

THE POINT

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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE

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- **Our Industry Mourns; A Memorial for Mark—p. 8**
- **The Importance of Downsizing—p.10**

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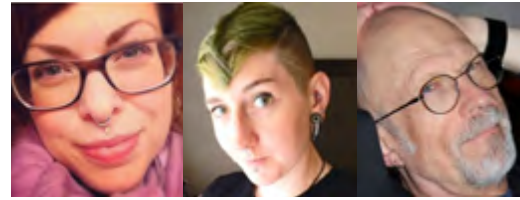


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FROM THE EDITORS



**KENDRA BERNDT
MARINA PECORINO
JIM WARD**
The Point Editors

• Kendra Jane B

We are in a world where we double tap dozens of times a day, use our smart devices to track the most minute details of our days, and start to sweat at the thought of no wifi. In a relatively short amount of time our industry has embraced technology. We as piercers know what an important role social media and technological advances have on our jobs. As someone that has been given the good fortune of being able to reach many of my peers on a regular basis; I want to take this opportunity to hopefully provide you all with for some food for thought. A few “rules” if you will to navigate the waters of the tech ocean we are all trying to stay afloat in.

To be engaged in ones work, ones passion to apply oneself fully and wholly is an amazing thing. This used to mean spending hours pouring over books, old letters, even microfiche, or (yikes) actually talking to people. The art of the spoken word is no longer what it was. The internet has made so much possible. With information a click away, one can fulfill every need and want for knowledge in seconds enabling our passions to ignite and take off. The flip side to this 24/7 access to internet anonymity (you can become

someone you are not, omit the parts of your person at will, or remain completely anonymous) is that the rules of social engagement seem to be faltering; no tone or body language to accompany it. In this issue, you’ll find an article by Miro Hernandez explaining how to put your best foot forward while communicating online.

When I was younger my mom often told me if I had nothing nice to say I was to say nothing at all. As much as it may pain me, I have to admit my mom was right. This statement has saved feelings from being hurt, friendships from being ruined, and embarrassing things from happening. Inevitably, we all face some form of negative online criticism in our professional lives. Courtney Jane Maxwell has shared some tips to help you stay cool and collected when dealing with a bad review on a social media platform.

We live in a world where we are force fed the idea that more is better. I firmly and truly believe moderation is the key, not just when it comes to the donuts I eat or the coffee I drink, but very importantly in the social media I use. I choose to be choosey which means I do not use every type of new and fancy social media that pops up. I do not snap, tweet, and in fact I do not spend the same amount of time tumbling or booking that I used to. I have chosen the types of technology that work best for me and I make them work as effectively and efficiently as possible. This means that as much as technology has become part of every facet of my day to day life, it is not my life from day to day.

Read on to see how technological advances have helped to make our industry safer for clients and piercers alike; how the etiquette of more formal times in the past still have a place in our conversations on the internet today, and don’t forget to double tap and share this publication.

• Marina Pecorino

I initially struggled to come up with direction for this editorial, partly because I feel that I’m somewhat of an outsider. I’m connected to the industry, obviously, but for now, I live my days in corporate America. On an issue geared toward technology in the industry, my brain immediately jumped to marketing, as this was one of my primary business roles during my time as a piercer. Honestly though, I think the biggest impact technology has for me currently is allowing me to connect so easily with all of you.

Throughout my life, I’ve found it difficult to stay in touch with friends when there is physical distance; I have great intentions, but my follow through can be lacking. Social media allows communication with my distant friends to become seamlessly integrated into my day-to-day life. I can now feel connected and do my introverted “lurk and like” while allowing people I care about to do the same.

Recently, I was trying to explain to my partner how supportive and appreciative the volunteer family is, even though many of us have only met in person a handful of times, if that. We’re not a daily face to face interaction in each other’s lives, but we still feel like family. I believe this to be true throughout the body modification community, which is one of the things I love most about having chosen this path. In many ways, my continued involvement in the industry is made possible because of the technology we have at our disposal.

It amazes me to realize that, as a result of my involvement with this industry, I’ve developed friendships with awe-inspiring people all over the world. Unfortunately, the last year seems to have dealt a lot of hard blows to our community. Having friends that span the far reaches of the globe can be extremely tough when someone is going through a particularly hard experience, and all I want to do is give them a hug. Technology makes connecting over these vast distances a little less difficult and allows us to show our support, even when physical proximity isn’t possible.

I have to admit that this editorial started out as a quick comment in the APP volunteers group, while curled up in bed. I only got a few words in, when I suddenly realized that what I wanted to express is my appreciation

for the chance to feel so close, despite being so far away. What started as a quick comment, ended up evolving into a rough draft for an editorial. It’s pretty incredible what you can create with technology.

• Jim Ward

One of the joys of having been a part of this industry since its beginning has been seeing the technological advances that have brought it to such an astounding degree of professionalism.

Young piercers have no idea what things were like when Gauntlet was born in 1975. For starters, imagine a world without the cell phone, personal computer, and the internet. As the old cigarette commercial said, “You’ve come a long way, baby.”

When I first began my piercing business, I had to use a pressure cooker to sterilize instruments, later graduating to ever more sophisticated autoclaves. With the advent of the Statim, you are now blessed not only with more reliable sterilization, but are able to accomplish it within mere minutes.

The first piercing needles were veterinary hypodermics with the syringe couplings cut off. We sterilized and re-used them over and over while they became duller with every use and often had to be used with a needle pusher. Nowadays, you have access to disposable needles that are so sharp they pierce the toughest of tissue like butter.

Even though I made every effort to provide the highest quality body jewelry, in those early days we had little understanding as to which materials were most suitable for the purpose of piercing. The industry is now blessed with an abundance of jewelry choices produced to the most stringent of manufacturing standards.

Many of you are familiar with Gauntlet’s publication *Piercing Fans International Quarterly (PFIQ)*. Thanks to the personal computer and the marvel of desktop publishing, I’ve been able to say goodbye to the typewriter, the T-square, the drafting board, and all the art supplies that were used for years to produce the magazine. With a few mouse clicks, design and layout has become a breeze.

Technology is here to stay, and will continue to benefit our profession. I only hope that one day human kindness and compassion will catch up.

On another subject, for the last several issues of *The Point* I have participated as one of the Managing Editors. With this issue my title changes and I become the publication’s Art Director. I will still be an occasional Contributing Editor, and while I’m busy doing the layout and design, I get to edit the editors. Over time I also hope to be able to bring some fresh design ideas to these pages. Enjoy!





THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

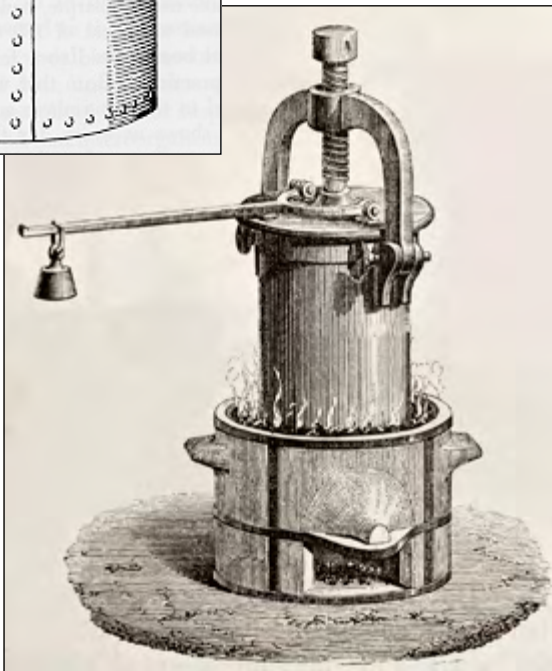
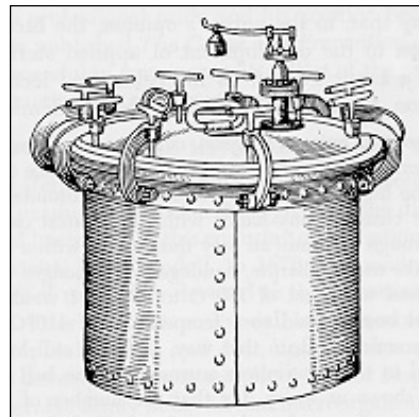
TECHNOLOGY for infection prevention:

Why the introduction
of more technological advances
help to reduce cross contamination risks

Brian Skellie
APP President

The benefits of thousands of years of advancements in infection control are applied and built upon daily: [a brief history of sterilization.](#)

Asepsis is the most effective technological advancement for a purposeful reduction of microbes to an irreducible minimum. This begins with policy and training, and



Top, Chamberland's Autoclave (1880), the first steam sterilizer patterned after Papin's "digester" (1680), the first pressure cooker.



The end of the operating theater

follows through with checklists, review, and reminders for implementation. Primum non nocere = above all else we should do no harm.

Physics was the first step in decontamination, using thermal energy: fire and the effects of the sun. Advances have been made in [E-beam](#) and radiation, both ionizing and non-ionizing, for sterilization. As a result, new equipment and supplies are now available providing an almost infinite sterilization shelf life. Part of what was found useful from the sun, apart from drying, was the power of short wavelength [ultraviolet](#) light to disrupt the DNA of cells. This has been harnessed for disinfection of exposed environmental surfaces, air, and water, but this form of sterilization is not appropriate for initial piercing jewelry. Further study of properties of the sun have resulted in functional plasma etching and cleaning processes and [H₂O₂ gas plasma sterilization](#). At some point, gadgets for disinfection of procedure rooms such as [UV-C](#) robots and hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) vapor foggers may have an application in scale for our trade.

Chemistry was the next big step in the fight against preventable iatrogenic infection with germicides, from chlorine solutions and carbolic acid to EO gas. Recognizing the potential for stopping infection transmission during proce-

dures by thoroughly cleaning the worker's hands and the subject site with a germicidal product was an enormous step that has become part of our established thinking. Materials themselves can be used to leverage the natural properties of copper (Cu⁺) and silver (Ag) that make touch and transfer surfaces inhospitable to microbes, and other embedded compounds have been developed for similar purposes. Some even work with nanotech surface treatments.

Instrument cleaning technology is constantly improving on the basic two fronts of physical action and chemical reaction. Advancements in products safe for the worker and environmentally friendly have brought forth alkaline or enzymatic detergent, or peracetic acid options.

Consumables have long been a source of worker and client protection and potential oversight. Gloves and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) do create a barrier when used correctly, but do not take the place of adequate hand hygiene and application of asepsis. For further protection against exposure to environmental hazards, wearable vapor detectors can be used to alert the worker of chemical hazards from cleaning and disinfecting products. Essential detectors for sterilization or cleaning parameters should be used for validation of each process. Test Soils with protein detection for washing instruments, even manual cleaning should be tested, and Chemical and regular Biological Indicators for sterilization loads.

Cleaning appliances have made validation tests easier and more repeatable, with the availability of small automated instrument washers and medical and dental ultrasonic cleaners. Our last line of defense against cross contamination comes from our environmental air quality, which can be improved with air cleaners equipped with HEPA filtration and UV, thermal or plasma disinfection, and floor scrubbers to vacuum up the dust, wash and dry the floor automatically and robotically.

The health and safety of our clientele and personnel depend on adequate sterilization and disinfection. The advancements listed have changed the way we do our jobs and protect ourselves from risk. As we look towards the future it is impossible to know the impact further technological advancements will have, but they will undoubtedly continue to change how we practice our trade.



Top to bottom, Antonj van Leeuwenhoek's microscope (1683); Joseph Lister's antiseptic sprayer (1867); outmoded surgical equipment from the late 1800s.



OUR INDUSTRY MOURNS; MEMORIAL FOR MARK

RYAN OUELLETTE
Precision Body Arts

Mark Siekierski on titanium:

'Gold is not an upgrade from titanium. Titanium cannot be upgraded; it is its own upgrade. That last part makes no sense, but titanium cares not what the Homo sapiens brain can or cannot comprehend. Titanium is named after the Elder Gods of Greece, the Titans. TITANIUM HAS A HIGH STRENGTH TO WEIGHT RATIO. You can make a jet fighter with titanium; a jet fighter made of gold would be soft, heavy, and wouldn't fly.'



Writing something like this is never easy. How can you really express your memories and feelings for someone with a few lines of text?

Mark Siekierski is someone we have all been impacted by in this industry. Not all of us talked to him in person, or even on the phone, but he left his fingerprint on our industry every day through his hard work and dedication.

The Siekierski family has been making body jewelry for this industry since the Gauntlet days; today most people would know their product by the name [NeoMetal](#). I can't remember exactly when I started ordering jewelry from NeoMetal, but my guess would be the early 2000s. That was a time when a substantial order for me was \$200, rather than \$2,000. I would call the NeoMetal line with so many questions that a very nice woman named Sue would hand the phone off to her much more patient son, Mark. After a few months of "NeoMetal, this is Mark" I became accustomed to hearing his voice when I called.

