



CHAMPIONING PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY

THE PHYSIO FIRST STRATEGY AND CULTURE EXPLAINED

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CHAMPIONING EVIDENCE-BASED COST-EFFECTIVE PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY
WITH PHYSIO FIRST MEMBERS IN A CHANGING HEALTHCARE MARKETPLACE

physiofirst.org.uk



Our strategy and culture explained

Dear reader

If you are about to read this document it will be because you are thinking about working with Physio First.

Whilst we dislike arrogance we do think that it is accurate to say that trying to form a relationship with Physio First having not read and digested (and indeed asked questions about) this paper would be a fool's errand. I make this statement not because I think Physio First is better than other similar organisations but because I do think we differ from many and to work with us, it is vital that you understand us and in the fullness of time, we you.

What follows is "our story". Our attempt to give clarity and context to the strategic journey that we have been on that was really crystallised in the outcome of some deep strategic reflections in 2013. The result was a decision as to what Physio First was for, or put another way, why Physio First exists.

The answer to both questions is contained within a 16 word statement of intent published in June 2013. Physio First exists to "champion evidence based cost effective private physiotherapy with Physio First members in the changing healthcare marketplace". It is this declaration that has been our guiding principle to everything we have done since and that will remain so until we have completed our 5-year business plan in 2018 or before.

So in very short order, to understand us you need to know 3 things, namely:

1. What our strategic statement of intent means
2. That since 2012 we have an organisational culture that is based upon our agreed values and which articulates the standard of behaviour to which we hold ourselves and as importantly, against which we judge our ability to work with a commercial partner
3. That although technically a not-for-profit organisation we run ourselves with the discipline and structure of a commercial organisation

So, the purpose of this paper is to try to provide a summary of the journey that Physio First has been on in arriving at our culture and strategy; as by explaining this we hope that any future contact with us will become easier and lead to a very successful relationship.

Although it is the leaders of Physio First who set our culture and strategy (that is our executive committee who are elected from among our members), Physio First is a



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membership trade association that is run by members “with” our members. You will see that our Big 5 unique member benefits all require member engagement.

From your perspective it may be helpful to know that our new organisation-wide commercial strategy states that we feel that we can only do business with organisations that are culturally and strategically aligned with us. In other words, organisations that take the time to understand our strategic direction of travel and our values and feel that they complement their own.

By way of explanation, that does not mean that there has to be a complete cultural and strategic match between ourselves and any commercial partner, but it does mean that there has to be sufficient synergy to make us all feel comfortable that we are on the same page.

Deciding that there is insufficient synergy is not, from our perspective, a criticism. It is perfectly acceptable for us not to have sufficient synergy with you or your organisation as different organisations have different priorities and different values and that is fine. But if there is insufficient synergy there is no chance of our working together save upon a transactional basis!

So to conclude, by providing this information to you I hope that I have sufficiently articulated our own culture and our strategy. In doing so I hope to have given you sufficient insight to be able to judge whether you think there is merit in spending the time and energy in trying to construct a functional (i.e. fit for purpose) relationship with us at this point.

So please do read on and please do let me know what you think.

Best regards

Karen Willcock
Hon Commercial Officer
Physio First

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Our story

1. Who are Physio First?

Physio First is for **championing evidence-based cost-effective private physiotherapy with Physio First members in the changing healthcare marketplace**. We are a trade association of self-employed Chartered physiotherapists in private practice and a dynamic professional network of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. We have more than 3,000 members across the whole of the United Kingdom, the vast majority of whom are practice principles (i.e. business owners).

Physio First is run by our members and we pride ourselves on being an organisation that works *with* our members as opposed to *for* them. All members have access to our Big 5 unique member benefits that require member engagement, as well as to a number of other member benefits which support these (see below).

Our elected Physio First executive committee, supported by fellow volunteer members, our Northampton office team and commissioned professional advisors, proactively work together to deliver our strategic intent.

The majority of our executive officers are practising self-employed private physiotherapists who deeply understand and appreciate the issues facing the self-employed private physiotherapist today.

Physio First also has a network of 18 Regional Officers – again practising self-employed private physiotherapists – who liaise closely with our executive committee. Their role includes holding and communicating our organisational strategy and culture; taking part in and supporting our Big 5 unique member benefits; leading upon planned regional events and assisting with our education, recruitment and retention strategies.

