

Grow Your Clinic Ep. 221

Four Locations In Six Years: Movement 101's Growth Story

Description

Moving your practice online can be a challenge especially if you're not particularly friendly with internet technologies. But with the current challenges brought about by the pandemic, it may be in your best interest – your team and clients included – to move consultations in the online space.

With the right guidance and strategy, anyone can grow their online business successfully.

In this episode, Dr. Jin Ong, Owner of MetaMed and host of The Art of Listening To Your Body Podcast, talks about her experience in having an online practice, how she got started, and how it has helped her expand her business and grow her client base even during the Covid pandemic.

TRANSCRIPT

[INTRO MUSIC]

This is the Grow Your Clinic Podcast from Clinic Mastery. We help progressive health professionals to lead inspired teams, transform client experiences, and build clinics for good. Now, it's time to Grow Your Clinic.

JACK: Well, welcome back to another episode of the Grow Your Clinic Podcast. Jack O'Brien here with you again today in the host seat and stoked to have you joining us wherever you're listening, iTunes, Spotify, YouTube, Google, wherever that might be, if you're driving or exercising or maybe just sitting back enjoying a coffee as I am today. We're continuing our clinic owner spotlight and I'm really excited to have another clinic owner with us. We got Marcio Ferrara, the director, founder of Movement 101.

Marcio, welcome to the podcast. How are you?

MARCIO: I'm well, thanks. I'm really excited for today.

JACK: I'm really excited. You've got a really inspiring journey as a clinic owner. And as we speak at the time of this recording, it's late August, and you're in and around the airport in Sydney with your clinic. So you're in the COVID hotspots, and we'll be able to lean on some of those stories. But overwhelmingly, your journey is gonna be a whole lot of fun.

Before we dive into that, I've got a couple of icebreaker questions for you ready to go?

MARCIO: I'm ready. I'm ready.

JACK: All right. Number one, what are you reading or learning right now?

MARCIO: I'm actually doing a Facebook ads course and a videography course on [Foundr](#), which just that I'd rather than reading something, right?

JACK: Yeah. That gets great. Yeah, Nathan Chan, isn't it? The founder?

MARCIO: That's right. Yeah.

JACK: Number two, who inspires you?

MARCIO: A lot of people inspire me, I think. I would say family first. My dad inspires me. Yeah, his work ethic has taught me a lot. He's worked very hard over his life and a lot of hours. And that's partly what inspired me to work hard as well.

JACK: Yeah, nice. What industry or career is your dad in?

MARCIO: At the moment, construction, but I always remember him working really hard and for a lot of years, he worked seven days a week. And it's not that that's always good. But it's helped me focus. It's also helped me learn that we shouldn't only work and we shouldn't forget to have fun as well. So yeah.

JACK: Number three, what did you want to be when you were growing up?

MARCIO: I actually wanted to be an engineer of some sort. I was very much into IT and computers and technology. So for a long time, I was more thinking of becoming an engineer. And then towards the end of high school, I changed to healthcare and sports, and ended up going down to physio.

JACK: Nice. And finally, what's the motto that you live by?

MARCIO: Not an official motto, but I would say, "Don't be afraid to make mistakes, I think you only make good decisions after making a lot of bad decisions."

JACK: I love it. And you know, probably one thing that I do know about you is you're a learner. I recall when we first met each other and came across Clinic Mastery, Facebook ads was something that you were learning and was doing super well and was a key part of your journey. And to hear that you're still investing in learning in Facebook ads is for me, that's bloody inspiring. So thank you, thank you for sharing. That's awesome.

So connect the dots for us. How does a little tucker who's keen to build stuff, probably playing with lego, and then becomes a physio. Connect the dots for us. How did you become a physio?

MARCIO: I've got very much into sports throughout high school, much fitter than I am now. And I also had a big interest in healthcare and biology but I thought about going down the medicine route for a while but didn't really see myself living that sort of lifestyle. And physio sort of seemed like something in between, you know, a bit of healthcare, a bit of sports. Obviously, a lot of young physios, the dream is to be a sports physio, so it just seemed like a good fit at the time. Although I had never even seen a physio up until finishing my course.

JACK: And was the journey into uni and then graduating uni all smooth sailing?

