

Credible information *continued from page 13***Implementing new protocols in your practice**

- Identify need for change in protocols
- Formulate a clinical question around an area that should be improved (e.g. decrease infection rates in surgery in your practice)
- Identify the members of your practice who are the stakeholders in protocol change, and present the clinical question to them
- Gather the best evidence
- Identify a “change champion” – the person directing the evidence gathering and who will present findings to the stakeholders
- Hold regular meetings to rate the evidence

- Based on evidence, develop new protocols
- Disseminate new protocols to staff
- Ensure protocols are adopted by all stakeholders

Reliable sources

- Veterinary Medicine Associations
- RCVS Knowledge
- Cochrane Collaboration
- Major veterinary scientific journals, e.g. *Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care* and the *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*

accurately. The results should be presented in a straightforward manner, without bias or comment as to why they may have occurred.

Finally, the discussion section should discuss all of the results obtained, even (and especially) those that contradict the researcher’s hypothesis. Contradictory studies are important as well, as they point the way towards

future avenues of inquiry and research that may be needed before a treatment or intervention guideline can be made.

This article is based on Mr. Yagi and Ms. Hughston’s presentation at the International Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Symposium in Grapevine, TX.

How to drive great social conversations and win clients

Fifty percent of veterinary clients today maintain a social presence over different platforms. So if 50% of your target audience is on social, then social is where you need to be. Your socially active target audience carries with it thousands of friends; this community of socially connected people share their thoughts, their opinions, as well as referrals for products and services they endorse. This is why social media are a prime, low-cost platform that can be ideal for building a robust online reputation for veterinary practices. It is where you can engage with your clients and prospects in a way that makes you look good both online and offline.

Social conversations are viral

The reason why social conversations go viral is because they spread from person to person; the conversation is shared till it eventually becomes a community dialogue. In a lot of instances, humour or unconventional characterization fuels these conversations – now you know why Grumpy Cat or LOL cats have such a huge audience. The world of social marketing is all about word-of-mouth endorsements – people like a brand, they talk about it, they share it, and they actively endorse it among their contacts and in their circles to create a viral sharing buzz.

Word-of-mouth or viral marketing is hardly new and advertisers have been using it for ages. However, social simply created a more engaging and visible way of achieving the same goal but with stellar results. The advantage with social is that conversations take place in real time and in a highly interactive space, which means your veterinary practice brand stands to gain from explosive online exposure if handled properly.

Are people talking about you?

The social environment is highly active and vibrant which makes it perfect for engaging with potential customers. Leading brands, in particular the ones that are most successful over social media understand this; their social campaigns focus on increasing brand awareness by driving conversations about their products and services. The more people talk about you, the better.

So the socially smart question is – how can veterinary practices drive conversation over social media?

Fostering conversations over social should be viewed as a means of meeting and exceeding clients expectations. Not only does this lead to higher engagement, but it also leads to more effective marketing. To drive efficient and effective conversations you need to be mindful of the following:

- Find out where your potential audience is most active
- Understand what your audience wants
- Craft messages to address these needs
- Ensure your audience understands your message
- Make sure you are receptive and responsive to your audience
- Ensure that you are in a position to exert some control over how communication flows

- Connect your content and themes to other relevant and significant conversations to add value and provide your readers with a little something extra

Create awesome content and compelling marketing messages

The key to creating truly engaging social conversations lies in creating content and crafting messages that are highly relevant to your audience. Your content should address a need or want as opposed to simply selling. Remember, the needs and interests of your community should always come first. The second aspect of creating a social media buzz revolves around the “appeal” factor. Give your audience a reason to share your items and they will. Thirdly, social community is all about give and take – you need to give first.

Great content is one of the best conversation starters over social. Keep in mind that conversations over social shouldn’t be initiated with a focus on gaining more “likes.” On the contrary, your focus should be about creating content that your audience cares about and will actually share with their family and friends – your content should be able to drive as many conversations as possible. Start using embeds and on-site social share plugins.

Once your audience starts influencing or advocating on behalf of your veterinary practice brand, it is akin to them personally endorsing your brand to their overlapping community members. These members in turn will be more inclined to pay attention to one of their own and further help spread the word – this is how a viral social buzz is created.

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