Consumer and military interest in biofeedback and neurofeedback services has increased. BCIA-accredited didactic training programs report greater enrollment. BCIA’s applications for our three certification programs (biofeedback, neurofeedback, and pelvic muscle dysfunction biofeedback) are 20% higher than 2010. This is the time to redouble your marketing efforts to take advantage of our field’s rising popularity. Although new media services offer unprecedented opportunities to communicate with your audience, they also carry unparalleled risks.

Marketing your practice requires that you strategically use all available resources to build consumer demand. BCIA is your partner in this effort. We have expanded our Web site (www.bcia.org) to provide our certificants with new marketing tools and have launched a media campaign using Facebook, Google, and Twitter to assist you.

BCIA’s Web Site
These efforts have started to show results. Our Web site redesign and marketing campaign have increased use of our Web site. Compared with 2010, our 2011 Web site page views are 57% higher. Visitors read 50% more pages per visit and stay 26% longer to use our content. One third of our homepage is devoted to the latest news in our field, including upcoming professional meetings and workshops. Consumers visit our Web site to learn why they should choose a BCIA board-certified professional and where they can find one. We now provide them with links to authoritative information about their medical or psychological disorder in our “Learn About Disorders Treated by Biofeedback” section. Certificants regularly check our job board, CPT codes, marketing suggestions, and list of articles they can read for continuing education credit.

Facebook
Traffic on BCIA’s new Facebook page (Biofeedback Certification International Alliance BCIA) has exploded because it provides visitors with a steady stream of the latest news and resources in the field. Our Facebook page connects readers with meeting and workshop announcements, 60-second Scientific American podcasts, informative videos, and indispensable references. In its first month, our Facebook ad appeared on the screens of almost 170,000 unique individuals, and we had more than 200 regular active users. Look for our gold logo when you enter “BCIA” on Facebook.

Marketing Strategies
In the past months, we’ve researched how our certificants successfully market their practice and want to share their secrets with you. In case after case, we’ve found that savvy marketers take full advantage of the powerful resources that come free with their BCIA board certification.

Consider these marketing strategies in accordance with state law and the rules of your professional membership organization(s):

1. Use the BCIA logo in your ads, business cards, presentations, promotional literature, and Web site where allowed. The BCIA logo is an internationally recognized seal of professional competence. You can find print-ready art and our logo usage guidelines at www.bcia.org.

2. Use the term BCIA Board Certified and your BCIA designation (BCB, BCN, BCB-PMD) where permitted. This may include your ads, business cards, conference name badges, conference submissions, presentations, promotional literature, publications, and Web site. Here is sample text that you can place on your Web site to promote your credential:

[ ] has earned an exclusive neurofeedback certification or recertification from The Biofeedback Association for Applied Psychophysiology & Biofeedback
Certification International Alliance this month. This certification confirms our dedication to providing excellent service to our patients through professional training in the field of biofeedback and neurofeedback. BCIA is recognized as the certification body for the clinical practice of biofeedback by the Association of Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB), the Biofeedback Foundation of Europe (BFE), and the International Society for Neurofeedback and Research (ISNR). BCN designates Board Certified in Neurofeedback.

3. Frame your BCIA certificate and place it where your clients can see it. This communicates the importance of your BCIA board certification and provides an opening to discuss your professional achievement:

I am Board-Certified in [ ] by the Biofeedback Certification International Alliance. BCIA is the only institute recognized worldwide that grants certification to biofeedback practitioners. Board Certification means that I have satisfied BCIA’s rigorous education, training, and ethical standards.

4. Explain what your BCIA certification and continuing education mean to prospective clients and referral sources. Here is text that you can place on your Web site and use in press releases where allowed:

Board Certification demonstrates professionalism and adherence to carefully developed standards as a healthcare provider. Biofeedback Certification International Alliance (BCIA) procedures follow the Department of Health & Human Services Guidelines. Healthcare professionals who achieve BCIA Certification demonstrate commitment to professionalism by completing basic degree and educational requirements, endorsing a rigorous code of professional conduct, learning to apply clinical biofeedback skills during mentorship, and passing a written examination. I am BCIA Board Certified and have earned the designation BCB, which means Board Certified in Biofeedback.

