

4 ways to make your site sticky

How do I get people to visit my practice's Web site often?

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VETERINARY ECONOMICS

To get the most from your practice's Web site, think of it not just as an electronic brochure, but as a living, breathing marketing tool, says Linda Wasche, president of LW Marketworks Inc., in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. A well-run Web site is a cost-effective and powerful tool for building interest in your practice and creating a sense of community among your clients. Once current and prospective clients have found you online, give them reason to visit—and revisit. Here's how.



Linda Wasche

1 Provide information

Become a resource for pet lovers, rescue groups, and other veterinarians by posting pet care tips, news, and checklists. Tailor information to your target audiences (see April issue). Update frequently with timely news and seasonal information. Publish a free e-newsletter with tidbits linking back to your site. Post links to noteworthy articles, studies, and reports on other Web sites.

2 Collect information

Marketing is as much about listening as it is about talking. Gather useful details about your site's visitors. Do they have a dog, cat, or rabbit? Do they own multiple pets? Who takes care of the animals? Do they get their pets' teeth cleaned? Ask visitors to supply this kind of information when they register for your e-newsletter or to receive promotions and special offers.

3 Promote your practice

Use the site to motivate clients and prospective clients to take action. Feature specials on veterinary services. Tie in with national events such as Pet Dental Health Month and Spay Day USA. Collaborate with local groomers and boarders. Conduct chats on veterinary topics or sponsor Web-based seminars and archive them on your site.

4 Build a community

Provide a forum for pet lovers with similar interests. Set up a blog where visitors can ask questions, share experiences, and post their pets' pictures. Allow local groups and organizations to post information on a calendar or events page. Link rescue groups with clients who might want to donate extra pet food or excess cages or supplies. Invite and post feedback.

Most importantly, Wasche says, promote your Web site every chance you get. Make sure your Web address is posted in your lobby, on signage, and included on your letterhead and business cards. In addition, direct clients to your Web site for news, updates, tips, and specials.

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