MARCIO: The first year or two, I sort of had to think about whether it really was for me. I did my degree overseas in Portugal and the first year seemed very slow and sort of content heavy, but not with things that I was really interested in. So I, yeah, I did think about whether it was for me. But I kept

pushing through and doing it and I don't regret it. I think it was a good decision in the end.

JACK: And did you practice in Portugal or straight back, straight to Australia?

MARCIO: I got the dream job straight out of uni — totally fluked it, ended up working for a professional soccer team, I think because I could speak English and they wanted someone that knew that had other languages.

JACK: I'm sure you're a good physio as well.

MARCIO: I'm sure. It was a really steep learning curve straight out of uni straight into a position like that — I really loved it, but it was a lot of hard work as well.

JACK: Yeah, so many people think, “Yeah, sports physio sounds awesome.” What were the pros, but also what were some of the realities?

MARCIO: Well, the pros was that I love the sport. I love the game. So being involved in it was awesome traveling with the team. We were on an island off the coast so we'd fly every two weeks to games and, you know, go to stadiums that I watched on TV. It was amazing but it was a 20, I wouldn't say 24-7, but it was a seven-day a week job. All of the players, most of them were from Brazil and from Africa and now we're all away from home. So the physio is sort of the person on the team that everyone trusts, like, the coach trust in the players, trust and the directors. So you're sort of the person that everyone comes to. Yeah, we'd have players that would bump their head, like literally in the middle of the night, and call me rather than go to hospital. Right? And so you sort of become the problem solver, but it does, yeah, especially if you're a young physio, and you don't really know what you're doing. It can be tricky.

JACK: So okay, and what was the then-journey from professional sports into private practice?

MARCIO: Well, --- was going through a bit of a financial crisis at the time. So you know, there was a lot of politics involved in sports in the club that I was at. I was going through a little bit of difficulty. I was there for a year, moved to another club, and then started hearing that they were going bankrupt,

interestingly, and I had just signed for them. And then my sister wanted to come back to Australia, I had grown up here. Some friends were thinking of coming too, and then we thought, “Well, why not? Let's, Yeah, let's go.” My wife, my girlfriend at the time, was kind of interested too. We just tried it. We came and wanted to experience it and see how it goes for us.

JACK: Did you step straight into private practice or the public system?

MARCIO: Well, when I first arrived, I didn't have my physio license here yet. So I had six months. I think I worked at a cafe actually for six months and tried to get, you know, my paperworks sorted, and then went straight into private practice after that, and did about two and a half to three years of private practice working for another company. And so my wife's a physio also. She left a job that she really likes to come to Australia. And when she got here, it was the first time she left Portugal and she, her English wasn't amazing at the time, and she was stuck doing a lot of jobs that she didn't like. And then she got into pilates. And I thought that, really, it's either we do something like either I can get her and help her get into a job that she likes, or this isn't gonna go well, and we're probably gonna have to get back. So. So when we had the opportunity to set up our own practice, and to allow her to try and get back into work that she enjoyed, we just went for it.

JACK: Okay, so the key driver of opening your own clinic was really to create ideal jobs for yourselves in the first instance.

MARCIO: Yeah, it really was, especially for her. I was happy I was working for physio, Inc, at the time, and they were a growing company. They were inspiring. And I was quite happy there. But at the same time, she was so... Claudia was trying her Pilates business. So she was running Pilates classes. She didn't have a physio license yet. And we sort of needed to push that and grow that. So it was the right time.

JACK: Interesting. Had you had much business or commercial background at all?

MARCIO: I was always into, like, into business, so I was always interested in it, but I had never run a business. My parents had owned, like hospitality, like a cafe, and I have worked in a hospitality business before but never like a

healthcare business. But I did have good examples and see other clinics doing well. And I was always quite interested in it. I always knew I'd want to go down the business route.

JACK: Yeah. Okay. That's interesting. Tell us.. How did the first year or two go?