Over the years of the occasional chat after an order or stopping by his booth during the Expo I'd say we became friends. I'm very comfortable with nerd culture, and Mark certainly would fall into that classification. He would give me that wry smirk and force me to give him a split finger Spock-esque high five. At a conference full of 1,000 people being "cool", it was refreshing to have someone more interested in teaching me the Dothraki language (yeah, from *Game of Thrones*) than in hitting the bar.

He always had such a calm demeanor. It was like he was researching us so he could write a book someday. He was quiet and composed, but

was always quick to crack a sarcastic joke if the right person came within ear shot. He liked to tease piercers by giving them a heads up about a new color or line being released soon. Mark had a gift for giving just enough information to get them interested; just a taste, but never enough. It was easy to get frustrated at how well he could keep a secret until the next Conference, when you would finally get a peek at what NeoMetal was working on.

He really cared about our industry. One thing that always stuck out in my memory was how he seemed to have a photographic memory for any shop anywhere in the world using their jewelry. Someone would come up to the NeoMetal table and say "Hi, I'm from X shop" and he would immediately know the city and start calling them by name. He never talked down to anyone or shrugged anyone off. If they bought one piece or one thousand he was appreciative that someone out there in the world cared enough about what his family was making and wanted to offer it to their clients. At a conference where companies have huge flashy booths fifty feet long, it was really endearing [to see Mark](#) and his brother-in-law, John, standing behind one small table, enthusiastically showing off every piece of threadless jewelry they make.



When NeoMetal started vending at the BMXnet Conference, it was Mark who went to Germany to showcase their line. It was great seeing him interact with piercers in that kind of environment. People who only got to see threadless jewelry online had the opportunity to meet someone from the company and have every facet of their line explained to them. Seeing piercers carrying away their first NeoMetal starter pack always put a big smile on Mark's face. Not because of potential income, as I'm sure most regular customers know NeoMetal has grown so fast they sometimes struggle to keep up with demand. Mark was happy because he took pride in the respect his family's company has earned worldwide.

At the end of the day he would want to sneak out to a quiet dinner with a few friends, rather than party with the throngs. I was fortunate enough to share a few meals with him and it never felt like I was being wined and dined by someone trying to make a sale. It was just dinner with a friend. No industry talk, just Star Trek or video games or whatever came up. I feel like I'm rambling. Like I said, it is hard to make a salient point when you're emotional.

Over the coming weeks and months be patient with NeoMetal. I know we all stress out over wait times; we stress out when we don't have the post size we need. At the end of the day just remember what is really important to you, and know what it really means to not have something, or someone, around when it really matters. Every time you bend that pin for tension, every time you snap an end piece into place, remember Mark. Because he remembered every one of us like we were his family too.



THE IMPORTANCE OF DOWNSIZING

CODY VAUGHN
APP Vice President



Figure 1

You'll find quite a few piercers who have been piercing for many years aren't big fans of using really thin jewelry in cartilage piercings.



Figure 2

So you have likely heard reputable piercers cover a lot of things when it comes to the healing of your body piercing. Aftercare, jewelry quality, etc. An often overlooked step that is critical to the overall healing of your piercing is downsizing. For this writing, let's focus on cartilage piercings as this is an issue that pops up frequently.

Not all, but most piercings initially require jewelry that is longer in length or wider in diameter in order to accommodate for the swelling. While some may find this longer length annoying, it's a necessary precaution to prevent jewelry from embedding into tissue once swelling takes place. Figure 1 shows an example of a freshly pierced tragus.

You may think that jewelry looks awfully long, right? Well after 2-3 weeks that flatback was sitting perfectly flush to either side of this client's tragus due to the swelling that occurs with cartilage piercings. So we need room for swelling, but excessively long jewelry is problematic as well. Jewelry that is too long will get caught and snagged much easier, causing irritation and a longer dragged out healing time. This is another reason why going to a reputable piercer is so important.

Not all, but most piercings initially require jewelry that is longer in length or wider in diameter in order to accommodate for the swelling.

With most cartilage piercings, longer jewelry being left in for too long can cause the piercing channel to shift its angle. The two most critical (and popular) piercings that come to mind are helix and forward helix piercings (see Figure 2).

At first glance you would probably just assume the top two piercings were done crooked. While that's possible, for this writing we will assume they were pierced correctly and perpendicular to the tissue (straight).

See that bump on the second from top cartilage piercing? That's not an infection, or keloid, or scar. That's an irritation bump that is most likely there due to the extreme angle the piercing has taken. That angle places pressure on the piercing channel, causing the dreaded cartilage bump.

There are many factors that could explain the top two cartilage piercings having such extreme angles. Sleeping on the piercing at night, catching and snagging it, etc. These things are all the more problematic with jewelry that has been left long for too long (not downsized soon enough).

You'll find quite a few piercers who have been piercing for many years aren't big fans of using really thin jewelry in cartilage piercings. And rightfully so. While thicker jewelry can still angle if not downsized, they generally tend to be a little more forgiving as the slightly thicker gauge can provide a bit more stability.

With the growing common practice of 18g jewelry being used in cartilage piercings, having regular checkups with your piercer is crucial so snug fitting jewelry can be put in as soon as the piercing is ready. Here's an example of a client who had a forward helix piercing done with longer jewelry, then later stopped in for a snugger fitting piece as the swelling had gone away at this point (see Figure 3).



Figure 3

So how soon after getting your piercing can you get a snugger fitting piece of jewelry put in? That's the tough part. It can vary greatly from one client/piercing to the other. After a few weeks, some people are ready. For others it can take well over a month or two.

Missing that open window when swelling has come down can be problematic. Now that longer jewelry may get caught or snagged on something, causing you to have to go through a period of swelling all over again (and delaying you in being able to downsize).

This is exactly why frequent follow ups with your piercer is essential to make sure you don't waste your money on a quality piercing with quality jewelry only to have it angle so bad you no longer find it aesthetically pleasing.

And one last thing, because this comes up all the time: When you come in for a shorter piece of jewelry, of course you have to pay for it. Jewelry is never free. Please say it with me: "I understand I will have to pay for jewelry when I am requesting new jewelry."

Okay. I feel better now. I hope some of you piercing enthusiasts find this information helpful!

Editor's Note: This is reprinted from a July 15, 2015 Tumblr post.



COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

MIRO HERNANDEZ
APP Public Relations Director

With the advent of the internet and World Wide Web, times are quickly changing for all. You literally have easy access to the entire world at your fingertips. Long gone are the days of AOL and slow dial-up connections. In fact you don't even need a computer or a laptop to access your email or the World Wide Web, and it is no longer necessary to hear the screeches and squeals from your modem just to find out "you've got mail." It is all right at your fingertips on your nearest smart device. As the landscape of the World Wide Web started taking shape, turning to the internet for all your questions and needs quickly became the new norm. "Just Google it" is now the answer to any question that is posed and the internet is full of plenty of answers, both good and bad.

Along with the rise of the internet, new and different platforms have risen as a means for businesses to promote themselves. Shelling out hundreds of dollars for an ad in the YellowPages is no longer necessary when you can get free promotion through the internet. When an individual is seeking an establishment that offers a specific type of service, websites like *Google*, *Yelp*, and *Facebook* seem to be their first stop. Do a great job and offer the highest quality of service and people are quick to sing your praises, loud and proud, through digital reviews. However, along with the good comes the bad. If they are quick to be loud and proud with a review of an exceptional service, they'll be even quicker and louder when the service that is offered does not



meet their expectations. Having a strong social media presence has the power to either make or break businesses these days. In the case of a negative review, it is essential to be prepared to respond politely and professionally. You may be faced with a firestorm on social media, lashing out based on an inappropriate comment. Understanding the tool you are using is imperative to the integrity of your business.

First and foremost, it is absolutely imperative to understand, that once it goes out into the World Wide Web, it has been put out for all eyes to see and will become a permanent part of the recorded history, even if you delete it. The most common fallacy that I see and hear repeatedly is "but it's my personal page. I'm free to do as I please with it." While this is technically true, personal page or not, there is no disclaimer to let viewers know this. It is not shrouded by a safety web or warnings. By using your "personal" page as a means to promote yourself and your business, you are providing your viewers with a direct reflection of who you are and the nature of your business. In essence, the internet has made us our own bosses and masters of our own domain.

A perfect example of your personal page not being so personal and the rather serious ramifications that can result is the infamous screen-

cap. How many times have you witnessed, in a public or private forum, a screencap of an image taken from a "personal" page or a "private" forum, used against someone maliciously? Not so personal or private anymore, huh?

Many of us, at one point or another in our life, have been told there are three things that you don't talk about: religion, politics, and money. While this may not hold as much weight these days as in days of yore, there is still something to be taken from this. Personally, I think that freedom of speech is a wonderful thing, and having the privilege and ability to speak on topics that we are passionate about is what defines us. That being said, there is absolutely a time and place for this to happen, and a social media outlet used to promote a business is not the place to do so.

These days, we live in a society where people are very easily offended and feelings can get hurt. I'm a firm believer that the greatest thing the internet has given us is "butt-hurt". That "friend" you thought was really cool and understood "where you're coming from" may take offense to your thoughts and feelings on a particular topic that you may have felt was a non-issue. Not only have you lost a friend, but that person could've been your biggest supporter. The person that was initially quick to sing your praises is now telling the world how horrible of a person you are and telling others to no longer frequent your establishment, possibly over something as benign as not seeing eye to eye on whether New York style pizza is better than Chicago style pizza. Simple rule of thumb: if the topic has potential to offend and you can't handle yourself in a manner that goes hand in hand with how you want your business to be perceived, don't post it.

In Don Miguel Ruiz's bestseller, *The Four Agreements*, one of the agreements was "be impeccable with your word." While the meaning of this can be open to interpretation, I will apply it in a manner that is in line with what has been brought up thus far. When we are communicating with individuals directly in person (verbal communication), there are many things we can pick up on indirectly through the individual's nonverbal communication: body language, eye contact, voice inflection, pause and timing, etc. The phrase "you're not saying anything, but you're telling me everything" will always

come to mind when I think of the importance of nonverbal communication. At this point, if you haven't caught on yet, you're probably asking yourself what this has to do with internet etiquette and being impeccable with your word. It has absolutely everything to do with it! These nonverbal identifiers can not be translated through text on a screen. An individual reading your words and seeing your emojis has to infer the tone of the message you are trying to convey. It can be difficult to distinguish whether you are being serious, malicious, sarcastic, or genuinely concerned. The overall message is often left open and subject to interpretation by whomever's eyes are reading it. This is where it is of utter importance to be clear and concise with the point you are trying to make; in other words, be impeccable with your word.

While I make no claims to be an expert in the field of internet communication, this is all based off of my personal observations and thoughts on the subject matter. My background is in speech communications with an emphasis on interpersonal communication, and the lack thereof, is something that I feel very strongly about. If you are touting and claiming yourself to be a professional, do so in a manner that is according to and in line with your claims in all aspects of your life, even the internet. Some people may say that the internet is not real life and should therefore not be taken too seriously. However, when it has the potential to impact your way of life, the internet should absolutely be taken seriously.





RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE CRITICISM ONLINE

COURTNEY JANE MAXWELL
Saint Sabrina's



The internet has become such an integral part of our marketing, allowing our clients to leave feedback about our service. Sooner or later, we all encounter one of the least fun parts of the piercing gig: dealing with a bad review or negative feedback/criticism on our social media. These reviews can be true, false, simple misunderstandings, and everything in between. Some will be incredibly easy to deal with or even ignore, “they wouldn’t pierce me because I was drunk—how rude!” Others can make you and/or your studio look bad, especially if you do not take the opportunity to reply. On many review websites, you can reply publicly to the original poster. When responding to negative feedback publicly, the first thing to consider is that this response is therefore not only for the original poster, but for the public who may be reading later. It then becomes wise to consider both perspectives (the current client as well as future ones) when writing your replies; your response doubles as a chance to show the public how you handle business. Do you

handle complaints with integrity? What kind of customer service do you give? Do you keep your cool when people are being unruly? What type of policies do you have, and why? Your response is a reflection of your business, and it can have a dramatic impact on how readers perceive the negative review itself. When deciding how to respond, having a solid idea of how you want to present yourself/your studio to the public is extremely beneficial. Using your company’s mission statement as a guideline for this will point you in the right direction. It can also serve as something to refer back to if you are unsure what the tone of your reply should be. It also keeps you from kicking yourself later. Having a well laid out plan from the beginning makes it much easier to navigate the trickier situations in business. Embarrassing online interactions from the past have a way of sticking around, so it’s always good to think about potential readers to see how any online interactions may come back to haunt you. There are many different ways to run a piercing studio

and handle clients, but consistency in how you handle difficult online situations will be much more beneficial long term than playing into the negative spiral that internet arguments can create. Once you have read a critical or negative review, take some time to process what was said. There are a lot of things to consider, and jumping to reply quickly can lead to an overly emotional response. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Criticisms can often be dramatizations; it is habit for many people to play up a story in their favor. The perspective from the critic can make this “version” of the story seem like it is accurate. On the other hand, sometimes people are just angry and really do try to spin a situation in a spiteful way. As with any conflict, accepting the way people may think and express themselves is important in allowing you to understand the situation. You can’t change people or how they choose to express themselves, and getting angry at the way they react is a waste of time. In the end it is counter-productive to your goals. Attempting to understand them better may allow you to handle the situation more effectively.
- Think like the client. Walk yourself through the details of their criticism and genuinely try to consider how the experience may have unfolded from their perspective.
- Never reply without getting the full story! Speak directly with any staff members involved in the situation that led to the criticism. Also be prepared to consider that your staff/co-workers are just as human as clients. Their perspectives may create some bias in the situation as well, even if they are trying to avoid that.
- Don’t assume that the customer is always right, OR that the customer is always wrong. Keep an open mind and remember to see past the presentation and look for the content of the complaint.
- Don’t make the mistake of invalidating someone’s experience; it’s a sure fire way to offend people. No matter how inappropriately someone may react, telling them “your feelings aren’t real” is not going to get you anywhere you want to go. For example: “We are really sorry if our policy about handling jewelry made you feel singled out. We have policies in place specifically to keep the shop as clean as possible for ourselves and our visitors. It may seem a little odd at first, but we like to take every precaution when it comes to our clients safety!” Rather than, “our counter person wasn’t being rude. He was just doing his job.”

