



SCOTT CHARLTON

Business Coach  
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# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## John Fitzgerald, **Physiotherapist** **Background**

John Fitzgerald is a leading Queensland physiotherapist who owns and operates Active Rehabilitation Physiotherapy, a practice that employs 50 staff across four state-wide clinics. During John's stellar career he has been engaged by some of the country's top sports men and women, including stints with the Brisbane Broncos, the Queensland Firebirds netball team as well as State of Origin players. International engagements and university mentoring round out John's impressive work life to date.

John first engaged Scott Charlton as an accountant in the mid-80s. Back then, John's business was still in its infancy and he was operating as a sole trader. Later, Scott's role morphed into that of business coach and mentor. Today, John credits his decade-long association with Scott as helping him to "become a better businessman" through identifying new opportunities and providing the accountability required to help him dedicate more time to working on the business, rather than in the business.

## Input and Coaching

*"I consider myself blessed to have met Scott because he was so much more than an accountant...he was looking for opportunities and growth for me, even when I wasn't...he is a very wise person and his input has been fantastic."*

That input extended to encouraging John to embrace marketing as a valuable tool to attract new clients. Naturally, this type of enthusiasm for self-promotion came

as a welcome surprise to John who could not have anticipated such insights from an accountant. Indeed, Scott was so much more...

Scott went on to support John through a number of business development phases, including early on in his career when he embarked upon a business partnership with another physiotherapist. Scott helped spark a re-brand of the business and encouraged the pair to create a new business name to reflect their future plans and to broaden their specialisation

well beyond sports therapy.

Scott's input also extended to encouraging John to establish and implement a series of in-house systems to ensure quality control across the clinic - from record keeping protocols for serving new patients, right through to the completion of patient care.

Further, goal setting proved to be a pivotal part of Active Rehabilitation Physiotherapy's development. Scott coached John to create annual budgets and targets for his practice. From there, the duo met regularly to review progress and discuss whether the business was meeting its short-term goals and, where necessary, what modifications were required.

Specifically, John credits Scott with introducing him to the concept of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-based. He says the S.M.A.R.T acronym really resonated, and, to this day, serves as a yardstick for his business decision making. Likewise, Scott helped John to identify the types of clients he enjoyed working with and, under his tutelage, John enjoyed a new-found freedom by learning not to feel compelled to take up every opportunity/referral that came his way.



John Fitzgerald, Active Rehabilitation Physiotherapy with Scott Charlton, Business Coach.

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Scott was also instrumental in helping John to broaden his network of aligned professionals whose unique insights assisted the growth of Active Rehabilitation Physiotherapy. Upon Scott's suggestion, that network grew to encompass financial planners, I.T. specialists, lawyers and workplace psychologists/H.R. experts. That professional network proved invaluable as his business developed. Similarly, John is grateful to Scott for alerting him to conferences and business seminars that helped further develop his managerial skillset.

As theirs was an enduring collaboration, Scott had also been on hand to help John through workplace challenges including the dissolution of his original business partnership, evolving staff structures and office relocations.

*“Initially I thought if I were a good physio then the clients would naturally come to me but Scott gave me the tools required to really grow my business. He was very directive yet pragmatic.”*

## Outcomes

John highlights Scott's business planning and vision as crucial to his transition

from physiotherapist to skilled, strategic, business owner. With Scott's assistance, John learnt the art of business development and how to maintain the integrity of his growing practices whilst employing staff whose skills and high standards mirrored his own.

From humble beginnings, working alone in inner city premises back in the mid-80s, John's business has taken off well beyond his main practice in the Mater Private Hospital in South Brisbane.

*“Scott helped me realise my goals by teaching me the importance of personal and professional development. It's important to realise you don't know what you don't know.”*

Today, Active Rehabilitation Physiotherapy also has clinics located within the Mater Private Hospital's Hope Island and Brookwater premises. Additionally, John has a clinic situated within UQ Health Care at the University of Queensland's Annerley base and he has a growing group of clinical educators within his practice.

John's diversification is not limited to location. Although his career began with a sports specialisation, now his clientele extends to those seeking assistance with pain, injuries, rehabilitation, women's and

men's health, and children's continence.

In summarising Scott's input in his impressive career trajectory, John's praise is forthcoming:

## Fulfilment

John admits the financial rewards of his business growth have allowed he and his family to live a comfortable lifestyle and enjoy some of life's little luxuries like regular holidays, when time permits.

Additionally, when John's wife joined the business, Scott helped the pair negotiate the necessary boundaries required to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

In terms of his personal growth, John credits Scott with helping draw out some personal strengths that he'd previously dismissed. A natural introvert, John says he needed some cajoling to grow his personal profile in order to create keynotes and present to prospective client groups.

*“Scott gave me the groundwork I needed to manage my business and taught me how to be a good employer. He helped us grow from a small business to the medium-size business we are today. He was way ahead of his time. Without him, we would have been behind the eight ball.”*