MARCIO: It was a lot of a lot more work than I think most people can imagine, like I was, when we started, I was still working a full time job in Penrith. So I lived around 45 minutes away from Penrith. So I'd drive there, work there, leave that job and go to Walnut Creek, which was about an hour away outside of Sydney on the other side. And then I'd work there from 5pm or 4pm, as soon as I could get there till eight, nine o'clock. And then we drive 45 minutes home, we'd be cooking dinner at 9:30pm. And we'd be dead, and then do it again, same thing the next day. And we did that for a good six to 12 months. I sort of looked back now and was like, I don't know if I had the energy to do that now. I mean, we've got a daughter now. So it'd be harder. But we did work a lot of hours just to get it off the ground and get it going.

JACK: And did that bode well for building a client base, referrals, partnerships, etc?

MARCIO: Yeah, it did. I mean, look, we had to make it work, right. So once we committed to it and built the clinic, we had to, we had to make it work. A lot of the time was spent treating clients and I was lucky enough that I didn't have to put in a lot of extra work when it was just me practicing to get more clients in. I had no idea about what it meant to run a business. I just knew how to be a physio. So yeah, the clients would come in and I was fairly good at retaining and we grew to the point where... I was actually looking back at it last week, because we just opened a clinic at Waterloo, and I'm in partnership with one of our physios and he's been working really hard. And it got me thinking, and I went back and looked at what I was doing. And I think my busiest week, I had seen close to 100 appointments, and these were half hour appointments. And I was like, I don't know how I did that, really.

JACK: Makes me tired thinking about it. Okay, so maybe talk us through the journey of... How did you go hiring your first team member? And what was that progression and growth like?

MARCIO: Yeah, so I was getting really tired. And I was seeing a lot of time. So I felt like I needed to bring someone in, like I didn't know about, you know, finances and benchmarks, and when we should be spending it on what. I knew I needed someone to help me. So we put out an ad and we ended up hiring a young physio, who came in and he was quite hungry. I wasn't the best mentor because I was so... It's tricky, right? You've become so focused on the fact that you sort of need the money coming in because you're just starting, it's your first big expense, a wage. And it's sort of scary. And then at the same time, when that happened, it's Murphy's Law, right? So that the new clients just dried up, all of a sudden, like the week we hired, they didn't dry up, but they're like, they dropped. So all of a sudden, I was you know, it was stressful. It was hard. But it got me more interested in learning about business. And I think that was when I hired my first business coach, and went down that route of trying to learn what I needed to be doing, how do I motivate, you know, my, my first team member, how do I grow the clinic, how do I learn to market, how do I learn to understand my finances. And it sort of started there?

JACK: And so how long ago were we talking, or what year roughly was this?

MARCIO: 2015, we started the clinic and in the first hire would have been towards the end of that year or early 2016.

JACK: Okay, we'll fast forward now for us, like paint us the picture of Movement 101. How many locations, team members? What's the scope of your practice six years later?

MARCIO: We've got four locations at the moment. We've just opened our most recent location, we rebranded in the meantime. So back then we were like Creek physiotherapy and Pilates. And then as we grew, we thought well, having a name that actually fits for every location would probably be cool. So we've rebranded into Movement 101. We wanted to be very movement focused. So we have not only physios but every other type of allied health that is related to movement. And we've got a team of 28. And we're looking at pathways, career pathways for our practitioners, whether they're, you know, becoming better and better educators or specializing in a field or even co-owning a practice with us, which is what we've done recently. And so

there've been a lot of mistakes and money that we didn't have to spend, that was spent, but we've definitely come far, I think.

JACK: That's unreal, mate. Appreciate sharing, and congratulations! It's no mean feat to in, you know, six years or so go from zero to not multiple locations, 28 team members, it's a real testament to hard work and learning lessons. So, well done.

What does the average week in the life of a clinic owner look like for you? Are you still seeing patients? What's it like to lead a team? What's a week look like?

MARCIO: I have trouble saying no to people, so I'm still seeing some patients, people that have probably been seeing me from the beginning. So some of my first clients and that they, you know, they still want to see me, probably because they just enjoy chatting with me more than anything else. It still feels good to step into the treatment room or the gym. The difficulties when we... is turning off from the business side of things when we're treating clients. and that's why I probably started treating less because you know, it's hard to concentrate on someone when you're still getting messages coming in and people needing you. But yes, I'll still do a little bit of that, maybe one or two appointments a week, but then I'll work from home a lot, and continue to learn and look at our systems and, and try and support the team. So I think over time, really, becomes about your team and learning how you can support them so that they enjoy their job. And the more they enjoy it, the better they'll perform and the longer they'll stay with you. So the day to day would be working from home in the morning. I like to be present so I still do in person meetings as much as I can, except obviously during COVID. But I'll try and come to the clinics and even if I can just come and have lunch with them and have casual chats and catch up with everyone, I'll do that as much as I can. And now trying to learn to turn off a bit and trying to learn to have some time off as well, which has been really hard.