- Don’t call someone a liar, even if it seems like they are lying. It makes people furious, and if somehow you are wrong, it makes you look extremely unprofessional. If you have solid evidence that what they are saying isn’t true, present the evidence and ask if perhaps there was some confusion. Giving people the benefit of the doubt is often the only way to “win” in this situation. If you think it’s pertinent to make it clear that something isn’t true, stating it in a way that doesn’t direct the statement at the client is a really great way to get the point across while still sounding professional. For example: “We have a very strict policy that nobody gets pierced without doing paperwork,” rather than, “There is no way you got pierced here without doing paperwork.”
- Remember not to disclose information about your client and/or their visit that should be considered private. Even if there are no legal repercussions, it will make potential clients reading it very uneasy to think that you could be provoked into sharing their personal information where the public can see. If details of this nature are necessary, it may be appropriate to reply publicly that, out of respect for the client’s privacy, you would prefer to contact them directly to discuss the matter. It assures that onlookers won’t think that you simply ignored the situation. In the end if communication like this isn’t your strong suit, I suggest taking time to read other people’s reviews. Check out reviews from people who you respect and shops whose business approach you admire. Then read reviews from random other studios as well; finding examples of what you don’t like can be just as helpful. When you find ones you like, analyze what you like about them and consider why you think it was an effective response. You won’t have the benefit of knowing the entire story behind the situation, but it’s still a very helpful way to prepare yourself and get an idea for how you want to handle that type of situation. I also suggest looking for places where the original poster can publicly reply to the person’s responses. It’s good to see how clients react to these responses, as it can give you clues on which approaches work best for the type of results you would like to see in a particular type of interaction. Developing a good method for handling negativity online is an incredibly valuable skill in our profession, although it can be a challenge. While this subject could easily become an entire novel, the points highlighted here are intended to help steer you towards better results when managing online reviews. Here’s to not having to use these skills too often!

TECH TIPS FOR THE STUDIO



JULIE TAYLOR & APRIL THOMAS
Outreach Committee

We don't use machines to create beautiful piercings, but for most of us, being a piercer involves much more than the installation of jewelry. As our jobs as body piercers become more multi faceted it is now common place to find more efficient and economical ways of doing all of the parts that now make up our job. This is where we can use technology; it can make many of our tasks more efficient and improve workflow; the integration of multiple technological tools can provide even more benefits. In this article we will take a quick look at some of the ways piercers can currently use technology in their studios to improve efficiency.

Point of sale system (POS)

- Create your next order automatically based on custom targets
- See inventory instantly
- Manual counting of each piece is required less often
- See sales in real time from home or away
- Track a variety of statistics, from best sellers to busiest time of day
- Use reporting features to identify business opportunities or trends

Client tracking software (sometimes integrated with POS)

- Set up and maintain client reward program
- Single out groups for marketing (birthdays, top gold purchasers in the last 6 months, all nostril piercings this month, etc)
- Generate contact list for an email newsletter
- Send reminders for check ups and other appointments
- Access sizes, wish lists, dates of services and other details for individual clients
- Commit phone clients by booking and scheduling appointments

Accounting software (also may integrate with POS)

- Track even more statistics
- Have year end figures ready at tax time
- All calculations are done by the software
- Handle payroll



Digital waivers

- Nothing to file or store, saving time and space

CCTV cameras

- Watch business from afar
- Added security

Online appointment booking (sometimes integrated with POS)

- Access schedules from home or away
- Clients can book themselves, reducing phone calls and emails

Social media

- Lower priced or free, targeted, advertising
- Easily respond to clients in a frequently used platform
- Scheduling software allows the streamlining of posts to multiple platforms over multiple days in one session.

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SUPPLY DISTRIBUTOR

Website

- Showcase all your info and portfolios together with aftercare, driving directions, links and more
- Collect data from here to shape marketing efforts
- Digitally book appointments to commit online shoppers
- Integrate with search engines for higher SEO results
- Integrate with social media (provide links between)

Cloud storage & file transfer systems (Google Drive, Dropbox, etc)

- Share photos and documents among team members
- Work on projects from home
- Less (or no) risk of losing work as a result of hardware failure

Google maps

- Show business by name
- Makes clients' experiences easier
- Reduce calls for directions

Mobile phone

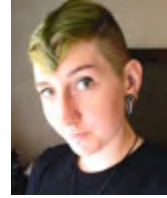
- Take photos to help line up paired piercings, show clients ear or other placements that are hard for them to see, as well as portfolio photos.
- Access your portfolio anywhere

- Use software for many of the above tasks while at home or away, including POS, CCTVs, Google, social media, and more (this article was written entirely with the Google Docs application).

Each one of these categories of technology could have an entire issue devoted to it. This quick reference was not meant to provide you with the information to best implement and utilize each of these technologies within your shops and business models. Instead, we hope this quick reference will help readers determine which technologies could make a meaningful impact in their studio. Hopefully this reference guide will allow you to isolate an area or procedure that can be improved upon and give you the tools to begin the research process.



ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGIES



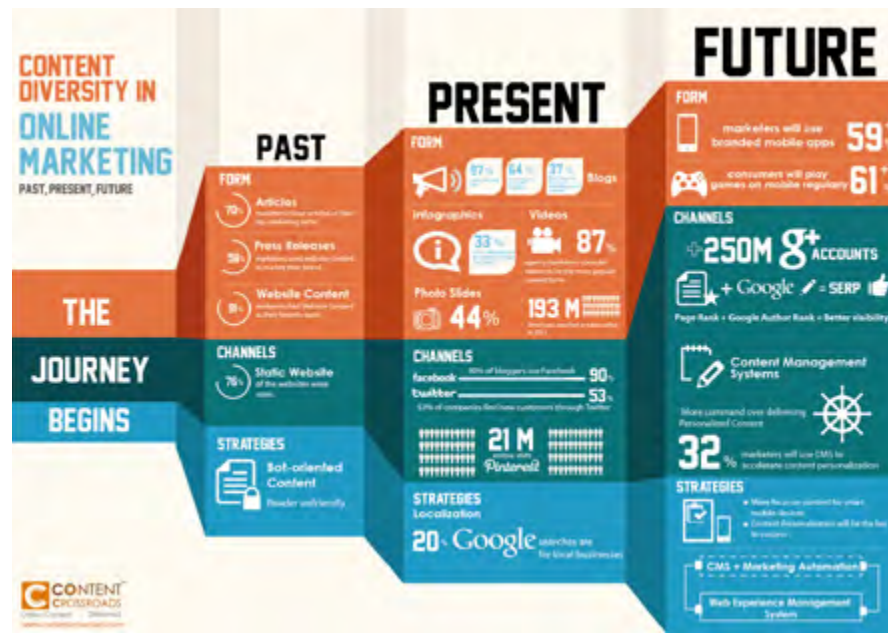
MARINA PECORINO
The Point Editor

It's been a while since I have had the chance to browse the internet for piercing shop websites in my spare time; it's actually fairly intriguing to me. The design of marketing materials has a lot to say about how each shop is choosing to present itself to (potential) clients.

In [Issue 73](#), I shared some tips and tricks for taking [portfolio photographs](#). In this issue, I'm going to get down to business (excuse the pun #sorrynotsorry) talking about online marketing. These days, it's so easy to get sucked into the glowing screen in front of you without putting it to use as a powerful marketing tool. I'm hoping this article will help make the time you spend online for business more efficient and effective, so you can get back to posting pictures of cats.

For the sake of "print" space, I'm going to assume that most readers already have a basic grasp of marketing on social media. For those of you that feel there's more to learn, many social media platforms offer a convenient business resource guide: [Facebook Business](#), [Instagram Business](#), [Pinterest Business](#), and [Tumblr Business](#). Some of them also offer forums and communities where business users can discuss their experiences and ask questions. If you have a question about using a particular feature, there are lots of articles available directed at businesses with how-to guides like this [beginner's guide to hashtags](#).

Like anything else on the internet, a quick search for terms like "Tumblr marketing strategies" or "social media tips for small businesses"



will yield innumerable articles with a mix of good and not-so-good information. Here is a small list of my favorite Dos and Don'ts:

- **Humanity**—Have a sense of humor and try not to sound mechanical. Clients are less likely to be drawn in by a robotic message. When the media has a personality, clients are more likely to become engaged in the content. Think of those days in the studio when your personality is shining through and your clients are eating it up; the same applies to social media.
- **Diversity**—Use a mix of images, videos, and text to share all aspects of your shop with potential and returning clientele. Don't limit yourself solely to one type of post or one social media platform. Variety in advertising will

allow more chances to strike a chord with viewers. Although there is a lot to be said about automation in regards to time management, be careful about repeating the same posts over all your social media platforms. Try to cater the content to the [audience](#) and mechanics of the different platforms you're utilizing.

- **Frequency**—Post, share, and interact consistently. It is a valid use of your time to be online at work as long as you are making sure to focus your attention on the business at hand. Dedicate a few minutes of your work day to posting and responding to clients. With certain platforms, like *Facebook*, you may also choose to dedicate some time to plan and schedule posts for the upcoming week(s), spending an hour or two "in the

groove" getting it all out of the way at once.

- **Engagement**—Certain types of posts are more likely to get a wider spread of reactions from your audience. Posts with at least one image are more likely to be shared than posts without images. People are more inclined to interact with content that evokes certain emotional responses; awe, laughter, and amusement are the most likely to be shared. Unless you intend to be the epicenter of debate, it is best to stay away from controversial topics, but a well placed poll question or invitation to share a particular post can spread like wildfire. Here are a [few bites](#) of food for thought: infographics (graphic depictions of information) and listicles (those clickbait numbered lists everyone loves to hate) are the most widely shared post types. Tuesday is overall the best day to post content.

Hopefully, after reading the points above you have discovered something about social media marketing that you weren't aware of previously. That means it's as good a time as any to discuss websites and [search engine optimization](#).

Although websites have the disadvantage of associated cost (web design and development, hosting, domain registration), they have some serious advantages that aren't as feasible with their no-cost social media counterparts. The main advantage: total control over style and the inner workings. The overall appearance is certainly important if you're particular about aesthetics, and let's face it, we're in the body modification industry; how things look is pretty much our business. More importantly though, total control includes using the elements of web development to make your website easy to

find for the clients seeking your services and products; this is essentially the [basics of search engine optimization](#) (SEO).

The [total number of websites](#) currently on the World Wide Web is mind boggling, and new sites are being added every day. For this reason, search engines need a way to keep track of and catalog what's available. To do so, search engines send out [web crawlers](#) (also known as bots or spiders) to methodically index websites and return informa-

Although websites have the disadvantage of associated cost (web design and development, hosting, domain registration), they have some serious advantages that aren't as feasible with their no-cost social media counterparts.

tion to the search engines about what text and images were found on each website and where those elements were located in the coding. Search engines use this information along with complex algorithms to determine the relevant results for a search, even tailoring the results based on a particular user's past search history.

Consequently, web developers have learned how to build websites to make pertinent information more available and meaningful for web crawlers, to improve the chance that their site will have a high ranking in relevant searches. Search engines often provide guides on [improving SEO](#), but information about the algorithms used are generally kept secret to reduce exploitation by dishonest developers.

