

use the bathroom.

- Impose reasonable, pet-related rules. For instance, have tenants ensure that their pets will not be left alone for extended periods of time, which may cause them to become stressed and to act out. Partner with local dog walkers and trainers, to help provide resources.

#### Steer clear from furnished units and charge utilities to tenants

- Steer clear from furnished units since pets may damage furniture and since future tenants may have allergies.
- Charge utilities to tenants with pets since they may leave the lights, heat, or TV on for their pets while they go out.

#### Speed up the pet approval process of condominium boards

- Waiting for pet approval may result in lost rental income. Have clear policies in place when dealing with condominium boards.

#### Study summary

Dr. Graham's study has the potential to reduce animal relinquishment due to housing issues. Previous research has shown that landlords who are reluctant to open their properties up to pet owners are most concerned over possible damage and nuisance, even if they have never rented to pet owners. All the landlords and property managers who participated Dr. Graham's study had actual prior experience renting to pet owners, thus offering useful suggestions for improvement.

Dr. Graham's study also has the potential to promote housing security for people with pets. Housing discrimination and financial exploit of pet owners needs to be addressed by legislation, noted Dr. Graham. On its own, however, policy change is not enough to reduce the number of animals that are relinquished to shelters every year, she said, nor is it enough to ensure the proper treatment of pets once they are housed. Rather, a number of different strategies and actions are needed to support and enable people to keep and

care for their pets when living in rental housing.

Greater collaboration between animal professionals and housing authorities could help tenants as well as landlords and property managers get all the support available, she suggested. For instance, reputable dog trainers and animal behaviourists could help with meeting and evaluating pets prior to signing the lease and could provide services for pet owners once housed. In their neighbourhoods, tenants need access to nearby parks and public space for dogs to get the exercise needed for health and good behavior.

Pets are often described as family members, yet people are unable to find rental housing by virtue of being pet owners. Being forced to give up a pet, in order to access housing, or being forced to live in poor housing conditions or in less desirable neighbourhoods, in order to keep pets, could negatively influence the health and well-being of pets and pet owners, Dr. Graham summarized.

#### Conclusion

A pet is a commitment for life, not a negotiable family member. In order to enhance access to quality rental housing for pet owners, we must strive to ensure that enough housing options exist for families with pets; that pet ownership in rental housing is not restricted by breed or size bans; and that programs and policies are in place that help support responsible pet ownership. CVP

*Dr. Taryn M. Graham is a research associate in the School of Social Work at York University. She holds degrees from Concordia University (BA), University of Waterloo (MA) and University of Calgary (PhD). Her research looks into the challenges and opportunities that Canadian cities face when it comes to sharing spaces with dogs. Taryn is also the founder of PAWSitive Leadership, a humane education program that teaches kids the life lessons we can learn from dogs. For the past decade, she has been actively involved with numerous animal rescue organizations. She also has experience training dogs.*

## TEAM Social and email marketing can drive digital visibility for your veterinary brand: what you need to know



By Naren Arulrajah

Should you market your veterinary practice through email or social media? The answer is simple. Yes! Diversity is a key factor in digital visibility. It may be tempting to streamline your marketing plan by using just one platform. However, that would severely limit your reach.

A strong online presence is no longer an optional part of marketing. Nearly 90 percent of the American population is now online, and they are using the internet more than ever. They are also using technology in more ways, and your practice needs to be wherever people are looking.

Most internet users maintain several social media profiles, but they are rarely active on every network. Similarly, some people respond to emails, but others do not. A multi-faceted approach can reach a greater number of potential clients. You can also increase loyalty and brand awareness by connecting with people on multiple platforms.

#### No, email marketing isn't dead

Several years ago, the buzz in digital marketing was the death of email. Inboxes were inundated with spam, newsletters, and advertisements, in addition to a high volume of electronic correspondence. People were simply discarding the majority of their messages. With decreasing open rates, and increasing spam complaints, many experts predicted that email would lose its effectiveness. Instead, they recommended focusing on social media, the new frontier of digital marketing.

Those who predicted the death of email marketing were wrong. It continues to be one of the most effective methods of connecting with your audience and building customer loyalty. In fact, email has a higher return on investment (ROI) than most print, television, or digital advertising.

The secret to increasing open rates and avoiding the label of 'spammer,' is delivering emails that people will want to read and share. Rather than

just sending out an advertisement, offer discounts, special deals, useful pet health information, and other content of value to the reader.

#### Yes, social media marketing still matters

Industry analysts may have misjudged the future of email, but they were right about social media. It has experienced phenomenal growth in recent years, with seven in ten adults active on at least one social network. The numbers are increasing annually and show no signs of slowing down. Furthermore, 65 percent of pet owners post about their animals on social media.

In addition to its large audience, social media presents a unique opportunity to engage with current and potential customers. In traditional advertising, you have few options to judge people's response to your message. However, social media allows for real-time interaction and developing relationships with your clients.

