

# Five ways to build brand awareness without breaking your budget

By Naren Arulrajah



Brand popularity is a common digital marketing goal for all brands. Some brands have attained an almost cult status across the globe – everyone knows or has heard about Google or Facebook. But these brands have the advantage of financial resources and some of the best brains in marketing to get them in front of a global audience. You don't have to go the lengths of what

Apple or Xbox do to win brand love – but that doesn't mean you can't build awareness and recognition for your veterinary brand.

Brands exist in a digital space that is quickly becoming the hub of all human interactions and connectivity. You just need to know how to apply the fluidity of the digital ecosystem to build brand traction. And no, we are not talking about quick fixes or an over-night success. We are talking brick and mortar strategies that take time and planning. If done correctly, these brand-building strategies can bring you the kind of recognition you want, without breaking your budget.

## Five top ways of brand-building for your veterinary practice

Offering ultra-valuable veterinary content, encouraging and acknowledging referrals, effectively utilizing social networks, building a unique personality for your brand, and using influencer marketing are all keys to brand-building for your veterinary practice.

### Great content is the big one

One of the best and the most effective ways of getting your brand known on the web is by creating and delivering ultra-valuable veterinary content. The reason why content is such a powerful digital brand building medium is because it has the potential to create a bookmark for your expertise and popularity in a way that very few other digital tools can achieve.

- Think blog posts and website articles that talk about pet health care in a way that delivers that value
- Don't stick to run-of-the-mill content; spend time identifying what your audience wants, and create content that satisfies that need or expectation. Visit social sites, and review sites and forums to see what kind of questions and conversations are trending
- Create more visual content in the form of podcasts, videos, and infographics
- Optimize all of your content – Google is big on catering to mobile audiences, which means you need to do the same

Being recognized and appreciated for your content can be one of the best forms of brand popularity. Plan a great content mix and start delivering.

### Encourage and acknowledge referrals

Your clients will love to talk about your veterinary brand and spread word of your product or service when they know they'll be appreciated and even maybe rewarded by way of exciting freebies. Here's what you can do:

- Start with your happy or repeat clients – ask them to put in a good word about your practice among their network and contacts
- Encourage them to leave reviews and provide testimonials
- Acknowledge their hard work through a rewarding referral program – you don't have to spend big – think small offer discounts, a free pet wash and grooming coupon, a free pet dental checkup, or even a little goodies-basket for clients that bring in more than two referrals

These are just a few ideas to get you started. You can always tweak or plan other things based on what works for your practice.

### Don't leave out the social angle

You cannot afford to be socially ignorant. Some of the best and most effective brand building work happens on social channels. This is where the majority of your clients hang out. People look for brands, brand information, and they check out the type of conversation that a brand is generating. If all of these

aspects please or impress them, they will investigate further. Here's what you need to know:

- Select social networks where your audience is most active
- Create social content that resonates with the expectations of your social audience
- Start or encourage social conversations about your content, or on different aspects of pet health care
- Make sure you post to your social sites on a regular and consistent basis – if you're gone for long, chances are your readers would have moved elsewhere
- Use social buttons so your social audience finds it easy to connect and share all your great content
- Run a social media contest that is both exciting and encourages sharing – encourage contestants to share the link with friends and family. Get your audience to share funny pet videos, or tell a funny story, or share the most unique pet pictures. The item that wins the most votes, wins!
- Optimize your social channels for mobile viewing

Building social recognition again takes time and careful planning. Identify your audience, understand their needs, and deliver. That's the best way to get social traction for your veterinary brand.

### Build a unique personality for your veterinary brand

A fun and unique brand identity can set you apart from your competitors. A little dose of humour or personality can leave an impression with audiences. Think of the last time you saw a funny ad or read a funny article that both impressed and made you laugh. Try something similar.

### Use influencer marketing

Identify existing influencers in your industry who align with your brand value. Maybe they run a pet blog or have a popular YouTube channel or are pet enthusiasts with an active blog. Think how your practice brand can potentially complement their position. Partner with these influencers and promote your brand through them. But remember, influencer marketing is a two way street. So unless you have something of real value to offer, it will be difficult to get their attention.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Check the influencer's website, blog, and social following to see how best your target audience aligns with what the influencer is offering
- It is best to work with influencers even if they have a small interactive community of engaged fans – an engaged audience will bring you greater brand popularity
- Be consistent in your relationship building efforts with your influencers; focus on consistently creating content that keeps influencer's audience interested and engaged
- Check the kind of content, tone and messaging your influencer uses to create a buzz and see how best you can match that format

### Conclusion

These brand-building strategies are highly effective and they don't require big investments. All you need is time, effort, and strategic planning to get your brand in front of the right kind of audience.

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