There are now more services available than ever to make web development possible for beginners. Here are a few tips to help you along the way:

- **Be honest with what you're advertising.** Despite what the name would imply, [SEO](#) isn't about catering your website to the search engines, but more about using web development tools to maximize the number of clients that find you by looking for what you're offering. By implying a level of service or product that the client won't find upon arrival, you're bound to end up with frustrated visitors writing bad reviews, rather than lifelong clientele. Therefore, it's incredibly important to be honest on your site about what your business has to offer; phrase and brand your web presence for the clients you want, but be realistic.
- **Text is important.** With the exception of [intentionally hidden content](#) (credential information, duplicate content, etc.), all text on a website is indexed by [crawlers](#). Some of this text is seen by viewers, but sites also contain a lot of text that is only visible when looking at the [source code](#). These elements only visible when looking at the coding—like [meta tags](#), [keywords](#), [alt text on images](#)—are important tools for developers to provide additional information to be crawled. There are numerous tools online to help you choose text that will attract a broad audience, like this free [keyword tool](#) with daily approximations of data, broken down by search engine and demographic information. These types of tools take some of the guesswork out of choosing what text is best to draw the most appropriate audience.
- **Images have become more powerful than ever before.** Search engines have evolved to the

point that images are now being [indexed](#), allowing users to do a search for particular type of picture, much like searching for a specific set of words or answer to a question. When your smartphone or digital camera creates an image, it assigns the image a generic filename like “IMGfivebazillion.jpg”. Renaming photos with something more descriptive and enticing like “Opal-Rose-Gold-Philtrum-Piercing.jpg” will assist web crawlers in identifying the photograph. Just make sure that the filename you choose accurately describes the image. Web developers also have the ability to add alt text, also known as alternative text, in case the image can't be loaded. Using descriptive terms in the filename and alt text will improve the chance of your image showing up in a relevant search, but it also allows users to get an idea of the subject matter in the image in cases when the image isn't visible.

- **Make your site as easy to navigate as possible.** A sitemap is essentially a blueprint of your website (generally set up in a hierarchical format), showing where certain types of information are housed on the site. It is common for web developers to make their [sitemap](#)—much like a writer composes an outline—before generating site content. Deciding the format and organization ahead of time allows a developer to determine the best layout for a website, so that similar content is together and that important information is easy to find. Once a sitemap is set up, developers essentially have a cheat sheet of which individual pages of a site will need to be built (portfolio, pricing information, aftercare,

etc.) and how those individual pages will relate to one another. Properly utilizing [internal links](#), [breadcrumbs](#), and sitemaps will assist search engines in understanding your site's navigation and help your viewers find what they're looking for.

- **Duplicate information will bog down viewers and bots.** The proper and consistent use of internal links throughout a website can make a huge impact on the user's experience and ability to navigate the site. Web developers use [anchor text](#) (this article is full of anchor text) to link text between pages or to reference outside sources rather than duplicating information. It's best to use single words or short phrases for anchor text; these words or phrases should provide a preview (or keyword) of what the link will contain. As an example, if a shop wants to include a link to a blank copy of their piercing waiver, it would be best to use the words “piercing waiver” as the anchor text. Avoid using ambiguous anchor text in sentences like “a copy of our piercing waiver can be found here” with the anchor text being “here”.

As I mentioned before, search engines use complex algorithms to take all of the elements (included the ones listed above) of a website and determine how relevant it is to a user's search. Unfortunately, there are dishonest web developers who know these tricks and will manipulate them to increase the ranking of their sites, even with searches that may not be relevant. This is precisely why [search engine penalties](#) are used to counteract potential misuse. One of these penalties, particularly common for beginners, is known as keyword stuffing. This is when a web developer

crams as many keywords into an element as possible. This isn't generally done maliciously, but in an attempt to reach all possible audiences; I have to admit that I was guilty of this early on. Instead of using “gauge”, “plug” and “stretched lobe jewelry” as keywords for the same entry, it's best to choose one term that is likely to reach a wide audience, while encouraging appropriate language. It's also a great idea to diversify terms where possible, only reusing the most important. If a particular site is especially spammy or dishonest, it can even be [de-indexed](#), meaning that it no longer appears in search results. Avoid these penalties by being conscientious during development and do research throughout the process.

The topic of online marketing is certainly not a simple one and is not something that can be learned from a single article. I have tried to provide you with a quick overview, but there is much more to learn, even on the topics introduced here. Throughout this article, I have provided additional resources, but there is far more information available, like this basic [website term glossary](#). We have the advantage of infinite access to [instructional websites](#) and tutorials available to explain the basics and more advanced techniques involved in [online marketing](#) and [web development](#). Instructional websites like these are where I have collected my knowledge over many years. If all this talk of tutorials has you excited and ready to learn, here's a great resource of [free web dev tutorials](#). I encourage you to dive in and enjoy the adventure. The greatest feature of a website is that it can be developed over time, starting off simple and small, and building into something full of information, images, and content to make your clients excited to come visit your shop.



“Essential reading...”*

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

An Intimate History of the Modern Body Piercing Movement by Jim Ward

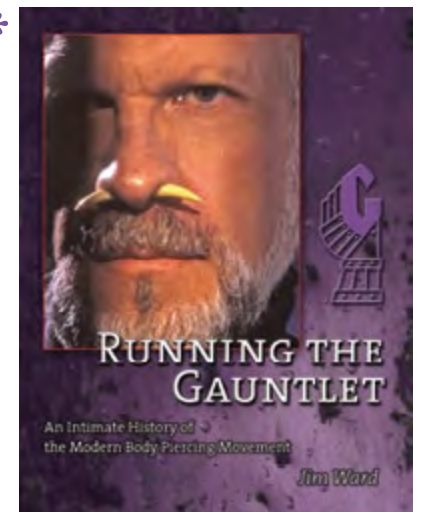
In this revealing autobiography, Jim Ward, considered by many to be the father of the modern piercing industry, tells the engaging and candid story of discovering his own fascination with body piercing, his founding of Gauntlet, the world's first body piercing studio, and how he transformed a personal fetish and backroom, amateur pursuit into a respected profession and spearheaded a world-wide social phenomenon.

Essential reading for everyone with an interest in body piercing; you, your shop staff, and your customers will treasure this book.

For more information and to order a copy of *Running the Gauntlet* signed especially for you by the author, visit runningthegauntlet-book.com. Also available wholesale and retail at safepiercing.org/publications/running-the-gauntlet.

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*
“Essential reading for anyone who wants to understand how modern body piercing arrived at the place it currently occupies.”

JAMES WEBER, *Former President Association of Professional Piercers*



PIERCING TRENDS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATE

RYAN CLARK

Immaculate Body Piercing

When a client walks in asking about the headache cure, we should be telling them that there's absolutely no verifiable evidence to support that a daith piercing cures anything other than an unadorned ear.



No matter what your opinions are on the current trend and associated claims regarding daith piercings, you can't deny their existence and the impact that trends like these - I'm looking at you, triple forward helix - have on the piercing industry. Perhaps more important to consider, is the way that these trends influence how clients or potential clients perceive us. With the way that information is shared these days - mostly thanks to the prevalence of social media - there is likely always going to be a "new" trendy piercing. To most of us, these piercings will be old hat. They may not (read: hopefully won't be) touted as some sort of miracle cure for some ailment. Regardless of the circumstances, there is much to be gained from anything that is bringing potential clients into your studio. Being honest and transparent is always going to be more important than making a sale. However, there are many things to take into consideration when you find someone at your counter who likely never expected themselves to end up in a piercing studio.

First and foremost, it's always going to be important to dispel myths. We all know there are many associated with piercings; from not being able to breastfeed after getting nipple piercings to, more recently, daith piercings being a cure for migraines, anxiety, and whatever else the internet has come up with since the writing of this piece. Remember, it is our job as ethical piercers to disseminate information about piercing to our clients and a large part of that is diffusing misinformation, even when doing so means potentially losing a sale. I'd go so far as to say especially when it means potentially losing a sale, because building trust is infinitely better for business than taking someone's hard-earned money under false pretenses.

Since the current trend centers around daith piercings being the miracle cure for migraines, we can use that as an example. When a client walks in asking about the headache cure, we should be telling them that there's absolutely no verifiable evidence to support that a daith piercing cures anything other than an unadorned ear. As ethical piercers, these types of misconceptions should be cleared up before talking with the client about doing a piercing. There really isn't any wiggle room on this, because it's fact whether we want to accept it or not; any "evi-

dence" that has been seen is purely anecdotal. We should all know that individual experience is irrelevant in relation to things such as cures for medical conditions. Since you can read all about confirmation bias, case studies, and double blind experiments in Jef Saunders's recent blog about the speculation that [daith piercings cure migraines](#), I won't delve too deeply into this.

While there isn't a whole lot of reason to define what anecdotal evidence is or explain the general lack of scientific consensus to someone who just walked in looking for a piercing, you should be able to if needed. The same way you can explain that a vertical hood piercing isn't going to cause nerve damage to the clitoris, you should be able to explain that a daith piercing probably isn't going to cure their migraines. If the client still wants the piercing (and many, if not most will) then you can at least carry on with a clear conscience.

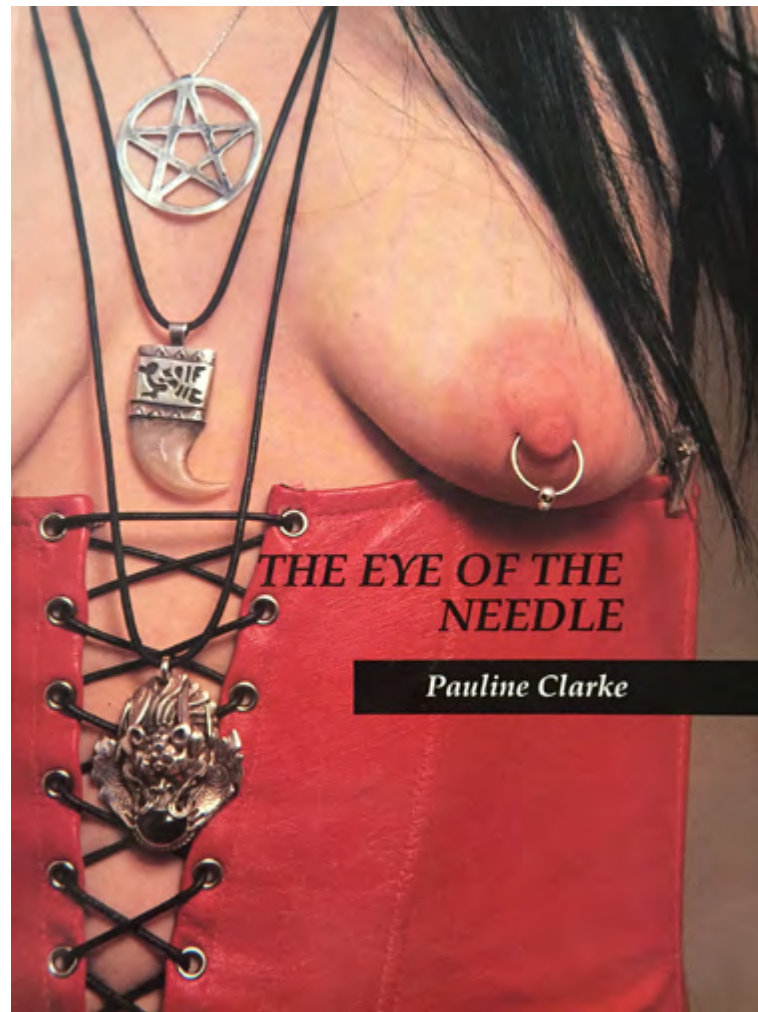
The type of clients who end up in your studio because of trends like these present a unique opportunity. Many of them have preconceived notions about piercing studios, and piercers, that they will find simply aren't true when visiting studios that meet industry standards. Again, a huge part of our job as piercers is to educate, and these situations often become excellent chances. When your client decides they still want a daith piercing, you get to inform them that they're not stuck with the poorly-sized curved barbell that they probably saw in whatever article they read. You have the opportunity to inform them that real body jewelry comes in many sizes, styles, and implant grade materials. The term standard, doesn't really apply; the sky's the limit now a days with body jewelry designs.

You become an ambassador for the entire piercing industry every time one of these clients walks through your door. While we should all be doing our best to give every client the best experience they can have, these types of people should be given extra consideration. You can teach them about jewelry standards, especially in regards to what to look for when choosing a piercing studio. You can correct misconceptions about allergies to everything except gold, while explaining that you offer a wide selection of jewelry including nickel-free gold, if that's what they would like. When they ask if you'll be using a gun (and there is a good chance they will) you have the chance to explain how [piercing guns](#)



are unsafe. They will inevitably pass this information onto their friends and loved ones who ask about the rad new piercing they got. In turn, this single piercing experience has the potential to save an untold number of people from the bad experience of being pierced by untrained hands.

