

Marketing 102: Quick marketing strategies

Here are 15 marketing tips that will yield results for your veterinary practice.

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By: [Linda Wasche](#)

VETERINARY ECONOMICS

So now you know that quick-fix strategies rarely provide the results you're seeking. And you know that to get the best marketing bang for your buck, you need to target your existing clients. Ready to take action and market your practice? Try these low-cost promotions:

1. Bundle services together with special client pricing.

Tie services in with pet-related observances like National Pet Dental Health Month or Spay Day. Promote them with client mailers, signs in your lobby, and a client newsletter—if you have one. Also send a news release to your local newspaper. This costs you nothing.

2. Sponsor a contest or competition.

Use themes like "best smile" or "most glamorous pet" to promote teeth cleaning or grooming services. Offer incentives to clients who enter their pets in the contest as well as service packages to the winners.

3. Promote services on your reminders.

Since you're already sending out a mailer, this is a no-cost way to remind clients of other services you offer.

4. Consider extending your practice's hours.

Research says that convenient clinic hours are highly important to clients, yet few practices are open during times that fit most clients' schedules. Consider trying out evening and weekend hours.

5. Become a donation site.

Local rescue groups are always looking for donated pet supplies and other items. Register as a drop-off site and then be sure to keep literature on hand promoting your clinic's services and encouraging clients to drop off extra goods.

6. Host a special event.

This doesn't need to be complicated or costly. Consider hosting:

- A seminar or workshop for clients with similar interests.
- A holiday celebration or other event.
- Programs that tie in with national observances such as Be Kind to Animals Week or Adopt a Shelter Pet Week.
- An open house to showcase new facilities or services.

7. Invite clients to bring a friend.

Offer incentives to clients for promoting your clinic to friends and family.

8. Use your walls.

Promote your services and the personality of your practice in your lobby and exams rooms. Decorate a bulletin board with colorful posters and flyers. I recently visited a practice when my pet rabbit needed oral surgery. The veterinarian was a dental specialist with more than 20 years of experience, yet the same old dog and cat pictures in the lobby said that this was a generalist's practice.

9. Use your team.

Encourage team members to wear colorful buttons that promote services and packages. This will pique clients' interest.

10. Use your lobby.

While clients are waiting, they're a captive audience for any reading material, flyers, videos, electronic presentations, and other media you might have on hand. Educate clients about pet care and services while they wait.

11. Reward client loyalty with perks.

Surprise clients who spend a lot of money with gift cards to local pet supply retailers, restaurants, or coffee shops.

12. Reach out.

In addition to clients, reach out to other audiences, such as referral sources and managers or employees at local pet-related businesses. These folks are in a position to send clients your way.

13. Collaborate with local businesses.

Attract clients of other pet-related businesses by cross-promoting your services with theirs. For example, invite local businesses to display their services at clinic-sponsored events in exchange for distributing your brochure on their counters.

14. Stay connected with referring veterinarians.

Your colleagues may not be aware of your evolving experience or services. This is especially true if your practice offers specialty services such as oral surgery, oncology, or orthopedics. Perhaps your clinic treats pets that others don't, like exotics. Keep other veterinarians informed about what you do.

15. Issue a news release.

If you have news at your clinic, let the community know about it through the local media. There is no charge for publicity, though in order to get the media to cover your news or event, you'll need to show local papers that it's newsworthy.

Don't miss part one of this series, [Marketing 101: Promoting Your Veterinary Practice](#).

Contact Linda Wasche at lindaw@lwmarketworks.com or 248-253-0300. Read more articles by Linda Wasche in Veterinary Economics at <http://www.dvm360.com>.