

## How do I increase traffic to my practice Web site?

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### Q: How can I increase traffic to my practice's Web site?



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You've built an online home for your practice and you're confident your new Web site will get tails wagging. Now your job is to promote it to build traffic. Linda Wasche, president of LW Marketworks in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., says to include your Web address wherever possible: in your advertising; on banners, giveaways, mailers, invoices, and appointment reminders; and on signage outside and inside your practice. Next, focus on reaching two groups: current clients and the rest of your community. It's easier to reach clients who are familiar with the practice and whose e-mail addresses you may already have on file, but general outreach efforts are valuable too. Here are nine ideas for encouraging people to visit your site:

1. Offer a fun giveaway item such as a T-shirt for pets, a T-shirt for people, or a tote bag emblazoned with your Web address. When your clients wear or display these items in public, other pet owners will take note.
2. Create coupons for a discounted service and make them available only—you guessed it—on your Web site.
3. Provide clients incentives for booking appointments online, if you offer this option.
4. Include information about new Web site features in your periodic practice mailings.
5. Set up a computer in your lobby that's logged on to your Web site.
6. Post touching quotes, poems, sayings, and stories on your site that clients will want to forward to others. This is called viral marketing.
7. Send press releases to local media outlets focusing on your timely and newsworthy Web site content, such as a pet nutrition guide, seasonal pet care tips, or tips for traveling with pets.
8. Link to other Web sites that offer credible pet health content. Once people realize your site is a reliable gateway to valuable information, they'll visit more often.
9. Run contests and promotions that require Web site registration, such as a pet photo contest, pet costume contest, an essay or story contest (perhaps for kids), or best pet trick.

Follow these tips and your Web site will become an important online destination for pet owners and a powerful marketing tool for your practice. (This is the third in a three-part series of questions on marketing your practice on the Web site. See the Related Links below.)

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