I think it is sometimes easy for us to lose sight of what we're really trying to accomplish as piercers. Obviously we are trying to do clean, safe piercings, but that's only one facet of the job. Many of us are guilty of worrying excessively about the opinions of our peers, yet failing to go above and beyond to impress the people who matter most: our clients. These are the people who are literally giving us a reason to come to work every day. By no means am I saying that you should disregard the opinions of your peers; in a tight-knit industry like ours, they definitely do matter. However, your personal feelings should always take a back seat to the health, safety, and mental-well being of your clients. So when someone is desperately searching for relief, it is unethical to not be upfront about your almost certain inability to provide that relief with a piercing. However, if you take the time to be compassionate and informative in your response, you just might end up with a lifelong client anyway.



THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE by Pauline Clarke

Second edition 1984

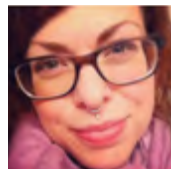
ISBN 0952117509

Published in 1992 by PAUK,

153 Tomkinson Rd, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV10 8DP England

A Book Review by Kendra Jane B

Body Piercing Archive



It is important to keep in mind the time frame this was published and how its purpose in a library or collection will have changed since its original publication. If this review had been written 20 years ago - when this book was one of the few available on body modification - it would have been an important and excellent educational tool for both the enthusiast as well as those considered professional piercers. Keep in mind that at this time there were very few piercing establishments that offered individuals who pierced as a profession.

Fast forward to now, when the educational body of literature for the body modification industry has grown significantly; this text now serves much better as a historical account as opposed to an educational reference. I also see it as a very important piece of the history of our industry, helping to bring piercing from the kink and fetish world (which you can tell influence this book quite heavily) to the more mainstream.

“Press about piercing at that time [the early ‘90s] was written by us for us: *PFIQ*, *Body Play*, *Body Art and Piercing World* out of the UK. For many of us—myself included—these publications opened our eyes to a completely new world. My aspirations to be as a piercer and body modification artist were directly shaped by what I read in these publications.

And now there is the internet. Piercers today are introduced to the world of piercing and body modification with a flood of information that was not readily available in years past. Sites like rec.arts.bodyart and BMEzine.com shaped body modification for the new generation. The problem in years past was too little information was available; now it's too much information to sort through” - [James Weber The Point: Issue 41](#)

It is interesting to note that the above comment by James Weber was 33 issues ago; it has been over eight years since that statement. Many of those websites are no longer what they were in readership or participation and others have simply been replaced all together. Our industry is experiencing unprecedented and exponential growth. This makes books such as *Eye of the Needle* so much more important to preserve and archive as they are the written history of our industry. This book is an indispensable addition to any collector's library.

As a historical text this book offers a look at what it was like for the body modification enthusiast in its infancy, not just in North America, but worldwide. It is a unique combination of instructional text containing brief descriptions of healing times and proper jewelry used to perform certain piercings, including septum, navel, and nipples. Male and female genital piercings are also discussed later in the book. These small written tutorials - complete with hand drawn diagrams by Alan Oversby (aka Mr. Sebastian)—are a key part to our history.

At the time this was written, few piercings in North America were done for fashion reasons; most body modification was rooted in sexuality or due to the love of physical adornment. The author mentions that at the time of publication, “Sleepers” were the most common, comfortable style of jewelry. She mentions repeatedly that the dominant styles of jewelry at the time were ball closure rings (BCR). This is what UK and English speaking Europeans have always referred to this style of jewelry as, continuing to this day. Whereas North American English speakers call this style of jewelry captive bead rings (or CBR). Most jewelry available was made from gold, silver, or surgical steel. This is also the time that men's ear piercings went from having very strong political ties to fashion statements. However nostril piercings were still rare and piercings like the septum were only seen at home or at private functions. Clarke explains that piercing went from the enthusiast to the public for fashion.

Clarke begins the list of piercings in this text with facial piercings, such as the lip and ear. Healing times are subjective and outdated, being quite a bit shorter than what we may suggest now. She sites the piercing gun as the most common method of performing an ear piercing. However, she does state that if you want to wear a ring immediately the piercing will need to be done with a hollow needle, but states that this method is slower and more painful. This is important, indicating that even decades ago people realized there were differences between piercings performed with piercing guns and hollow needles.

From here she moves on to talk about the navel piercing. Much of the information included for this piercing still holds true. Nipple piercings

are the next to be covered and receive more attention than any other piercing at this point in the book. This, again, indicates a direct link between the roots of the piercing movement and the kink and fetishists of the time. This latter section for the book includes several excellent photos highlighting nipple piercings and their accompanying jewelry in both color and black and white. These collections of photos are an excellent window into the rise in popularity of piercing in the ‘80s and ‘90s. However the anatomy of a nipple piercing that is covered in this literature would now be considered outdated; as an industry standard, it is now agreed upon that it is not necessary to pierce into the areola no matter what the anatomy of the nipple.

From here, Clarke goes on to give answers to the most commonly asked questions about





body piercing, such as “does it hurt?” Trying to address the ideas of pain versus pleasure, and how one can become the other, again ties the roots of piercing to the S/M and kink cultures. She also offers other examples, stating that the simple act of adorning the body is able to affect the physiological aspect of a person’s well being. She supplements these ideas with several first hand accounts or testimonials from people and why they have chosen to seek out body piercings and their motivations in becoming modified.

From what would have been modern accounts of body modification, Clarke goes further into what she feels are the different aspects of body piercing. She refers first to personal expression, such as dressing for pleasure, and then moves on to discuss the idea of collectors - those who had a true passion for piercing and modification. As with previous sections of the book, Clarke includes several pages of both color and black and white photographs as examples.

Moving onto the next section of the book, Clarke talks about the pioneers - those people we look to as the founders of the modern body piercing movement as a whole. From Doug Malloy to Alan Oversby, she offers their accounts and written dialogue and as well as her stories of their meetings and visits. She starts with a reprinting of the *Adventures of Body Piercing* by Doug

Malloy. This is followed by a story by England’s pioneer in the modification world, Mr. Sebastian. She rounds out this collection of history with letters and stories from Will and Ethel Granger.

The remainder of the book is largely dedicated to genital piercings accompanied with personal testimonials, great photographic examples, and more illustrations from Alan Oversby. These illustrations are much like the earlier examples, going over the technical aspects of these piercings (accurate and citing best practices for the time of publication). The focus on text and images related to genital piercings acts as another great indicator of the connection between sexuality and the roots of the piercing industry, not only in North America, but in other parts of the world as well.

To round out her book Clarke briefly touches on stretching, the tribal roots of our industry, and nipple training. She closes the book by offering her own account of her modification journey, including her thumb web piercings and her labia piercings done by Mr. Sebastian. As a historical piece of literature this personal account really gets demonstrates how far our industry has come in the past 40 years, from bedrooms and basements to board rooms and run ways. Although Clarke’s book no longer serves as an educational reference, it would have when first published. It offers a colourful and intimate account of body piercing as it was in the beginning. It is the perfect example of how kinks, lovers, and BDSM practitioners helped to bring piercing from the closet to what has become common day practice.

One important thing to note is that the very last page of this publication is a set of standards that were set forth for UK piercers by PAUK (Piercing Association of the United Kingdom) and the Director of Public Health; this would have been one of the first sets of standards for the professional piercer, dictating what and how they may do parts of their job.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR PAULINE CLARKE

Clarke married in 1959. It was through her husband’s interest in body piercing that led her to put compose this book. After having two kids and writing children’s novels, her aspirations had always been to become a journalist.

It was after her first tattoo in 1965 that the door was really opened for what was to become her future and the focus of her journalistic career. By 1981 she had become much more involved in the tattoo community and in 1983 she was named Miss Tattoo, Great Britain. This led to many magazine features and interviews, and eventually to the creation of PAUK (Piercing Association of the United Kingdom). She then followed up with a quarterly publication called *Piercing World*.

OTHER TITLES BY THIS AUTHOR

- *Beyond the Eye of the Needle*
ISBN 0952117509
Published in 1992 by PAUK
153 Tomkinson Rd, Nuneaton,
Warwickshire, CV10 8DP England

This book serves as a sequel to Pauline Clarke’s previous book, *The Eye of the Needle*. *Beyond The Eye of The Needle* leaps forward through a decade of events since those early days of body piercing, and contains many beautiful full page photographs of people showing their interest in body piercing while adorned with a variety of body jewelry. This publication presents multiple examples of piercing placement and stretched piercings, including facial, nipple, navel, and genital. It features the various groups of people that are all part of the fraternity of “Body Piercing Enthusiasts,” portraying its significance as a part of life.

- *Spheres of Adornment*
Publisher Piercing World, 1996
ISBN 095281790X, 9780952817901
Published in 1992 by PAUK,
153 Tomkinson Rd, Nuneaton,
Warwickshire, CV10 8DP England

Spheres Of Adornment incorporates body piercing, tattoo, and fetish dress, while exploring the fascinating realm of body decoration. This book displays full page photos of decorated people of alternative facets: showing body jewellery, tattoo styles, provocative PVC and leather wear.

- *Piercing World*
Published by PAUK
153, Tomkinson Rd, Nuneaton,
Warwickshire, CV10 8DP England

Quarterly, full-colour publication. Annual Subscription: pounds 16 UK, pounds 20 Europe, pounds 25 overseas. Subscription to *Piercing World* grants automatic membership to PAUK. The publication features detailed color and black and white photos of piercings and tattoos, unusual jewelry designs, multiple piercings, and piercing techniques including all genital piercings.

http://www.vanishingtattoo.com/pauline_clarke.htm

SIDE NOTE ON ALAN OVERSBY

Alan Oversby (20 February 1933 – 8 May 1996) was one of the primary figures in the development of contemporary body piercing in Europe. He was better known by his professional name Mr. Sebastian.

Originally an art teacher, Alan Oversby left his initial profession to pursue his interests in tattooing and piercing instead. From his studio in London, he promoted

both tattooing and body piercing, especially within the gay leather community. His correspondence with both Doug Malloy and Jim Ward si well documented and even being sponsored by Malloy, he visited Los Angeles. Malloy was also responsible for trip to London that included companions Jim Ward and Sailor Sid Dillor. These visits and written correspondences between all of these parties were critical to the global spread of the techniques and technology used in contemporary body piercing. SOME OF THIS CORRESPONDENCE CAN BE SEEN AT THE BPA EXHIBIT IN VEGAS THIS JULY.

Oversby’s connection and involvement in body modifications goes far beyond just these letters and visits mentioned above. However, as this article does not focus on him as a topic we will keep the description of him brief.

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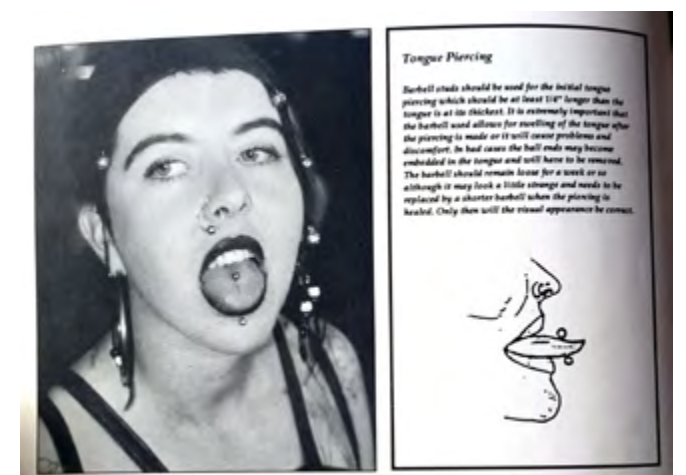
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ISBN 0-940642-14-X

“The Beginnings of the Modern Body Piercing Movement”, *Body Modification E-zine* article

“A Visit to London”, *Body Modification E-zine* article

“Obituary: Mr Sebastian”, *The Independent*, 22 May 1996

Editor’s Note: In this review I state that Doug Malloy’s book was called *Adventures of Body Piercing*. The original title was *The Art of Pierced Penises and Decorative Tattoos* and was republished by Gauntlet as *The Adventures of a Piercing Freak*.



“FDA APPROVED”—LET’S GET REAL



PAT McCARTHY

Owner of Piercology and APP Past President



Approved by the FDA” is a claim we’ve all seen on corporate websites or mentioned in marketing literature and online ads. Salespeople sometimes refer to the products they promote within the body art community as being “FDA approved”. Clients who come to Piercology often ask me or my piercing staff if the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the products we use. I’m sure many of you have faced similar questions or simply wondered yourselves.

I’ve done some research in order to clarify the issue and answer in a fair and honest way the following questions. Does a manufacturer or distributor have the legitimate right to claim a particular product was approved by the FDA? If the product has an Over-the-Counter (OTC) drug label and a National Drug Code (NDC) number what does that really mean?

