own Just go for it!!

Translated by Deborah Monje - 25/01/16