

# Recession Proofing your Practice

No one can deny the economy is tight at the moment and if the Australian economy isn't technically in recession, it's certainly showing all the signs of it. So what does it mean for us in chiropractic?

As small business people it may mean that the patients/consumers we work with are less keen to spend than they have been over the last few years. However, the experience over previous recessions suggests that chiropractic practices may be in a better position than most businesses. In speaking about this with Dr John Hinwood, he related that in previous recessions (in the last two economic downturns in the US) that healthcare rose on average 29%! So maybe this is the dawning of a golden age!

When surfing around the Internet, it becomes clear why this may be. In an article in the on-line versions of "Growing Wealth" magazine, which outlines companies that do well in a recession, John T. Hiatt noted that "health care companies generally do well because in a recession people get sick just as much – and sometimes more – than during boom



periods... Plus, as Baby Boomers age, the market promises to grow larger for products and services that help people live longer and more comfortably". Hiatt also noted "service businesses do better in recessions or downturns because their gross profit margins are higher, compared with companies that make a product or carry inventory".

So what should we do to recession-proof our practices? Research by leading Management Consultants, McKinsey & Co,

examined companies that came out of the last recession in a dominant position. Their findings were that these organisations had a few common characteristics. Those most applicable to chiropractic practice were:

1. The successful ones kept marketing their companies, the less successful ones tried to cut costs by cutting their marketing budgets.
2. The successful ones focused on improving loyalty by improving customer service.
3. The successful ones invested in training and development.

In that sense, it's perfect timing that this year sees the return of the Parker Seminar to Australia in partnership with the Australian Spinal Research Foundation. It's an opportunity to invest in your training and development, improve your skills in marketing your practice and teach you and your team to upgrade your customer service skills.

The line up of speakers this year includes many of the masters of practice growth from the chiropractic profession, experts in exceptional service and care as well as leaders in technique, neurology and science.

This year's Parker Seminar sees the return of Parker favourites from the last few Parker seminars such as Drs Fabrizio Mancini, Jim Sigafosse, James Chestnut, Gilles Lamarche and Michael Hall.



It is also the first visit in a number of years for Dr Charles Ward and Bill Esteb who have been long time favourites of the chiropractic profession in Australia.

There are also some new faces in the line up including Drs Matthew McCoy (Editor of two chiropractic journals), Laura Hanson (paediatric neurology), Carol Ann Malizia (practice and personal growth), CA trainer extraordinaire Brandi MacDonald and Kent Greenawalt (businessman and philanthropist). The theme for the seminar is "Mission Possible" and it promises to be an extraordinary opportunity to recession proof your practice!

Parker Seminar Melbourne 2009 will be held at the brand new Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on July 31, August 1 & 2. Mark your diary and register on line at [www.spinalresearch.com.au](http://www.spinalresearch.com.au) or by calling the Australian Spinal Research Foundation (07) 3808 4098.

<http://www.growingwealthmag.com/?p=1274>  
Richard Dobbs, Tomas Karakolev, Rishi Raj, McKinsey on Finance: Perspectives on Corporate Finance and Strategy, Number 23, Spring 2007, McKinsey & Company available at [corporatefinance.mckinsey.com/\\_downloads/knowledge/mckinsey\\_on\\_finance/MoF\\_Issue\\_25.pdf](http://corporatefinance.mckinsey.com/_downloads/knowledge/mckinsey_on_finance/MoF_Issue_25.pdf)