This is what I’ve discovered:

The classification of cosmetics and drugs are defined by law, based on their intended use. Each classification has associated laws and regulations. There is a lot of information available, so let’s start with a few excerpts directly from the [FDA website](#):

The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) defines cosmetics by their intended use, as “articles intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed on, introduced into, or otherwise applied to the human body...for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the

appearance” [FD&C Act, sec. 201(i)]. Among the products included in this definition are skin moisturizers, perfumes, lipsticks, fingernail polishes, eye and facial makeup preparations, cleansing shampoos, permanent waves, hair colors, and deodorants, as well as any substance intended for use as a component of a cosmetic product.

The FD&C Act defines drugs...as “articles intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease” and “articles (other than food) intended to affect the structure or any function of the body of man or other animals” [FD&C Act, sec. 201(g)(1)].

Under the FD&C Act, cosmetic products and ingredients, with the exception of color additives, do not require FDA approval before they go on the market. Drugs, however, must generally either receive pre-market approval by FDA through the New Drug Application (NDA) process or they must conform to a “monograph” for a particular drug category, as established by FDA’s Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drug Review. These monographs specify conditions whereby OTC drug ingredients are generally recognized as safe and effective, and not misbranded...(and) state requirements for categories of nonprescription drugs, such as what ingredients may be used and for what intended use.

In other words, the FDA does not approve cosmetic products or formulas. It is essentially left up to a manufacturer to insure their product complies with the standards, packaging, and label requirements. We all want to think “natural”, “botanical”, and “herbal” formulas are safer and better in some way. Maybe they are, but I remain skeptical until I know where the ingredients come from and if they have certificates of authenticity. I want answers to questions such as where was the formula developed and manufactured, is there a scientifically based and tested preservative system to prevent bacterial growth, is there stability testing, and has the product been tested against the type of bacterial concerns we face in our professional lives such as Staph, E.coli and MRSA? I’ve often wondered how some non-OTC products on the market have “healing claims” yet despite their intended use they are not registered as an OTC drug with an NDC number?

Contrary to what some people hope or believe, the

FDA does not have a system in place to approve the vast majority of non-prescription OTC drug products intended for human use either. It is up to the manufacturer to insure their product(s) follow the existing monographs and prove their products are both safe and effective. At first glance it seems as if the government is relying on an “honor” system they believe responsible companies will follow.

Unfortunately, the result of leaving it up to others is that some claims seem “too good to be true”. Is it possible for example that a single product can be effective as a “skin prep” and gentle enough for “aftercare”? The concept of “electrified water” seems promising, but if sealed packaging is required to prevent a reduction in efficacy how do we know if the product works as promised after it’s opened, or after a few weeks or months. Critical questions should be asked regarding how a product is manufactured and if the prevailing monographs are being followed. Also important to question: how has the product been tested and where can the test results be found?

The FDA issues “Establishment Licenses” to manufacturing facilities that comply with rigorous standards that include “Current Good Manufacturing Practices” (cGMP) so it is important to know where the products we use and recommend come from. Topical antiseptics for example should be manufactured following cGMP regulations to insure the facility has appropriate procedures in place to prevent the presence of objectionable microorganisms in drug products that are not manufactured as sterile. A licensed facility typically has the staff, equipment and procedures in place to validate the raw materials, formulas and every stage of the production process.

Incredibly, there are documented

OTC Drug Product Labeling Outline

Drug Facts		Drug Facts (continued)	
Active ingredient (in each dosage unit)	Purpose	Directions	
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX mg	XXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
Uses		Other information	
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
Warnings		Inactive ingredients	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Do not use	XX	Questions?	123-456-1234
Ask a doctor before use if you have	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
When using this product	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
Stop use and ask a doctor if	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use.			
Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.			

The FDA published a final regulation (21 CFR 201.66), establishing standardized content and format for the labeling of OTC drug products.

cases of companies using “NDC-like” numbers on their labels without ever applying for or obtaining the legitimate NDC. Typically however, the vast majority of companies file an application to obtain the NDC prior to offering the product for sale to the public. Does this mean all OTC drug formulas are approved in advance? NO! Does it mean the FDA has approved the product because an NDC number has been assigned? NO! Obtaining an NDC number means the manufacturer has provided the required information and followed the correct steps during the application process. This includes stating the intended use of the product and confirming the active and inactive ingredients are not restricted or used in amounts beyond the established limits. Also, the OTC drug label structure and claims must all fall within the prevailing FDA monograph.

A section of the FDA website supplies a frequently updated [NDC directory](#), which clearly states: “Assignment of an NDC number does not in any way denote FDA approval of the product. Any representation that creates an impression of official approval because of possession of an NDC number is misleading and constitutes misbranding. (21 CFR 207.39)”

So why do some companies claim their products have been “FDA approved” when in fact it’s not an accurate statement? Do they think we are easily fooled? Maybe...

The FDA website explains the [drug application of OTC](#) classified products, which states: “OTC drugs are defined as drugs that are safe and effective for use by the general public without seeking treatment by a health professional. Because there are over 300,000 marketed OTC drug products, FDA reviews the active ingredients and the labeling of over 80 therapeutic classes of drugs. OTC drug monographs are a kind of “recipe book” covering acceptable ingredients, doses, formulations, and labeling. Once a final monograph is implemented, companies can make and market an OTC product without the need for FDA pre-approval. These monographs define the safety, effectiveness, and labeling of all marketing OTC active ingredients.”

[DailyMed](#) is a website operated by the US National Library of Medicine (NLM) to publish up-to-date and accurate drug labels to health care providers and the general public. The contents are provided and updated daily by the FDA. As a handy reference source that lists individual OTC drugs that have been assigned

"As a piercer, nurse, and educator, I can say without a doubt that this is the most complete book ever written for all people in our industry."
—DAVID A. VIDRA, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF HEALTH EDUCATORS, INC.

The Piercing Bible

The Definitive Guide to Safe Body Piercing

ELAYNE ANGEL

SELL BOOKS IN YOUR STUDIO!

THE PIERCING BIBLE

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO SAFE BODY PIERCING

by Elayne Angel

This one-of-a-kind comprehensive resource covers everything piercers and piercees need to know about the subject. Piercing pioneer and authority Elayne Angel shares her extensive knowledge about piercing techniques, jewelry, placements, aftercare, troubleshooting, and more.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR—ELAYNE ANGEL has been a professional piercer since the 1980s and has performed over 40,000 piercings. She was awarded the President's Lifetime Achievement Award by the Association of Professional Piercers in 2006 and is a contributing writer for *PAIN* Magazine. She lives in Mérida, Mexico. Visit www.piercingbible.com for more information.

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an NDC number, it is important to know the information provided usually comes with this disclaimer: "Most over the counter (OTC) are not reviewed and approved by the FDA. However, they may be marketed if they comply with applicable regulations and policies. FDA has not evaluated whether this product complies."

The bottom line is this, don't be fooled by marketing claims that a particular product has been "approved" by any government agency, including the FDA. My best advice is to look up the NDC number on a site like DailyMed, find out the origin of the product, and ask the manufacturer or distributor for documented test results from a recognized and trusted lab to substantiate their claims of safety and efficacy. It always pays to ask questions, for your sake and for the sake of your clients.

Many products used in our industry may be well intentioned, including those meant for aftercare, but it's important to know if the manufacturer follows aseptic cGMP techniques and the FDA monograph rules that cover acceptable ingredients, doses, formulations, and labeling of an OTC drug product. "Natural" does not automatically mean it's better, safer, or more effective. Ask to see bona fide test results.

I've seen enough in my 22+ years in this business to know it's OK to be skeptical. It's OK to question what you do as a professional and strive to be the best you can be. It just makes good sense to protect yourself and your clients in order to grow your business. Because your friend or another artist uses a product does not prove anything! Before you choose to work with any product, or recommend it for your clients, find out where it comes from, and what testing has been done to prove it is both safe and effective for the intended purpose. Good luck and may your business grow and prosper in the future.

Some background: Pat is the owner of Piercology in Columbus, OH, one of the oldest and most successful piercing studios in the USA. He was the first elected President of the Association of Professional Piercers. He is the founding and current President of the Association of Body Art Professionals in Ohio. Pat has been working with Ohio legislators on body mod studio regulations, and he frequently lectures Ohio Health Inspectors on bloodborne pathogens and best practices in piercing and tattoo studios.

APP PRICE INCREASES—CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

The 2015 APP Conference in Las Vegas was the biggest event we've hosted, and with twenty years of Conferences behind us, where do we go? In the last couple of years we have seen new members on the Board of Directors and changes to the Conference Committee. With new faces come new ideas and with these ideas come changes.

We will see changes in 2016 to the scheduling and structure of Conference, including some changes in pricing. In 2016, and over the next few years, the APP will be doing gradual increases in prices pertaining to Conference. No drastic increases will happen all at once, but we will see small increases on a few items over the next few years. Price increases are an inevitability needed for any business or organization to continue growing. While nobody likes to hear prices are going up on anything, it's important to note why.

Historical figures of Conference fees show that prices have stayed the same for many consecutive years. When prices have increased in the past, they have been small increases and have remained for years thereafter. As Conference attendance has increased over the years, so has the cost of making it happen.

The upcoming price increases that will be in effect for our 2016 Conference are as follows:

- Initial Vendor booths will increase for the first time since 2013 by \$25; additional booths will increase by \$50
- Banquet dinner tickets will be increased this year by \$10 if purchased early; this is the first increase since 2003. Banquet ticket prices onsite will increase by \$30. Buying tickets early helps the APP plan the event in an economical way; help us keep the event low cost and the waste to a minimum.
- Daily Expo Passes will increase by \$10.

For now, the APP will not be increasing the price of membership dues or full-Conference registration, though in the coming years we will see small increases to Conference passes and individual classes. The Board and various committees will send out a notice ahead of time so attendees have ample time to budget accordingly.

We are doing our best to maintain Conference prices at levels that keep the event reasonable for attendees while being in line with the always increasing price of holding an event of this size. We hope to see you all this July.

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IN THE OFFICE



CAITLIN MCDIARMID
APP Administrator

I've been asked to write an article about how technology has changed over the course of my tenure with the Association.

When I first started working for the Association, I worked exclusively on a desktop computer in my home with a phone line, a credit card machine, and a small closet full of supplies and brochure stock.

That is how it remained for many years. During those years we contracted out our Registration Staff (and processes) at Conference and each instructor brought their own computer for their class. It was a great leap forward a few years down the road when we bought laptop computers for both the registration desk and our classrooms.

Back at home in the office I went from a desktop computer to a combination of desktop and laptop computers. Now I work solely on a laptop computer which moves with me whether working in the office, at home, or at Conference.

We have certainly utilized programs such as Cvent for registration in the past few years and have added to the Cvent family of programs with the CrowdCompass app starting last year. These programs have allowed us to register people ourselves, and even have them register themselves onsite. With these advances, we have also been able to compile statistics over a period of years which help us make decisions about each year's Conference. We've gone from stamping cardboard cards, to collecting paper tickets, to bar code scanners, to scanning

with smartphones (OnArrival) at our classroom doors. This has made the collection of data in our classes more accurate and streamlined the certificate production process.

However, in the office, software has stayed fairly consistent for us until this year. We have continued to manage our databases exclusively with Excel. As we have grown, this has become increasingly cumbersome. Information is transferred from one spreadsheet to another or maintained on multiple documents, which not only takes a lot of time, but comes with an increased risk of error.

After Conference last year I became frustrated with the problems facing us in the office and the overwhelming amount of time devoted to tasks which I felt could be automated. I did some preliminary research and began pitching the idea of the Association adopting a management system. Jef Saunders was also looking for ways to automate the application process by taking it fully online. While it took a lot of work and we looked at a lot of systems, we were able to narrow it down and select one (with approval of the Board) which we feel very excited about.

I am happy to announce that the APP is on the cusp of implementing an Association Database Management Software system. When fully active, this program will change the way we do our "day to day" work. It will streamline almost all of our office processes, consolidate all our databases into one, provide a structure for committees to work from, estab-

lish a member portal where members can access their record, upload documents, pay dues, get member notices, provide an online application process, automate many of our communications, and more!

This is a big undertaking and will result in big changes. At this point in the office pretty much every day, I think to myself "this would be so much easier if the system was already in place." I was probably about a year later than I should have been with my push for us to look at an overhaul of how we manage things in the office and with our membership documents applications and other matters. I know that Jef also cannot wait for these processes to be fully active. Like with all the projects this will take time; we want to do it right the first time.

The office has already taken its accounting program online. Members are experiencing the benefits by being able to pay their dues directly from their invoices. We see the benefits as those payments get recorded in real time, saving Paul King, Emily (our clerk), and me a lot of data entry. Paul and I can also both work in the program whenever we want, which keeps us from getting too behind on the growing workload.

So while it has taken us 13 years to really change how we handle our daily tasks, our databases, and our office procedures, we ARE doing it this year. I am happy to help steer the Association to this new level of efficiency and growth. I am sure that every member and every potential

member will benefit from this new system - this new technology - and the changes that result.