JACK: If I can pull on a couple of those threads with the turning off thing. You work with your wife, right? And you... at home. How do you manage that tension of being in business as well as, as well as family?

MARCIO: I should probably dedicate more time to my family. Like I did, obviously, I'm present and so it's not going away, but um, I do, I'm on the phone a lot. So I find myself, you know, my daughter wanting to play with me and I still have that tendency to be checking slack. And so that's probably my greatest difficulty at the moment. But I feel like I'm very fortunate that I don't have to be stuck at the office if I don't want to, or if I don't need to. So if I do need to take data, take it to the park or to get dance lessons, and I can so yeah, very fortunate. And it's, it's a work in progress, learning to balance it all,

JACK: Lead the business with your wife, co-lead it?

MARCIO: Yes. At the moment, she's mainly working from home. So ever since Laura was born, she sort of stepped back from running Pilates sessions. Right about the time she started getting morning sickness in it right in the middle of the classes, she had to stop. And then over time, she's sort of learned a bit more about bookkeeping and Xero. So she's been doing a lot of that and a lot of the dashboarding from home and helping run the admin side and the admin team. So we will share an office most of the time and then but I'm sort of coming to the clinics a bit more frequently.

JACK: If we can then touch on the team leadership. So I think you can't be in four locations all at once and 28 people, there's a lot of names to remember, let alone being invested in their growth. How do you lead effectively? Or what are some of the keys that you've found to be able to be across your team effectively?

MARCIO: This was actually one of the biggest reasons that I initially joined Clinic Mastery was to learn more about how to run the team effectively and learn how to scale that and grow it. We've got a team leader at each location, we now have an admin team leader as well. Learning what responsibilities to give to the team leaders was hard and letting... not letting go, but just giving other people extra tasks, I always find like I just want to do it,

JACK: ...enjoy doing it, or you're the best at it? Obviously, with all humility, but how do you navigate that?

MARCIO: I do enjoy doing it. I only realized that I should pass it on to other people when I'm just crazy busy and having trouble coping. But yeah, so team

leader at each location, they, you know, I was still a work in progress in learning and adding tasks and things that they need to be doing. But they're all doing an awesome job with them now independently reach out and find new businesses and people to relationships that we can set up for referrals. They help mentor the team, and they've all got access to their dashboards. And I've now learned how to go over those dashboards with them and work from the fire a little bit more.

JACK: So when you grow to the extent that you have you know, there's two keys to... there is a number of keys, but specifically, you need more team members and more clients. How have you gone about attracting great team and continuing to attract a large volume of new clients?

MARCIO: We've been quite lucky in terms of recruitment, I think. So I know a lot, especially in physio, and in allied healthcare, a lot of businesses are having trouble with recruiting. We've been lucky enough that we've mostly had people wanting to work with us. I feel like the more we grow, the easier to become to... because now we've got our own team members referring people that they know, which makes it easier. We've invested a lot into having really cool spaces to work in as in like our clinics are quite modern, really big gym spaces that I feel like that does attract people nowadays. They want to work.

JACK: Is that a deliberate investment to go, "we want to create beautiful spaces so that it attracts people?" It was both from a recruitment point of view but also from a patient client point of view. We've wanted to be... like we've never wanted to be the cheapest clinic in our suburb. So we've wanted to charge a bit more but also provide more.

JACK: Which is gutsy, right? Because you fit out some sure are not cheap. Has it paid off in the long run?

MARCIO: Yeah, they're very expensive. But yes, I think I think it does, it is worthwhile because if you have good team members, then you don't really need as many new clients either. If you can attract those good, you know, the talent, those good people to work with you, you'll be happier. And if.. And I feel like nowadays, people do look for a bit more in healthcare. They don't, like obviously no one wants to pay a lot of money, they don't have to, but they are willing to pay more for a good experience for less clinical experience. So yeah,

even with that last clinic, we've deliberately really thought out about how else, you know, our floor plan and our layout should look like so that it fits with our brand and it fits with what we're charging. So now we've got a concept for moving forward. If we are to continue scaling, we know how to roll it out quite easily.