In response to our members' needs we have developed our Big 5 unique member benefits which are, in no order of priority:

1. Receiving the latest unique marketplace information gleaned from Physio First post holder interaction with the healthcare marketplace
2. Receiving individual reports based upon data collection surveys to benchmark their practice
3. Being allowed to take part in our private trusted LinkedIn discussion forum that is one of the most actively engaged forums of its kind



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4. Receiving individual reports to enable members to compare their individual patient (and soon clinic) outcomes through our Data for Impact project run in collaboration with the University of Brighton
5. The opportunity to become an evidence based Physio First Quality Assured Practitioner, that bases its quality assessment on patient outcomes

As a professional network of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy we are formally recognised by the Council of the CSP as representing self-employed Chartered physiotherapists.

We are functional, well-structured, use project planning and capacity management tools and systems which include our sophisticated Membership Relationship Management (MRM) system.

2. What is our history?

Physio First was formed in 1952 as the Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice (OCPPP) to represent the interests of self-employed private Chartered physiotherapists – something we still do today.

The continuous developments in the NHS and in private healthcare have always presented a number of challenges for our members and, as a result, Physio First has grown and adapted to meet the needs of our members in today's fast changing and often challenging healthcare marketplace.

We benefit from professional management, professional coaching and other professional support and pride ourselves on being an extremely functional (i.e. fit for purpose) organisation that is run by its members. We integrate the discipline of a commercial organisation with values that govern what we regard as acceptable behaviour and that are uniquely our own.

3. Our strategy explained

Our commercial discipline has ensured that our strategic intent is clear. Physio First is for championing evidence-based cost-effective private physiotherapy with Physio First members in the changing healthcare marketplace.

In deciding our strategic intent in 2013 our executive committee then developed a 5-year business plan comprising 9 goals to achieve it (see below).



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We know from feedback that our members want to ‘make a difference in the marketplace’ and ‘exert some influence in that marketplace’ and these are the key principles underlying our plans.

We also know that we need to be organised, functional, have a clear purpose and be able to harness our passion to succeed!

Our 5 year goals, signed off by our executive committee in October 2013, are summarised here:

Goal 1: Commission and implement a positioning exercise to understand how Physio First is perceived by our internal and external stakeholders to provide a benchmark against which we can measure progress.

‘Positioning’ is a precise business exercise to establish how we and others really see us. Having implemented this in 2013, it has enabled us to measure our ongoing progress.

Goal 2: Review business as usual (BAU) and:

- Examine critically to ensure alignment
- Refine our project review and planning processes to ensure that both are fit for purpose

By examining everything we were doing, we cleared out all activities that used resources but were not aligned with our key objective – our statement of intent – so that all our activities aligned with it. This review was completed in June 2014.

Goal 3: Procure evidence to acquire health industry standing to enable us to win arguments against, and /or form a strategic alliance with, commercial organisations in order to impact upon the changing healthcare marketplace.

Through learning to collect business and clinical data and to then examine it we have learned to produce evidence upon which to base our judgment and activities and thus influence and impact the healthcare marketplace (see unique member benefits [2](#), [4](#) and [5](#) above). The completion of this goal at the end of 2015 resulted in our:

- producing regular practice profiling reports that enables our members to benchmark their business



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- shaping our decade old data collection project into our current Data for Impact project which produces individual reports that enables our members to benchmark their physiotherapy service and which underpins our Quality Assured Practitioner scheme based upon clinical outcomes.

Goal 4: Improve the relationship between our membership and our executive by:

- Increasing / improving communication
- Examining our member journey
- Managing member expectations

Physio First is conscious that some members feel a gap exists between them and our executive and we are taking steps to ensure members are engaged, involved and informed on all our business. This was implemented in 2015 and has been an ongoing and developing process since.

Goal 5: Championing private practice to each internal stakeholder group so that they view Physio First as the “go to” organisation.

Our internal stakeholders are our members, regional officers, sub committees, contractors and office team and we need to ensure they all view us in the right way. Goals 1 – 4 have enabled us to do this. Goal 5 was achieved in December 2015.

Goal 6: Understand how to measure and manage our capacity to operate at 80% of available resource, i.e. of available time, energy and money, to enable us to achieve Goals 7, 8 and 9.

We knew that we needed to consciously manage our capacity so our resources (our time, energy and money) are not overwhelmed. It is accepted that 80% is the maximum capacity at which any functional organisation can run and we now actively monitor our capacity.