This management software system will change my job. How it will change my job is not yet fully known.

I am prepared however to go with the flow and tackle new challenges that come with new systems and any kind of change. I hope that those who are reading this will watch as the Association takes this great leap

forward. We encourage our membership to provide feedback on how these changes affect the Association, its members, potential members, and the greater community of the piercing industry.

UPDATES FROM THE OFFICE—BOARD INTROS



Kendra Jane B.

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. - Buddha

I find it very surreal that today February 3, 2016 is exactly six years after the first day of my piercing apprenticeship. Today I celebrate that anniversary by preparing to attend my first Board Meeting. Thank you to the membership at large, for voting to give me the opportunity to serve my first term on the Board of Directors of the APP.

At that first Conference I realized that I stood in a very unique place in our industry; it is young enough that I can (and have had) the chance to learn first hand from those individuals that brought to the masses what we do. People like Fakir, Jim Ward, Elayne Angel, Paul King just to name a few. I also realized that our industry is still young enough for me to have that type of impact on the generations of piercers to come after me. It is with humble gratitude that I thank those who have appointed me to work hard for our industry and The Association Of Professional Piercing. I could not be more elated to be joining the board with Ryan Ouellette and Luis Garcia and look forward to what the next 3 years shall bring.

You will find me piercing in Edmonton, Alberta at Dragon Fx in West Edmonton Mall, and have been a member since January of 2014.

I'd like to thank everyone who voted and has put their faith in me. Having served on the Board before (2005-2008), I am familiar with the inner workings of the organization, so I'm ready to jump in and get to work. I don't know what position I'll be taking yet, so it's hard to make clear promises as to my goals. Rest assured that I'll do my best at whatever position the Board chooses for me.

For those that don't know me, I've been piercing for 25 years, and instructing seminars and classes for a little over 10 years. I currently work at NoKaOi in Philadelphia, PA, where I've been the senior piercer for 14 years. I'm blunt and to the point, and see little reason to mince words, but have been told I'm very approachable about any piercing topic.

Hello, my name is Ryan Ouellette. I started piercing in the late '90s and I've had my own shop, Precision Body Arts, in Nashua, New Hampshire since the fall of 2000. I started attending Conference in 2001 and it made a huge impact on my career. The APP has always been a driving force for me. I've looked up to its Members, instructors, and conference attendees for years and I am very happy for a chance to help out on the Board of Directors. I am nervous for the responsibility but I feel like I am at a point in my career where I can give the position the time it deserves. I look forward to working with our members to advance the APP and help grow our industry.

—Ryan Ouellette
Precision Body Arts
3 Elm Street (new location)
Nashua, New Hampshire
www.precisionbodyarts.com



Luis Garcia



Ryan Ouellette

THE UKAPP—PART 2



RYAN OUELLETTE
Precision Body Arts

“The whole thing was a highlight for me, being kinda all alone with no support network one day, then the next having a hell of a lot of talented and friendly people to be able to talk to was amazing.”

—Gareth Rogers, piercer
Old Forge Tattoo Collective
Sheffield, England

In my last article I discussed some of the challenges faced by UK and EU piercers. In this article I’m going to write about what a group of British, Irish, and Scottish piercers have done in response to those challenges.

September 20, 2015 in Birmingham, England—the first ever open meeting for the United Kingdom Association of Professional Piercers

The work started in the early afternoon at the rented venue. There was the typical bar area upstairs and a quiet meeting room downstairs. Things kicked off with the UKAPP officers (President, Nicole Holmes; Vice President, Peter Monckton; Treasurer, Aiden Johnson; Secretary, Kim Hutchinson; Outreach, Sebastian Wolfe Pickersgill; Health Liaison, Charlie Remy LeBeau) nervously discussing the day’s agenda and beginning to set up. Soon, there was a group of roughly 50 piercers from throughout the UK in attendance. The energy was great. As an outsider who has been to many many industry gatherings over the years, it was inspiring to see something from the beginning.

The meetup started with the officers introducing themselves, discussing relevant issues, and laying out the



UKAPP BOARD OF DIRECTORS: *Left to right*, Aiden Johnson, Charlie Remy Le Beau, Peter Monckton, Sebastien, Kim Hutchinson, Nicole Holmes

early stages of the UKAPP’s mission statement and goals. The UKAPP doesn’t want to start with too much; their main effort is to reach out to local piercers and bring as many together as possible to help create a community of professionals. UKAPP President Nici Holmes, stated their goal was not to tell other piercers how to work, but rather to listen and get a sense for what the organization should strive to offer as it grows. She also mentioned that one long term goal of the UKAPP is to establish criteria for membership, but that pushing for a membership structure immediately is not a priority while the group is still in its infancy.

A huge issue in the UK is the government classification of consensual genital body piercings as genital mutilation, including piercings like the clitoral hood. Many UK piercers have chosen to stop offering these services as they may be held liable for legal action. The group discussed steps to

counteract this classification such as client petitions and reaching out to local councils. If you have interest in this topic, in [Issue 70](#) Paul King discussed when body modifications are considered mutilation, specifically in regards to [Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)](#).

The next topic was the concept of a voluntary rating system. This idea was elaborated on by 2015 Al D. Scholar, Charlie Remy LeBeau. The idea is in an early stage of development, but the intent is to offer something similar to a star rating system used for restaurants. The rating would focus on shop features and safety issues, such as the sterilization facilities, piercing work areas, and types of jewelry used. The rating system is intended to be optional so as not to create unfair competition between future UKAPP members.

Once the officer introductions were finished, there was a meet and greet among attendees. The energy in the room was very positive. It

seemed that everyone was happy to finally have a physical outlet to share information with other piercers in their own country. One attendee brought up the fact that she and other piercers had tried to set up a similar group years ago, but due to a lack of cohesive community it never took off. Part of the event’s success may have come from the support of Industrial Strength UK, the official distributor of their parent company for the US. Industrial Strength UK’s Paddy and Lee were in attendance with a great display of jewelry showcasing items that were previously only available by ordering from the United States. It was clearly appreciated by attendees to have a major jewelry manufacturer/distributor present to support the event and the new organization. I got the impression that a few piercers in attendance hadn’t previously been able to see a wide assortment of high quality jewelry in person before. You could tell that something as simple (and often taken for granted) as accessibility to high quality jewelry was very inspiring and encouraging. Paddy took some time later in the day to give a presentation on high quality jewelry sales; increased flexibility was a major point in his talk. Hav-

ing a distributor in the UK with high quality jewelry in stock and ready to ship within days rather than weeks or months can create amazing possibilities for local piercers. Hopefully the success of Industrial Strength UK will spur other manufacturers to follow suit and increase support in the United Kingdom like we have seen in North America.

I was lucky enough to be invited to speak at the meet-up. I did a variation on the workshop classes I instruct at the APP Conference in Las Vegas. First, I presented a Safe Practices in the Sterilization Room portion. We discussed proper layout of sterilizing areas, how to process tools post-piercing through chemical, manual, and mechanical means, and the importance of proper PPE and documentation. After a short break we began Safe Practices in the Piercing Room. Here we discussed setting up your work area, opening packaged instruments, prepping the piercing site, performing the piercing, and cleaning up afterwards, all with a focus on preventing cross contamination. The attendees were engaged and participated with lots of comments and questions. My beard net was a big hit for comic relief. I even learned something very impor-

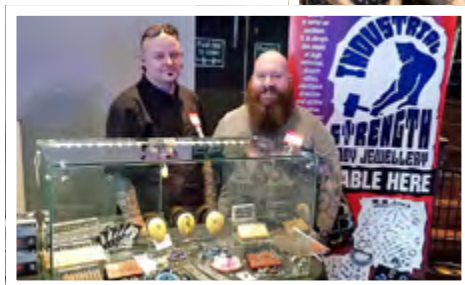
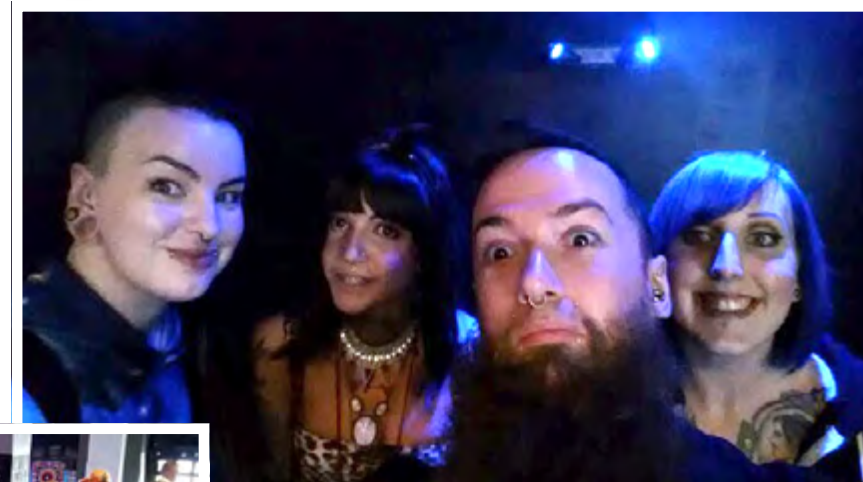
tant; that a beard net’s proper name is a “snood”. Worth the transatlantic trip right there.

For me, the class that stood out the most was the Metals & Surface Polish class from another 2015 Al D. Scholar, Aiden Johnson. Aiden has an engineering background and his knowledge and interest for metals was apparent in this class. I have taken material data classes before, and while I learned a lot from them they might have felt a little dry. Aiden gave us just enough information on commonly used piercing industry metals such as steel, titanium, niobium, and gold to keep things educational while also giving us historical information to keep it interesting. With his knowledge base, I could easily see Aiden developing similar classes to one day co-instruct at the APP Conference and other industry events alongside leading experts like Jason King and Brian Skellie.

In addition to the materials information presented he also discussed surface polish at length. As piercers most of us understand why surface finish is important, but not as many understand the process of how body jewelry is hand polished. Aiden explained polishing with a bench grinder, polishing wheels, and polishing com-



THE UK APP



pounds. By the end of the seminar I had gained a better understanding of the time and precision required to achieve a mirror shine without damaging the jewelry. As an added bonus Aiden had brought a bench grinder and polishing set up so that attendees could each take a turn hand polishing pieces of jewelry. After scratching some demo jewelry with sandpaper volunteers buffed and polished the piece to a mirror shine in just a few seconds. I saw more than a few smiling faces as a result of this hands on exercise. It was a great learning experience and a creative way to keep people interested.

Once the classes were finished there was more time to socialize while the organizers packed up. I saw a lot of new friendships and professional connections made that day. You could feel the vigor and enthusiasm as people began talking about future meetings and making plans to stay in touch, visit, and shadow each other. Overall, I don't think it could have gone better. This group of dedicated piercers should take great pride in what they put together. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for the UKAPP. These British, Irish, and Scottish body piercers have really shown how much they care about their industry and I applaud their hard work.

NEWS FROM A.P.T.P.I

Associazione Piercers Tatuatori Professionisti Italiani

ITALIAN SUSCON 2015

(Italian Original)

Dal 20 al 22 settembre 2015 si è svolta a Tirrenia (Pi) Italia l'11ma edizione dell'italian suscon, seminario sui rituali di trazione e sospensione corporale. anche quest'anno i partecipanti sono stati numerosi, circa 75 persone, provenienti da diverse parti del mondo come Italia, Norvegia, Stati Uniti, Israele e Germania.

Quest'anno abbiamo avuto come relatori un pioniere delle sospensioni corporali come Fakir Musafar e il dott. Franco di Palma. Fakir Musafar padre delle sospensioni e modifiche corporali moderne dagli USA e per la prima volta in Italia, ha presentato il viaggio personale che lo ha portato a sperimentare e sviluppare antiche pratiche rituali antropologiche portandole nella cultura contemporanea. Il dott. Di Palma, neurologo, invece ha trattato nella sua lezione "il dolore" spiegandone il significato, i suoi benefici e come il nostro cervello reagisce ai suoi stimoli.

Durante l'evento sono state effettuate 35 sospensioni e a differenza delle edizioni passate



quest'anno è stata data un'impronta più rituale vista la partecipazione di Fakir. È stato organizzato un rituale, "moon dance", sulla spiaggia al quale hanno partecipato circa 40 persone. Ogni partecipante dopo essersi fatto inserire due ganci nel petto e dopo una meditazione spirituale personale ha partecipato in primis ad una preghiera collettiva, poi in fila indiana, tutti si sono diretti in spiaggia al tramonto dove ogni partecipante è stato agganciato ad un unico anello centrale. Ognuno poteva così sentirsi legato materialmente a tutti i partecipanti. L'atmosfera era magica e spirituale e il pulling di gruppo è durato circa un'ora con un sentito sottofondo musicale di 12 percussionisti.

