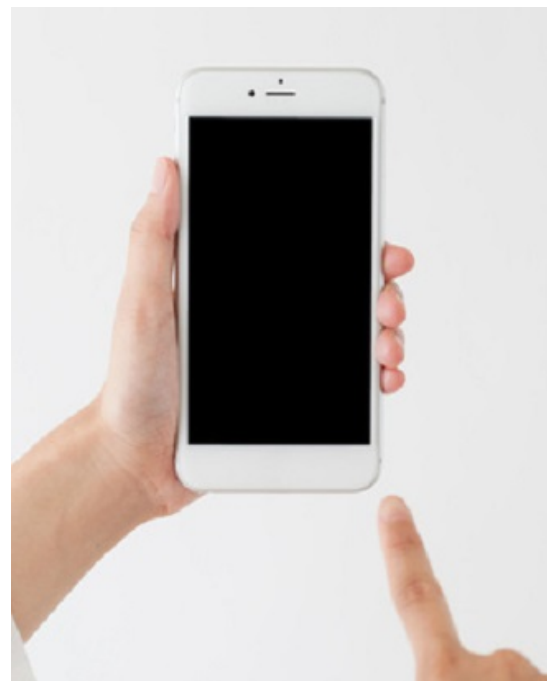


Build Brand Loyalty with Mobile Marketing

Naren Arulrajah

Brand loyalty is among the most important factors in veterinary client retention. People tend to think of pets as family members, and they take their pets' medical care very seriously. That means once pet owners have an established relationship with a trusted veterinarian, they are unlikely to shop around. However, achieving that level of trust and brand loyalty — and maintaining it — can be challenging, and it involves more than just quality clinical care.

Clients want to feel like they can count on you for help, advice and compassion in their journey through pet parenthood. You need to maintain contact with them and become their go-to source for reliable information. Increasingly, the best way to reach new leads and stay in touch with clients is via mobile.



About a year ago, mobile technology reached an important milestone. For the first time, [mobile users surpassed desktop](#) users in overall internet time. Mobile internet use continues to increase, and the trend shows no signs of slowing.

Essential Mobile Marketing Strategies

- **Have a responsive website:** Your website is the core of your practice's online presence, and that includes the mobile internet. The biggest mistake you can make is failing to have a mobile-friendly website. In the past, it was common to create two versions of the same site, one designed for desktop computers and the other designed for mobile devices. However, with a growing variety of devices and screens, having multiple sites is becoming less practical. A better option is a single website with a responsive design, which automatically adjusts to display correctly on devices of any size.
- **Create mobile-friendly emails:** A plain text message is unlikely to capture the reader's attention. Therefore, HTML formatting is standard for marketing email campaigns. However, many emails are difficult to view on a smartphone screen. Before sending a newsletter or promotional email, send it to yourself and a few staff members who use different devices to make sure it is easy to read on all screens.

- **Use targeted advertising:** Platforms such as Facebook offer the option of creating ad campaigns specifically targeted to mobile users. Because there are fewer competing elements on a small screen, these ads can garner more attention and get better results than standard ad formats. Take advantage of the opportunity, particularly if you are promoting a downloadable app.
- **Make use of SMS:** One of the most effective and most overlooked mobile marketing strategies is plain text messages. You can deliver reminders, tips, coupons and updates, reaching up to [98 percent](#) of your audience within two minutes. After 24 hours that rate is nearly 100 percent. Email, on the other hand, has about a 20 percent overall read rate. Like newsletters, text message campaigns should be on an opt-in basis.

Customer Service on the Go

A solid mobile marketing plan is essential for today's veterinary practice. Unfortunately, your competitors likely know this as well. To set yourself apart and win the loyalty of your clients, you need to go the extra mile and use mobile technology for their convenience. One of the best ways to accomplish this is with your own mobile app.

While developing an app for your practice may be pricey, the cost pales in comparison with the potential benefits. Clients appreciate the convenience of a dedicated platform for appointment scheduling, reminders and communication with your office. You can make the app more appealing by including features such as pet care tips, push notification reminders for medication or treatments, and even pet photo-sharing features. In addition to keeping clients connected, an app gives you the ideal platform for promotional content and special offers.

If you aren't quite ready for your own app, there are still many ways you can incorporate mobile technology into your current customer service. Offer clients a variety of options for appointment reminders, such as text, phone or email. Similarly, offer them a mobile number they can use to contact your practice via text. Most importantly, never pass up an opportunity to make your practice more accessible and mobile friendly.

Naren Arulrajah is president and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, a complete internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education and the online reputations of veterinarians/practice owners. With a team of 180+ full time marketers, www.ekwa.com helps practice owners who know where they want to go, get there by dominating their market and growing their business significantly year after year. If you have questions about marketing your practice online, call 855-598-3320 to speak one-on-one with Naren.