Goal 7: Champion private practice to each external stakeholder group, i.e. the public, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and professional networks, the Private Physiotherapy Educational Foundation, government departments, commercial purchasers, sporting bodies, physio consumable suppliers, and healthcare Institutions, so that they value private practice and view Physio First as the “go to” organisation.



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Through our Data for Impact project and our MRM system we are confident we can provide 'evidence' based upon the data we collect that demonstrates 'cost-effectiveness', giving us valuable information to present to the marketplace – making us an organisation to which external stakeholders are now listening to. This remains our priority between July 2016 and December 2017.

Goal 8: Increase available resource by exploring and creating mutually beneficial collaboration with individuals / organisations.

By carefully selecting strategically and culturally aligned partners we are building partnerships and alliances of commercial and strategic value. This began in June 2015 and we actively continue this now.

Goal 9: Investigate, so that we are able to understand, explain and judge the:

- Potential impact of co-operatives, i.e. physio owned / controlled business entities
- Elements of real branding that incorporate measured quality and competence

Here we want to ensure private physio-owned networks come into existence and are able to compete in the marketplace with consistent, predictable, sustained and measurable quality. The journey to fulfilling this goal was begun in earnest in March 2016 and is actively being pursued now with a view to implementation as soon as is practically possible.

4. Our culture explained

Our culture expresses our values and represents the standard of behaviour against which we are to be judged and against which we judge others. We first published it in 2012 and we strive to live up to it in everything we do every day.

We need to be able to feel enough synergy reflected by any potential commercial partner for us to be able to work with them. “Doing business through relationships – through respect, no blame, good communication, structure and planning.”

Respect: We believe in showing total respect for others, whether our volunteers or our employed office team. This means behaving with integrity and helping others to feel valued all of the time.



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No blame: We accept that anyone can make a mistake but that we have to demonstrate trust to empower – trust in a person’s honesty and in a person’s competence – and operating a no blame culture is empowering. Our aim is to respond to mistakes by offering help and support, and not to blame.

Communication: We value good communication and we always strive to give clarity and context, to proactively listen, look at others’ viewpoints and provide an environment of openness, trust and positivity.

Structure: We have three structural elements each of which have equal importance.

- 1. Operational:** Our Big 5 unique member benefits supported by our education programme, our publications, our annual conference as well by the advice and support we provide.
- 2. Strategic:** To consider and plan our future and continuously monitor our progress against our business plan.
- 3. Support services:** From well-planned office procedures, to our meeting etiquette that is solely based on our culture, to team building appraisals, to elegantly simple management accounts, to role defining job profiles. Every management tool we have is designed to make us as fit for purpose as possible.

Planning: Through detailed planning of our business we reduce risk, frustration, conflict and misunderstandings. Planning, coupled with our culture of no blame, good communication, and structure enables us to form and nurture successful commercial strategic relationships.

5. Our executive described

We have 9 members who make up our Physio First executive committee and another 3 who sit with and advise them.

Our executive committee meets four times a year.

It is our executive’s role to lead our organisation in response to our members’ needs and views set against our current strategic purpose to champion evidence-based cost effective private physiotherapy with Physio First members in the changing healthcare marketplace.

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6. The role of our Hon Commercial Officer

Thank you so much for reading all the way to the bottom.

The role of Hon Commercial Officer, in addition to being an executive committee member and thus to help lead Physio First is to “champion the implementation of our commercial strategy and to contribute to our capacity and performance”.

This means that it is my role, with the support of our full time Commercial Support Administrator Amy Ross, to be available to spend time with you.

We already have formal strategic commercial relationships with:

- Painless Practice
- Online Ergonomics
- Patterson Medical
- Physiotec
- Physiotools
- Towergate Professional Risks
- Vivomed

and what we call a “transformational relationship” with Blue Zinc, which is managed by our Chairman.

Our definition of a commercial strategic relationship as set out in our commercial strategy is one “where our Hon Commercial Officer is satisfied that the individual or organisation has sufficient strategic and cultural synergy and 3 elements i.e. resource for Physio First, a mutually agreed realistic commercial outcome for our commercial partner and a benefit for our members that will help them on their journey to our Goal 9 and our intent and that our Executive has sanctioned”.

So, if you think you and your organisation are interested in discussing a commercial strategic relationship with Physio First then please do get in touch with Amy and/or I. Believe it or not, we would love to talk to you!

Best wishes

Karen Willcock

Hon Commercial Officer

Physio First

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