

the Merck Veterinary Manual (1979) quote that demodicosis “*may be one of the most persistent of diseases and often responds poorly to treatment*”, the response to treatment can in fact be dramatic and very satisfying.

References

1. Sastre N, Ravera I, Villanueva S, et al. Phylogenetic relationships in three species of canine Demodex mite based on partial sequences of mitochondrial 16S rDNA. *Vet Dermatol* 2012;23:509–e101.
2. Siegmund OH, Fraser CF, et al. *The Merck Veterinary Manual*. 5th ed, Rahway: Merck & Co, 1979;943.
3. Miller WH, Griffin CE, Campbell KL. *Muller and Kirk's Small Animal Dermatology*. 7th ed. Toronto: Elsevier Inc, 2013;304-315.
4. Nexgard Label. In Compendium of Veterinary Products. Copyright 2017 - Animalytix LLC.
5. Beugnet F, Halos L, Larsen D, de Vos, C. Efficacy of oral afoxolaner for the treatment of canine generalized demodicosis. *Parasite* 2016;23:14.

6. Marbofloxacin Label. In Compendium of Veterinary Products. Copyright 2017 - Animalytix LLC.
7. Shumaker AK, Angus JC, Coyner KS, et al. Microbiological and histopathological features of canine acral lick dermatitis. *Vet Dermatology* 2008;19:288-298.

Dr. Stephen Waisglass is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Dermatology (ACVD). He practices clinical veterinary dermatology at the Veterinary Emergency Clinic and Referral Hospital in Toronto and the 404 Veterinary Emergency and Referral Hospital in Newmarket, Ontario. He teaches the course in veterinary dermatology at the Ontario Veterinary College and lectures internationally. Dr Waisglass has published numerous articles and book sections in his field. When not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife and children, skiing, playing tennis, and visiting people with their golden retriever, a certified therapy dog named “Penny”.

How to build a strong visual brand for your veterinary practice

By Naren Arulrajah



Visuals win over text. In the digital space where anything short of fast communication is considered almost redundant, visuals provide an eye-pleasing and quick medium for digesting information. If you think certain text just cannot be converted to visuals, well, you might be wrong. A case in point is today's ever-expanding number of emojis and acronyms. The textual form of the technology era is steadily being disrupted with a form of communication that is less text-dependent and more visually-based.

If you could tell your veterinary brand story with visuals and images in a fraction of the time it takes to read it in text form, wouldn't you want to try it? Brand success, after all, hinges on consumer acceptance. And if the current medium for encouraging consumer acceptance is visuals, then customizing messages to a more visual format naturally becomes the new normal.

Why you can't lose with visual marketing

Ninety percent of the information transmitted to the brain is visual. So it's hardly surprising that we should hold a visual bias. Furthermore, visual creation is being simplified by the minute via new and upcoming visual-based social sites. These platforms make visual creation quick, easy, and a lot of fun. Now you can take a string of images, lace them together, and tell your story! Slideshare, Instagram, and Snapchat, among other sites, have created huge and highly engaged audience bases simply by making storytelling through images easy even for those who are technologically challenged.

So if you want to stand out in the digital space and drive traffic to your veterinary brand, start utilizing visual marketing strategies.

5 insanely useful strategies to attract audience attention

Create better brand recall

The right kind of visuals can attract attention, impact, and stimulate the interest of even an indifferent audience segment. You want potential clients to remember your veterinary brand. You want them to remember reading about your product from months ago. Visuals can do that effectively. A great example of how images can give a brand unique recall power is DropBox. This power brand uses illustrations that are almost childlike, but at the same time unique from other storage brands. Google Doodles are again a great example of brand recall. They are popular and people look forward to them. Both brands use visuals to create an emotional connection and an immediate appeal. Discover what is unique about your veterinary brand, and explore the use of specific images or visuals such as photos or cartoons in a way that can help you stand out.

Inform and educate the fun way

Pet care procedures, services, and treatment options are easy for you and your staff to understand. But can you expect your clients to feel the same way? Instead of going back and forth with verbal communication, use visuals to provide an introduction, or to give a brief or detailed understanding of

specific topics that you know are difficult to understand. If you want to educate your clients on routine procedures, such as dental cleaning, pet vaccination, the do's and don'ts of pet travel, or even caring for aged pets, create fun videos or visuals explaining the topic. Great content also comes with great sharing potential. If your clients love your videos or visuals, they will happily share them with their friends and family. The additional benefit is that this kind of sharing is an indirect yet highly effective way of referring your brand to new clients.

Humanize your veterinary brand

Digital clients want to see is the real face of your veterinary practice. They want to see the people behind your brand. They want real stories of real people. Take every day photos, or shoot a behind-the-scenes video, or create a collage of successful pet treatment stories. There is just so much for you to take and create a human brand.

Breathe new life into your content

Whether it is your veterinary blog, website, or your social sites, images are the big sell. Content with images gets 94% more views than content without any images, and social content that is backed by visual imagery gets more social shares. If you were to write an article on pet allergy it might be difficult to get readers to read past the first paragraph. Add a few visuals, or make a video on the same topic, and you immediately increase the engagement potential!

Use a visual mix-up

Use a wide range of images across all your digital real estate. Some ideas for a great visual mix-up include:

- Use cartoons and or comical images to increase the fun factor of your messages
- Graphs and charts can be used to educate clients on pet care metrics such as growth, health risks, or to provide breed-specific information on pet health care
- Custom images can be used to create a brand style or to encourage a sense of brand recall
- Memes are a lot of fun if they are created tastefully

Conclusion

Visual content can get your veterinary brand in front of your audience in a way that is immediately engaging, interactive, and meaningful. Once you are in their direct line of sight, it becomes easier for your brand to attract the kind of attention that can propel you forward in an already saturated market space. If used effectively, visuals can help create a unique and powerful connection between your veterinary brand and your audience. They can add a recall component that can set you apart from the competition.

Naren Arulrajah is President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing (www.ekwa.com), a complete Internet marketing company that focuses on SEO, social media, marketing education, and the online reputations of veterinarians/practice owners.