BCIA is the only institute recognized worldwide that grants certification to biofeedback practitioners. The Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB), the Biofeedback Foundation of Europe (BFE), and the International Society for Neurofeedback and Research (ISNR) all endorse BCIA certification. BCIA was established in 1981 to certify individuals who meet education and training standards in biofeedback and to progressively recertify those who advance their knowledge through continuing education. Currently, more than 1,500 healthcare professionals have achieved this certification in 25 countries.

5. Educate your colleagues and prospective clients about the value of your BCIA credential by linking your Web site to BCIA’s “Why Choose a BCIA-Certified Professional?” page.

6. Encourage your clients to visit our “Learn About Disorders Treated by Biofeedback” page.

7. Expand your professional listing in our free directory. Think of your BCIA directory listing as a free Yellow Pages business card ad for your practice compared with a single-line business listing. We encourage you to update your profile to provide more detailed information. Although a business card ad costs a high monthly fee, your expanded listing is free when you certify or recertify.

8. Make Yucha and Montgomery’s Evidence-Based Practice in Biofeedback and Neurofeedback (2nd ed.) available to referral sources and third-party payers to help document the efficacy of your services. You may purchase this indispensable reference from the Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB).

9. Use the media to educate the public about your services. Savvy professionals use interviews, press releases about their certification, recertification, and professional training; and YouTube videos to inexpensively reach their audience. Here is text that you can place on your Web site and use in press releases:

The Biofeedback Certification International Alliance, formerly the Biofeedback Certification Institute of America (BCIA), is pleased to announce that [ ] has become Board Certified in Pelvic Muscle Dysfunction Biofeedback. She joins an elite group of professionals who have met the educational, clinical, and exam criteria required in order to become a certified provider of neurofeedback services.

10. Invest in community outreach. Provide educational presentations to local organizations, patient support groups, and referral sources. Invite media coverage. Where appropriate, display the BCIA logo and your designation on a PowerPoint slide, and explain what they mean. Focus your presentation on the field. Don’t make it an infomercial about your services, because this
may jeopardize the credibility of your message. Instead, establish yourself as a skilled provider through a balanced and informative presentation.

Build a daily schedule of whom you will call and which leads you will follow up. Networking depends on personal interaction and your contact list. Consider using services such as LinkedIn to stay in touch with your contacts, manage your online identity, and expand your network.

**Caveats in Using New Media**

Although new media such as Facebook, listservs, and personal blogs provide inexpensive ways to reach clients, colleagues, and referral sources, they also carry significant risks. Consider these guidelines when using these tools:

1. Never assume that privacy settings provide complete protection.
2. Once you post on a listserv or tweet, these messages may persist on the Web indefinitely. Worst case, damaging messages could go “viral.”
3. Never post identifiable patient information online.
4. Ensure that information about yourself, your practice, and the field is accurate and professionally appropriate.
5. Maintain the same clinician-client boundaries online that professional ethics require in person.
6. If you post personal information online, separate it from content describing your credentials and practice.
7. Remember that your actions and posted content online can negatively affect your reputation, your career, and public trust in the field. This caution is routinely violated on listservs, where the illusion of privacy invites unprofessional exchanges.

**Conclusion**

We encourage you to catch the wave of increasing consumer and military interest in biofeedback and neurofeedback services. You can successfully reach your audience by using these inexpensive marketing strategies. Review your current marketing plan and decide which strategies you should add and when you should initiate them. Phase these strategies in to minimize your expenses. For example, you might add the BCIA logo and your designation to your business cards, letterhead, and promotional literature when it is time to reprint them. Although new media offer exciting opportunities to reach your audience, you must exercise caution to protect your reputation and trust in our field. With an effective campaign, you can teach consumers, referring professionals, and third-party payers in your market to demand professionals who are “More than qualified, BCIA Board Certified!”

Correspondence: Fredric Shaffer, PhD, BCB, Psychology Department, Truman State University, McClain 214, 100 E. Normal Avenue, Kirksville, MO 63501-1820, email: fshaffer@truman.edu.