

Why You Can't Afford to Ignore Email Marketing

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Years ago, experts announced the death of email. Spam was making people's inboxes unusable, and they didn't want to see marketing messages. More recently, social media was said to be killing email. People had a new method of sharing, and email marketing would soon become antiquated. Like many online reports of celebrity deaths, these rumors were untrue.

It is 2017, and email marketing is alive and well. In fact, email is more powerful than ever. Today, **eight in ten** professionals say that email marketing drives both acquisition and retention of new clients or customers.

The Role of Email in the Modern Veterinary Practice

Email has better visibility and reach than virtually any other marketing channel. Social media posts are seen by a tiny fraction of followers. Similarly, very few subscribers actually read newspaper ads. By contrast, the open rate for the average email campaign is more than **20 percent**, meaning that one in five people actually see the message. In the pet care and veterinary industry, this number is even higher, with an average **open rate of 33.5 percent**.

Not only did email survive the plague of spam and the rise of social media, it has become the standard method of business communication. From marketing to billing, the best way to reach your client base is through their inboxes. According to consumer surveys, nearly **three-quarters** of all adults prefer to communicate with a company by email than any other platform.

If the potential results are not enough to convince you, consider the affordability of email marketing. Automated mailing list management services are usually very reasonably priced, and the only other expense is a little for your marketing team to create campaigns. Therefore, email is a low-cost, high-profit strategy. In fact, the average return on investment for email marketing is reported as high as **\$38 for every \$1 spent**.

How to Optimize Your Email Strategy

How can you put the power of email to work for your veterinary practice?

- Include subscription options on your website, on social media and in regular communications with clients. Building a sizable, opt-in mailing list is the foundation of successful email marketing.
- Provide valuable content. If you are promoting a service or special offer, the message should convey why it is of value to the reader. For newsletters and other informational content, be sure the content you provide is high quality, accurate and targeted to your clients' interests.
- Stay in touch. You may be surprised to learn that over 80 percent of consumers prefer to receive promotional emails from a business at least once a month, and over 60 percent prefer messages at least once a week.
- Choose timely topics. For example, try seasonal specials on flea and tick treatments, tips for holiday travel with pets, or warnings about the latest pet food recalls.
- Don't overlook customer service. Marketing is not the only aspect of your practice where email shines. Appointment scheduling, billing, client inquiries and other essential communication is often handled by email rather than by phone. People expect timely, friendly, helpful responses. Be sure that your office staff treats all email communication with the same level of professionalism and standard of customer service that would apply to a phone call.

The Bottom Line

Email is not only an effective marketing strategy, it should be an integral part of your veterinary practice. If your office staff or marketing department is treating it like an afterthought, your professional reputation and practice profitability can suffer. On the other hand, with strategic planning, regular communication and quality content, email marketing can help take your practice to the next level.

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 140+ full time marketers, 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.