Don't limit yourself to just one network, but also avoid stretching your resources too thin. You need to be active and regularly post quality content in order to benefit from social media. Each network also needs to be monitored for new messages and comments. If you fail to provide prompt responses, you are missing the benefits of engagement, and possibly even presenting an image of poor customer service.

#### Better together – tips for integration

The desire to simplify your increasingly complex marketing strategy is understandable. However, you can streamline without eliminating any important channels. Instead, opt for integration, which makes your marketing more manageable and more effective. Here's how:

- Add social sharing links or buttons to your emails. Encourage readers to share your content if they find it valuable. Don't forget links to your website and blog.
- Encourage email subscribers to connect with you on social media. Try a dedicated campaign, or even a featured section in your newsletter,

- promoting your social profiles.
- Create social media campaigns promoting your newsletter. This is a great way to expand your reach and gather more information about your followers.
- Take advantage of the many tools offered by social media platforms. Targeted advertising, lead gathering campaigns, on-site forms, and other features can help build your mailing list. These tools can also be used to drive website traffic, increase blog readership, and more.
- Create cross-platform campaigns. If you want to warn pet owners about coming flea and tick season, don't limit yourself to a newsletter or blog post. Try both, along with tweeting, pinning, and posting.
- Add incentives with prizes or giveaways. Offer free gifts or contest entries for liking, sharing, following, or subscribing. However, be sure to check the terms of each network before beginning a promotion, as they have varying requirements. For example, Facebook will allow you to offer incentives for liking your page, but not for sharing a post.

- Upload your mailing list. Twitter and most other social networks will allow you to import contacts. You can then follow your mailing list subscribers.

**Looking at the big picture**

Despite expert predictions, email marketing has not slipped into obscurity with the rise of new platforms. In fact, the opposite is true. It has a more valuable role than ever. In addition to direct marketing, email can boost your web traffic and social following.

*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.*

## Registered Veterinary Technologists and Technicians of Canada News



By Ivana Novosel, RVT, MSc  
RVTTC/TTVAC Vice President

It is hard to think that the spring is on the way and that the summer is at our doorstep – especially when sitting here in Calgary, looking outside of the window and seeing snow covering the lawn!

Every April, we celebrate the World Veterinary Day (WVD). It is a good reminder to celebrate all that we do in veterinary medicine. The World Veterinary Association (WVA) created the World Veterinary Day in 2000, as an annual celebration of the veterinary profession. This year the theme for WVD is *Value of Vaccination*. “Vaccination is an essential tool for preventive veterinary medicine, promotion of animal health and welfare, and reducing the risk of human exposure to many zoonotic pathogens”, according to WVA. Let’s honour this important day by assuring all those around us, humans or animals, are well informed and properly protected.

The warmer months are not all about thinking about antiparasitics and vaccinations. These are the months of travel, for fun and for work - as I like to call them, ‘work-ations’ - the months for re-connecting, networking, and for learning about new opportunities. From conferences and annual general meetings (AGMs), through practicums and organized volunteer spay and neuter opportunities in the country and internationally, the choices seem to be endless. What a great profession to be in right this moment!

On that note, I would like to update you with some of the events the RVTTC board has been involved with and some that are coming up in the near future.

**RVTTC was in Brisbane, Australia this April**

The SAVT (Saskatchewan Association of Veterinary Technologists) representative for RVTTC, Carolyn Cartwright, RVT, VTS (Anesthesia/Analgesia) was invited to join the rest of the IVNTA (International Veterinary Nurses and Technicians Association) Board for the in-person strategic meeting, where she delivered greetings on behalf of RVTTC. This was an excellent opportunity for networking and promoting the RVTs of Canada and the Proudly RVT message. Stay tuned for the official updates from this meeting!

**RVTTC board members and their executive director continue building strong relationships across the country**

One of the efforts the RVTTC leadership is embracing is attending important local conferences and events in order to build new and nurture established relationships with its members and stakeholders. From one coast to the other, RVTTC’s mandate is to be there for its members. Visit our booth and stop to say hello next time around – perhaps in Toronto, 16-19 July at the WSAVA/ CVMA 2019 Conference.

**PROUDLY RVT t-shirts are now for sale!**

We still have a *limited* number of ‘ProudlyRVT’ t-shirts available for purchase. These are available on a first come, first served basis. However, if we receive a significant number of requests, we will consider ordering more. To order, go to our website at: <https://rvttcanada.ca/proudlyrvt-t-shirt-order-form/>

**RVT TALK – the new RVTTC monthly e-newsletter is not to be missed.**

Have you received it? Have you read it? RVT Talk is our new way of assuring you are kept most up-to-date with relevant content and information. Please send us your feedback and let us know what you think. What would you like to ‘talk’ about? We would love to hear from you. Send us an email at [info@rvttcanada.ca](mailto:info@rvttcanada.ca) with your suggestions and ideas.

For more information visit our website at [www.rvttcanada.ca](http://www.rvttcanada.ca), and the RVTTC Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/RVTTC/> to stay up to date with all our events, latest industry information and member support!