JACK: That's awesome, mate. I think you've done a super job on that branding angle for sure. Can you tell us to what degree or what role has Clinic Mastery played in this journey?

MARCIO: Interestingly, when I joined Clinic Masters, I had two other business coaches, had learned from both but had sort of felt like they were having trouble progressing further. With clinic mastery, I was really, really interested in learning about team and culture. I thought I knew a lot about finances and then as soon as I joined, I feel like one of the things I've learned the most was actually learning to understand my finances and being in control, especially Shane, the dashboard master he, he's really pushed me in that sense in understanding Xero and understanding budgeting. So it's become really important. I think that the clarity that I've obtained and learned from that point of view has allowed us to start forecasting ahead and knowing when we need to hire, when we need to market more, when we know we can afford to grow and invest in another location. So that's been a really important base. And then we've doubled our team since we've joined CM. So learning to manage that will continuously be very important for us if we are to continue growing, without that it would definitely be very difficult to do what we're doing right now.

JACK: And so, we're in the thick at the moment, the end of August 2021, as COVID happening in Sydney. What's it been like to be in one of the epicenters? How has it impacted you personally and in your clinic?

MARCIO: It's been an interesting journey, it's made me realize that communication is really important. And the more open and honest I can be with my team, the more they're going to help me and help each other. Last year, when, when it all started. I think we all went through a little mini mental breakdown and crisis. And I found myself just really resorting to being really honest. And you know, to the point where I was showing the whole team, our profit and loss and showing them where we were at and, and what it all

meaning from a financial point of view. And I made a few mistakes, but trying to understand their point of view and the fact that they weren't feeling necessarily safe and they were scared and, and some from overseas and wanting to go see their family. And so it was a difficult but really interesting journey, and then has led to growth. And when it first started, we all really came together and within a week we had started, and I think everyone did this though, but we had started an online app. And we thought it was going to be the greatest thing in the world and a great idea until every single gentleman on the planet started doing it as well. But the truth is the team really did it, like when they were working really hard. And before they knew it, they were actually really busy again, with clients. And yeah, it's led to growth. I think a lot of our really our doubling in team has happened since then, interestingly.

JACK: Why is that, you reckon?

MARCIO: I don't know, I mean, I think healthcare businesses did grow after the initial rounds, round one, of COVID. Interestingly, when it all started, we started having a lot of physios come to our clinic for the first time ever, and just handing their CV right. So a lot of young physios lost their jobs when the first lockdown happened. And my theory was always like, all the businesses that do survive this are going to do well. And this sounds kind of evil. But I thought if we take some market share now, then really what's one of the things that slows you the most in the healthcare business? It's having trouble recruiting, right? So if we have the capacity to hire now, if we are getting busy, then it probably means we'll have more market share in the end. And then we did that. So obviously, first there was a dip, there was no work. And then as that works out, come back and we got busy, we were aggressive with hiring. So with that theory in mind, like they're... now, the other clients are coming back, things are getting busy, they're getting under control. Let's bring in new team members. I started finding it the more team members I bring in, the more new clients I get. I got to a point where I was literally like, "Okay, well, I've got three, four rooms that aren't being used yet. Let's just hire four of them and figure it out." And we did and they got full and they got busy.

JACK: How does that bode for you now? Like you've been aggressive, and if I can pull you up, I don't think it's evil. I think it comes from a place of good

intent for you. But now we're in lockdown too, how's that playing out, the aggressive recruitment?