Le sospensioni corporali come ogni anno si sono tenute indoor outdoor sotto gli alberi e infine anche direttamente in mare. Fortunatamente, nonostante fosse il penultimo weekend di settembre il tempo è stato bello e soleggiato con una temperatura estiva.

La crew era composta da 29 persone provenienti da diversi team: aptpi suspension team (Italy), wings of desire (Norway), superfly (Germany) e release flesh suspension team (USA).

Il tutto si è svolto in completa armonia tra i partecipanti e anche in quest'occasione si è potuto interagire sia a livello tecnico che artistico per elevare la conoscenza di queste procedure in sicurezza e sperimentando nuove possibilità di sospensione.

Vi aspettiamo per la 12ma edizione che si terrà sempre a Tirrenia il 18-19-20 settembre 2016.

—APTPI Staff

ITALIAN SUSCON 2015

(English Translation)

From the 20th–22nd of September 2015, in Tirrenia, Pisa, Italy, the Italian association of professional piercers and tattoo artists (A.P.T.P.I.) organised the 11th edition of Italian SusCon, a three day seminar on body suspension rituals. Italian SusCon 2015, as from previous editions, continued to attract a considerable number of participants, 75, coming from different parts of the world: Italy, Norway, USA, Israel and Germany.

Guest of honours of this year edition of Italian SusCon were: pioneer of body suspension Fakir Musafar and the neurologist Dr. Franco di Palma. Fakir Musafar (USA) father of modern suspension rituals and body modifications, for the first time in Italy, presented the personal journey that led him to experiment, develop and bring ancient body rituals to contemporary culture. Neurologist Franco di Palma, in his lecture entitled "The Pain", explained the benefits of pain and how our brain reacts to it.

During Italian SusCon the crews suspended a total of 35 people. Thanks to Fakir Musafar's participation, this edition of Italian SusCon, gained a more ritualistic and mystical atmosphere. The famous "Moon Dance" ritual, held on the beach at night, was attended by 40 people. After a collective prayer, each participant was inserted two chest hooks and given some time for a personal spiritual meditation. Then the group, queued to the beach at sunset, where each participant was hooked to a central circular ring, given the feeling that everyone was physically connected. The ritual of collective pulling was accompanied by twelve percussionists and lasted one hour.

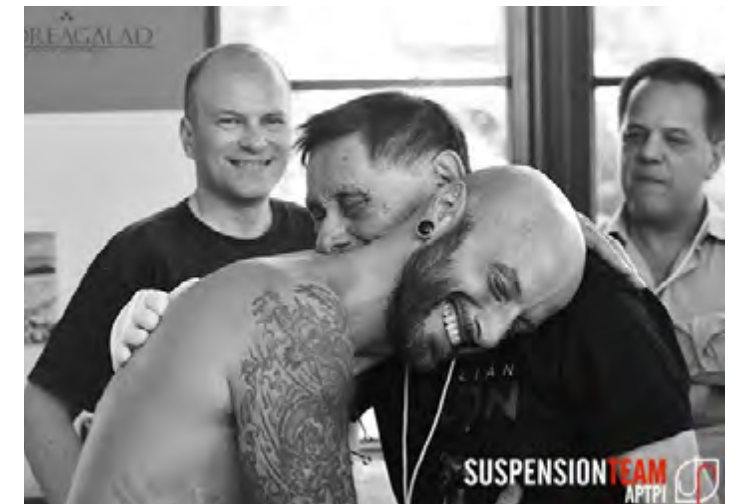
The September weather in Italy during Italian SusCon 2015 was warm and sunny allowing indoor and outdoor on trees and on the sea!

The Italian SusCon 2015 crew of 29 featured members from: A.P.T.P.I. Suspension Team (Italy), Wings of Desire (Norway), Superfly (Germany), and Release Flesh Suspension Team (USA).

Italian SusCon 2015 fostered complete harmony between the participants and allowed them to interact and exchange both technical and artistic skills and expertise to extend the knowledge of body suspension procedures safely and to experiment with new possibilities.

We look forward to seeing you for the 12th edition that will be in Tirrenia again on 18th–20th September, 2016.

—APTPI Staff



1° Convegno italiano su LA PRATICA DEL PIERCING

Roma, 28-10-2015

Organizzato da Istituto Superiore di Sanità



A Roma, mercoledì 28 Ottobre 2015, il centro ONDICO dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità ha organizzato il primo convegno sulla pratica di body piercing.

Durante il Convegno sono state analizzate interessanti argomenti inerenti la pratica di body piercing.

Di seguito il programma del Convegno:

- Dott. Renzoni e dott. Pirrera—La pratica del piercing: stato dell'arte e questioni aperte
 - Dott. Ciccaglione—Rischi infettivi nella pratica del piercing
 - Dott. Berardesca—Rischio dermatologico, complicanze e aftercare per il piercing
 - Dott. Tammaro e dott. Persechino—Controindicazioni alla pratica del piercing
 - Prof. Liguori e dott. Gallè—Aspetti epidemiologici e rischi igienico sanitari tra i giovani
 - Bruno Valsecchi, body piercing e rappresentante A.P.T.P.I. (associazione piercers e tatuatori professionisti italiani)—Introduzione alla pratica di Body Piercing e il ruolo del Piercer
 - Dott.ssa Marchetto—Vigilanza e controllo delle attività di piercing: criticità riscontrata sul territorio
- Come si può vedere dal programma, è stato un Convegno interessante e, per quanto riguarda la realtà italiana, pionieristico.

Si sono susseguite tutta una serie di statistiche, ricerche e proiezioni che hanno mostrato chiaramente che l'Istituto Superiore di Sanità ha ben chiaro in cosa consista l'attività del piercer, cosa sia concretamente il body piercing e come viene eseguito.

Ciò ci fa pensare che si sta procedendo verso la giusta direzione per la tutela degli operatori e per la salute del cliente.

Il fatto che abbiano contattato un piercer, per prender parte a questi lavori, fa altrettanto trasparire la sensibilità e l'interesse nei confronti di questa attività, quanto mai controversa.

Durante i lavori si sono susseguite tutta una serie di informazioni che hanno messo in evidenza la discrepanza sulla qualità e sulla durata del percorso formativo per operatori di body piercing su tutto il territorio italiano. Infatti, per fare un esempio, nonostante il fatto che le linee guida del Ministero della Sanità del 1998 mettano in evidenza e demandino la facoltà di organizzare corsi professionalizzanti per operatori di piercing e tatuaggio alle regioni, ad oggi, ancora 4 regioni non si sono adeguate a tale documento.

Per non parlare del melting pot di regolamenti, ordinanze, leggi, normative sull'attività di tatuaggio e piercing che vigono su tutto il territorio italiano.

Durante la mia presentazione, ho sottolineato, tra i vari argomenti, anche il concetto di deontologia professionale.

Spero che ciò sia servito per dare una più chiara idea sul fatto che, come categoria, noi cerchiamo di migliorare la nostra attività optando per la formazione autonoma, attraverso enti o associazioni del settore che si adoperano a tale scopo.

Ho altresì evidenziato l'importanza, per quanti desiderano intraprendere questa attività lavorativa, di integrare la parte teorica, appresa durante i corsi di formazione, con un serio tirocinio da svolgere in uno studio con un mentore di riferimento.

E' indiscutibile, però, che occorre prestare particolare attenzione alla reputazione e alla professionalità degli insegnanti e dei relatori ai quali ci si affida.

Spero che la mia presentazione esposta durante il Convegno sia servita a dare una più chiara idea sulle possibili procedure di sicurezza utilizzabili durante la pratica di body piercing.

Dette procedure sono ritenute da noi, APTPI (Associazione Piercer Tatuatori Professionisti Italiani), gli standard minimi igienici sanitari per la salvaguardia della salute del cliente.

Mi reputo lusingato ed onorato di essere stato chiamato a svolgere questo incarico in occasione di quello che è stato un primo evento specifico sul piercing.

Spero ardentemente ne facciano seguito altri e spero che vedranno coinvolti, sempre più, operatori professionisti del settore. E' mio personale convincimento che solo con la consulenza di seri professionisti si potrà arrivare ad ottenere una congrua, moderna, efficace e, speriamo, unificata normativa di regolamentazione della formazione degli operatori e della attività di body piercing.

Stay tuned.

—Bruno Valsecchi

1st Italian Conference on PIERCING PRACTICE

Roma, 28-10-2015

Organized from Superior Institute of Health

Organized from the Superior Institute of Health in Rome, Wednesday October 28, 2015 at the center ONDICO.

The Institute of Health organized the first conference on the practice of body piercing.

During the conference the following interesting topics related to the practice of body piercing were presented.

- Dott. Renzoni and dr. Pirrera—The practice of piercing: current status and issues
- Dott. Ciccaglione—Risk infections practice of piercing
- Dott. Berardesca—Risk dermatological complications and aftercare for piercing
- Dott. Tammaro and dr. Persechino—the practice of piercing
- Prof. Liguori and dr. Gallè—Aspect epidemiological and sanitary risks
- Mr Bruno Valsecchi, body piercer and representative APTPI (Association Piercers and Tattooists Professionals Italian)—Introduction to the practice of body piercing and the role of Piercer
- Dott.ssa Marchetto—Watch and control of piercing: critical found on territories

As you can see from the program, the conference was planned to be interesting and cover a wide range of topics. We have followed a number of statistics, research, and projections that showed clearly that the National Institute of Health has very clearly decided what constitutes the activity of the piercer, what is considered a body piercing, and how it is to be completed.

This makes us think that we're heading in the right direction for both protection of our workers and the health of the clients. The fact that the Health authority has contacted the piercing industry, to take part in this work shows us the importance of it.

During this work, we have followed information that has highlighted the discrepancies of the quality and duration of the training courses for body piercing and piercers as a whole in Italy.

In fact, despite that, the guidelines of the Ministry of Health in 1998 suggest the right to organize professional training courses for piercers and tattoo artists by regions. However to date, four regions still do not have adequate training available. Combined with the melting pot of



regulations, ordinances, and laws on the activities of tattooing and piercing that apply throughout Italy, creating standards is of utmost importance.

In my presentation, I pointed out, among other issues, the concept of professional ethics. I hoped to give a clearer idea on the fact that, as a group, we need to improve our businesses and skills by promoting education, either through agencies or industry associations. I also highlighted the importance of integrating the theory part and practical lessons, to be learned during these training courses.

I hope that my presentation during the conference served to give a clearer idea about the possible safety procedures used during a body piercing. These procedures are considered by us, APTPI (Association of Professional Tattooists Piercer Italian), the minimum standards for sanitary safeguarding the health of the client.

I am flattered and honored to be called to speak at what was the first event specific to the body piercing. I very much hope it will be the first of many, and that others will get involved. It is my personal conviction that only with the advice of serious professionals can we have a fair, modern, effective and, hopefully, unified legislation and regulation for the training of the body piercers of my country.

Stay tuned.

—Bruno Valsecchi

DONATE TO SCIENCE AND HELP A FELLOW PIERCER, STUDIO OWNER, & DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

You are invited to be part of a research study being conducted by Capella University PhD candidate, Stephanie Hutter-Thomas (Stephie Von Hütter Thomas). In order to fulfill her PhD requirements, Stephanie must complete a doctoral dissertation that presents new information for the scientific knowledge base. As a result, Stephanie has chosen to invest her time in research that will serve to promote a deeper understanding of the modified community. Some of the details regarding the study are listed here in order to help you determine if participation is right for you.

STUDY TITLE:

Sociocultural Evolution: An examination of personality type, life events, age, gender and perceived spirituality and the influence these variables have on self-reported levels of body modification.

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between personality and impact of life experiences, spirituality/religiosity, age, gender, and how modified one chooses to become. The study will include only APP 2016 conference attendees in the interest of limiting participants to only those over age 18 and those who view body modification as their lifestyle choice. You do not need to be an APP member to participate, however, you must be attending conference this year.

The goal is to secure 150 participants to take part in this study in order to use the desired statistical analysis. If you decide to be in this study, your participation will last about two hours. The questionnaires you will be completing will be administered in a meeting room at the APP 2016 conference in Las Vegas. Information regarding rooms and time slots will be announced.

WHAT WILL I HAVE TO DO AND DOES IT COST ANYTHING?

If you decide to be a part of this study, all you need to do is watch for this year's conference course schedule, choose a timeslot that works best for your schedule, and make it to the indicated room number. Participants will not be paid, however all participants in this study will receive a gift for giving their time freely to this endeavor. It is important to note that Stephanie is NOT receiving any funding from the University, the Association of Professional Piercers, or any other third party for conducting this study. All costs relating to the purchase of copywritten instruments/questionnaires, promo materials and gifts to participants are paid solely by Stephanie.

This study will help to expand the information currently published by offering data compiled from those who see body modification as a part of their lifestyle, not a trend. By donating your time to this project you will not only help another piercer complete a major academic goal, you will also be helping to improve the overall understanding of the modified community.

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