MARCIO: Well, I mean, look, we're not recruiting as much now because they're already full, but um, we're lucky we've got multiple locations so we can move people around. So that's helped. One of our locations has been hit harder. So we were doing some work for a few other companies. We're contracting, doing work for Qantas and Amazon during pre employment tests and around the airport, a lot of that work is gone and that's slowed down. So the botany clinic which is sort of closer to the airport, probably due the demographic as well, it has slowed down. We've had to move one of the physios there or we've splitting between there another clinic. That's helped. But obviously the strategy is different right now. It's not aggressive hiring. It's more you know, the clinics really, they were just before this lockdown, they were at capacity with you know, with physios, with staff. So now it's, "let's see what we can do to keep people full and to keep them engaged." I think, the mindset right now is different to pick up like most of the teams just really tired. They've avoided taking a holiday, though, some of them for the past few because they wanted to go overseas or they want to travel. So right now, it's more about learning to support a team right. We do have, we've been waiting for everyone to get vaccinated hopefully soon.

JACK: So it sounds like most of your role really these days is nurturing, leading and creating pathways for your team and then continually creating opportunities to recruit. It's mostly people, leadership and management, right?

MARCIO: Yes, yeah, definitely is, especially one of the things I've been doing a lot of work on has been on trying to create those pathways and figuring out what those careers could look like. Because a lot of young physios come into the profession thinking that, especially in private practice, there's not a lot of a career like this, they become a physio when they start working, and then — still a physio. So we've tried and been trying to get creative and figure out ways to create those pathways and objective ways to show them what their earning potential could be, and what their role could transform into. I think it does get easier as you grow, obviously, there's more positions that you can create as you grow. So right now, that's probably what's going to drive our

growth the most. It's trying to create systems and a big enough company that we can create growth and progression and motivation for our team.

JACK: It's unreal, I love it. Hey, if you had some words of wisdom for two types of clinic owners, say that solo, startup, early days clinic owner, but also the one now with multiple locations, 20 plus team members, what words of wisdom would you have for those two ends of the spectrum?

MARCIO: I think so for the solo clinic owner, mainly assessing your goals early on. And obviously these can change. When I started, the initial goal was just to run a clinic, right? Like I was buying myself a job and I was happy with that. I soon realized that it was hard work and that I wanted a team. So the sooner you can start learning about that and preparing yourself and the easier your own life will be, and definitely not being afraid to risk and to try things. I think also, yeah, for a bigger clinic for an owner of the biggest panic, I think it would come down to various — the same thing. Like, “Don't, don't be afraid to make mistakes.” I feel like I've experienced the most growth after making wrong decisions. And a lot of the people that I know that have been successful in businesses, whether in healthcare or not, they've made a lot of bad decisions before making good decisions. And they probably wouldn't have made a lot of those good decisions if they hadn't tried a lot of things first. Try things, you know, when it comes to marketing, try a lot of different avenues. Figure out which ones work for you in your location for your team. The same thing in terms of, you know, mentoring and growing your team, obviously, learn from your coaches and from people that inspire you, but try different things, like we've had systems in the past that really didn't work for our team, they had the opposite effect even though they're all working for other people. If I hadn't tried it, I would never have known. So making those mistakes of wanting to figure out how to fix them and then coming up with better systems and wanting to learn more, and that's helped drive our growth as well.

JACK: That's awesome, mate. I really appreciate you sharing that and thank you so much for your vulnerability and openness, transparency, and I just really respect your humility, but also hustle and you've worked super hard and you deserve everything that's coming your way.

If people want to maybe check out your clinic, get in touch with you what's maybe the URL or the socials that we can point people towards

MARCIO: Movement101.com.au is our website. We're actually launching a new website next week with heaps of cool content where we're interviewing all of our team and we're doing a lot of videos. Hence why I'm trying to learn how to produce videos now. And then our socials, [Movement 101](#), for Facebook, if any ... check out.

JACK: Yeah, awesome. We'll make sure we link all that up on the show notes. So listeners, clinicmastery.com/podcast, we'll link out Movement 101, all the socials and the Facebook's will be over there.

Marcio, thanks so much for joining us, maate. It's been an absolute pleasure to have you on the podcast.

MARCIO: Thanks so much, Jack. Thanks for listening today.

JACK: And listeners. Thank you for joining us. As always head over to clinicmastery.com/podcast. We really appreciate you sharing your time with us as you listen to this episode and I can't wait to bring you another episode of the podcast again really soon. Bye for now.

Thanks for tuning in to the Grow Your Clinic podcast. To find out more about past episodes or how we can help you, head to www.clinicmastery.com/podcast and please remember to rate and review us on your podcast player of choice. See you on the next episode!

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